

Royal Pharmaceutical Society



The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is the professional and regulatory body for pharmacists in England, Scotland and Wales. The primary objectives of the Society are to lead, regulate, develop and represent the profession of pharmacy.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society was founded in 1841 by Jacob Bell, owner of a large pharmaceutical business, to promote the interests of the trade. Bell also established the Society's periodical, *Pharmaceutical Journal*, which he edited from the Society's premises at 17 Bloomsbury Square. It moved to its present location (1 Lambeth High Street London SE1 7JN) when the Bloomsbury building was compulsorily purchased to make way for the British Library.

Pharmaceutical History



At the corner of Lambeth Road and Lambeth High Street stands the headquarters of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. A seven storey, steel-framed building, the lower part is built of dark red-brown brick and quarry tile, and the upper part is faced with matching marble slabs in a matt finish. The heavily tinted windows in aluminium frames contribute to a generally sombre and functional appearance. The building is the work of David Hodges MBE, FRIBA, and it was opened by Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother on 22nd February 1977.

An interesting feature is the car-lift situated in Lambeth High Street, which gives access to seven parking spaces underground. Inside, the building contains a Council Chamber for monthly meetings of the Society's governing body, committee rooms, an assembly hall for 300, and a library of historical and contemporary pharmaceutical works.

Though it seems to make an unwelcome contrast with the neighbourhood of old Lambeth, the Pharmaceutical Society building contains some fascinating relics of the local pottery industry. Several of these are on show in the entrance hall, and may be viewed on request. There is a fine collection of English Delft drug jars dating from 1675-1725 and a separate display of examples made in Lambeth.

It is interesting to speculate that perhaps not only the jars but also some of the drugs used in those times may have been prepared in one of the three Lambeth windmills. The Lambeth Drug Mill stood in Gray's Walk, roughly where the Ethelred Street estate now lies, to the north of Black Prince Road. Although the association of this windmill with the Apothecaries Company has now been disproved, it is certain that the mill was in the tenancy, up to about 1790, of persons carrying on the trade of druggist and apothecary.

