



The SBNS Autumn 2024 meeting was held at Twickenham Rugby Stadium, famed for hosting world cup matches. It can now add hosting one of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons' most successful conferences.

Day 1 - As this is a sports venue, we thought it appropriate to open the conference with a Trauma Day. This was organised by the British Neurotrauma Group and our hosts at St. George's Hospital in London. The day was led by Prof. Mark Wilson OBE and Fay Greenway. Throughout the day they had an array of highly acclaimed international and UK based speakers covering all aspects of trauma induced conditions, with topics such as *Pathophysiology and patterns of blast brain injury from Iraq and Afghanistan* and *mTBI in Motorsport; tools for trackside and outpatient assessments* and of course injury through playing sports such as rugby! There were also talks on the best ways to treat these injuries, rehabilitation and the current research being carried out.

Speakers included: Shelly Timmons, Lieutenant Emily Ashworth, Peter Hutchinson, Naomi Deaki, David Sharp, Antonio Belli, Adel Helmy, Nigel Mendoza, Mario Ganau, Tim Lawrence, Collette Griffin & Harry Mee.

Day 2 - The trauma theme continued at the start of the main meeting with a lifelong learning session on spinal cord injury. This included talks on surgical management, anaesthetic considerations, and the role of successful rehabilitation in optimising outcomes. There was also a moving talk by a patient who has made a remarkable recovery after a serious spinal injury.

The opening guest lecture was delivered by Henry Marsh MBE, a retired Consultant Neurosurgeon and world-famous novelist. He spoke about his 40-year career at Atkinson Morley Hospital which later became St. Georges.

This was followed by a “Hot Topic” session which covered a wide range of topics: the SBNS National Audit Programme, rugby concussion injuries and the SBNS Support line. The Support Line is a new service which the SBNS provides for our members who may be going through a difficult time either at work or in their private lives. The welfare of our members is very important to the Society. Neurosurgery, as we all know is not an easy profession to work in.

This was followed by Spine and Paediatric academic sessions, with plenary talks from Mr Michael Hutton on development of a national CES pathway, and Professor Mallucci on achieving the balance between clinical and academic paediatric neurosurgery.

Free paper Spine topics ranged from prevention of intra-operative spinal cord injury to the long-lasting effects of COVID-19 on spinal casemix. Paediatric free papers included the yield of minimally invasive brain biopsy, and utility of intraoperative MRI. Then followed a short oral session on mixed neurosurgical topics.

The day ended with a Welcome Reception in the Stadium’s Museum followed by a BBQ by the pitch. Thankfully the British weather was kind and the rain held off. This was a great opportunity for our guest speakers, friends, colleagues, and sponsors to get to know each other and network.

Day 3 – Kicked off with a Breakfast Seminar sponsored by Medtronic on Advances in the Neurosurgical Management of Epilepsy.



This was followed by a session on the SBNS Global Neurosurgery Initiative. The SBNS is very passionate about this project and is working closely with the Royal College of Surgeons and the London School of Economics to see how we can help neurosurgeons in LMICs with training, equipment and exchange programmes. Mubashir Mahmood Qureshi (neurosurgeon from Kenya) gave an excellent talk on: *Developing Neurosurgery in LMIC regions: The Treat, Equip and Train Model to address the need* and Richard Ashpole from the UK spoke about Simulation training and the global possibilities.

Professor Shelly Timmons from the USA delivered the Sir Geoffrey Jefferson Lecture on *Decompressive Surgery for Traumatic Brain Injury*, and Jonathan Shapey, a clinical lecturer and honorary consultant at King’s College London who was recently awarded the RCS Hunterian Medal, delivered a fascinating Hunterian Lecture on *Artificial Intelligence driven hyperspectral imaging for intraoperative neurosurgical guidance*.

The rest of the day was filled with abstract presentations on a variety of neurosurgical topics and each session was headed by a plenary talk. Throughout the meeting, we were very fortunate to have renowned speakers

from all over the globe: Prof Kostiantyn Kostiuik & Andrii Sirko - Ukraine, Debora Garozzo - Dubai, David Baskin, Richard Winn and Gavin Britz - USA, and from the UK, Peter Hutchinson, Connor Mallucci & Keyoumars Ashkan.

The highlights of day 3 were Prof Kostiuik's talk on the challenges of stereotactic neurosurgery in Ukraine, and Dr Ross Paterson's plenary on stable isotope kinetics in CSF turnover for Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus. There were also exciting Neurovascular presentations on Novel consideration of poor outcomes in SAH, a Haptoglobin expert consensus, and an assisted listening device for hearing loss following SAH.

The functional and teaching/training section also included highly novel talks such as "*Can ChatGPT Outperform Neurosurgical Trainees?*", and the Hugh Cairns essay prize talk by Kanza Tariq, on the "*Impact of global warming on brain temperature*".

Day 4 – Began with a breakfast seminar on "*Optimising Visualisation AND ergonomics – wishful thinking?*" Sponsored by Zeiss and delivered by Jane Halliday.

This was followed by a session on Human Factors with interesting talks by a wide range of specialists in this field, including surgeons, a former army leader and a performance coach. They spoke on how to work within a team, cognitive style and the science behind improving your presentations. How we behave and interact with our colleagues can have a huge impact on everyone's performance and wellbeing, and who doesn't need some help with improving their presentations? This session was one of the most talked about of the conference.

Day 4 highlights included the Peripheral Nerve section, with the plenary talk delivered by Debora Garozzo, consultant neurosurgeon from Dubai, on the opportunities for neurosurgeons in peripheral nerve surgery; and Professor Sirko described the Dnipro experience of modern penetrating brain injuries in the Trauma session. Other engrossing presentations on day 4 included Oncomagnetic therapy for Glioblastoma, machine learning to predict Chronic Subdural Haematoma outcomes, and using biohybrid regenerative bioelectronics to restore function in amputated peripheral nerves.

The grand finale was the Sir Hugh Cairns Lecture which was delivered by Derek O'Keeffe on the *Rise of AI : The Digital Brain in Healthcare*. It was a fascinating talk, and love it or hate it, AI will soon be present in a lot of areas of our lives in some form or another in the future.



The other most talked about event was the Gala Dinner on Thursday night - held at one of London's most historic sites, Hampton Court Palace. Our guests and delegates shed their day-to-day attire for tuxes and evening gowns and were treated to a banquet fit for the Kings and Queens of Neurosurgery in the most magnificent setting followed by dancing till midnight.

The SBNS thanks everyone who attended and contributed to make the SBNS Autumn conference such a success, both academically and socially, especially our hosts at St. George's Hospital, London.



Preparations are now in full swing for the SBNS Spring meeting which will take place at the ICC Conference Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland. The meeting will be hosted by our colleagues at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. We are also very pleased to announce that the [Societa Italiana di Neurochirurgia](https://www.sinch.it/) (SINch) will be joining us as our invited guests along with the British Neuro Vascular Group. To find out more about the meeting and to submit an abstract please visit the Edinburgh 2024 conference page on the SBNS Website. Lines close on the 12 December 2023.

<https://www.sbns.org.uk/index.php/conferences/edinburgh-2024/>

We look forward to welcoming you to the beautiful city of Edinburgh in April.

The SBNS Autumn meeting will be held in Birmingham, UK 24 September 2024:



In October 2026 the Society of British Neurological Surgeons will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary and we would like to extend a warm invitation to our fellow neurosurgical colleagues from around the world to join us, especially if you have either trained in the UK or have some affiliation with a Neurosurgical Unit in the UK. This will not just be a celebration of the formation of our Society, but also of the journey Neurosurgery has taken over the past century including the related neurosciences. Mark your diaries and we look forward to welcoming you to our capital city in 2026.

SBNS Meetings Committee