I embarked an academic trip with the help of the Travelling Scholarship that the University of Leicester provided me to explore the central northern section of Hungary, more specifically Budapest. In this report I will demonstrate how this Travelling Scholarship allowed me to successfully carry out my aims of scientific research of past medical Hungarian professionals which helped shaped the current capital city Budapest.

My trip to Budapest began when I flew out with EasyJet on the evening of 23rd September 2017 and lasted for 4 consecutive days (23/09/17-26/09/17). Upon arrival, I checked in at the Senator Apartments Hotel located in the heart of the city centre (1061 Budapest, Király utca). The reason why I choose this hotel was that it was in close approximation to all the museums/buildings that I believed would allow me to complete my aims for this project. However, I still required the use of the local public transport to get from one building to the next. By using the Hungarian public transport such as trams and buses I was able to see more scientific/cultural buildings within a day then if I was to walk from one to the next. The following paragraphs will consequently detail the methods of investigations employed within my stay in Budapest and to what extent have they allowed me to achieve my scientific aims.

Throughout my visits to these trips listed, my method of understanding what each one entails involved reading the displays provided, asking members of stuff or paying for a guided tour around the exhibitions. The first building that I investigated was the Sziklakórház Atombunker Múzeum translated in English: ‘Hospital in the Rock Nuclear Bunker Museum.’ This museum is situated underneath the Buda Castle, as shown in Figure 1. By undertaking a guided tour, I was able to understand the importance of not only the architecture of the makeshift emergency hospital during World War 2 and then during the 1956 Revolution but also the important impact medical professionals had on ensuring the survival of the soldiers. The hospital which was opened in 1944 was built with multiple corridors which lead to a common passageway that lead ultimately to St. John’s hospital. This allowed the doctors and nurses to receive fresh food, water and medical supplies, seen in Figure 2. Its importance to Budapest history during World War 2 was that the Red Cross marked this hospital a safe zone for any soldiers to come and receive medical aid. This meant that both the opposition and Hungarian soldiers who were injured could be accommodated within the hospital without the fear of being killed. However, this hospital was originally only meant to serve maximum 60 soldiers, but as the war and the 1956 Revolution began to intensify the patients that were treated rose up to approximately 300. As a result, from
understanding what the tour guide leader said about the history and the exhibition within museum (i.e. rooms and hallways being filled, beds, supplies, operation rooms and apparatuses) was that the medical stuff were consistently being over worked to provide enough care to ensure no fatalities. Therefore, by going and learning about the importance of the medical staff and the Hospital of the Rock, it has allowed me to successfully understand the significance of both doctors and nurses in providing basic medical treatment, ultimately reducing the number of fatalities during both wars. By doing so, it has allowed many thousands of Hungarian soldiers to regain their health and help to reshape and redevelop Budapest to how it is now, post-war.

The second museum exhibition that I went to was the Golden Eagle Pharmacy Museum, shown in Figure 3. This museum is located near to the Hospital of Rock, thus within the Buda Castle. The Golden Eagle Pharmacy was according to the owner of the museum was the first professional pharmacy in Buda in the 1730s-1750s. The building and its functional purpose successfully survived many turmoil’s endured in the Buda Castle battles, such as World War 2 and then the Soviet battle. This museum illustrated an exact pharmacist laboratory that was used during the 1730’s-1750s. It displayed a combination of herbs, dried animals, alcohols that was used by the 18th century society to treat illness. Thus, by examining how the very first pharmacist looked and what medicines was used during this era, it has allowed me to effectively understand how this provided the basic grounds of medicine practices which would ultimately lead to hundreds of pharmacists located around Budapest today. Nonetheless, it also taught me how medicine has evolved from herbal drugs primarily used in the 18th century Hungary to now more modern synthetic drugs. In this Museum, however I was not allowed to take photographs of the medical equipment used within in the pharmacy, instead I was allowed to take a picture of the general museum illustrated in Figure 4.
The third museum exhibition that I visited on the third day of my trip to Budapest is the Hungarian National Museum located in Kerület, shown in Figure 5. Within this museum I was able to learn how Hungarian scientific scriptures gained ground with the increased acceptance of the Hungarian language, instead of Latin during the 18th century. This was because scientists found it increasingly difficult to express the new scientific phenomena of a changing world in a Latin as it was considered to be a ‘dead language.’ However, it became difficult to express the new Hungarian language when the citizens of Hungary were used to Latin. Therefore, Ferenc Kazinczy and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences lead a language renewal movement which involved listing: linguistic norms, compilation of spelling rules and a Hungarian dictionary. As a result of this, Hungarian gradually gained ground in scientific life of Hungary, competing with German, via publishing science journals, seen in Figure 6. Hungarian became the official language of state life in 1844. By reading about the changes that occurred with regards to Hungary during the 18th century, has allowed me to learn how it was important that communication of scientific language needed to be changed for scientific work to blossom. Thus, allowing more successful science knowledge to be spread and taught to the Hungarian people and to some extent Europe. The rest of the Hungarian National Museum tour I got a chance to learn more about the impact communism and the Soviet Union had on the Hungarian society.
Aside from these museums that I had visited, I got a chance to experience some Hungarian culture. For example, I explored the architecture of Hungarian famous buildings such as the Hungarian Statue of Liberty, Matthias Church, Dohány Street Synagogue and the Parliament building, illustrated in Figure 7. It was interesting to learn and see how the architects who designed these buildings were extremely fascinated with specific details of the buildings, ranging from the colour schemes, angles of the domes/windows and the structure of these buildings. Nonetheless, I also got to experience one of the main Hungarian cultures: the public baths. I got to visit and try out the many public baths that were present in Széchenyi Thermal Bath. By doing so it allowed me to see how these baths were crucial in keeping Hungarian citizens clean during Hungary’s history.

To conclude, my trip to Budapest was a successful trip with regards to fulfilling my aims and objectives of my scientific project. It allowed me to see how important medical professionals and scientists were in Hungarian history in shaping a successful nation it is today. Nevertheless, it allowed me to understand and get a grasp of how important science was in educating nations but how it saved numerous individuals during harsh conditions. This trip has given me an appreciation of the ‘unsung scientists’ of Hungary and how their dedication to science was crucial during times of war and during the Revolution. I intend to use this knowledge when faced with tasks during my final year at university. Finally, Figure 8 shows the postcard I purchased during my last day in Budapest. I would like
to thank the University of Leicester for providing me with the Travelling Scholarship, which allowed me to undertake this trip.