World Anaesthesia Day

This week sees anaesthetists marking World Anaesthesia Day, a date that commemorates the first successful demonstration of ether anaesthesia on October 16, 1846.

One of the most significant events and developments in medical history, the demonstration took place at the Massachusetts General Hospital, the home of the Harvard School of Medicine. This first recorded use was shown by American dentist William T. G. Morton. He demonstrated how ether inhalation could be used for painless surgical treatment.

Use of a general anaesthetic was first performed by surgeon and pharmacist Crawford W. Long in 1842 but he did not publish his findings with ether until 1849.

The discovery paved the way for a revolution in surgical procedures with patients getting the benefits of an operation without pain.

On Friday, October 16, anaesthetist bodies and training schools will commemorate the day in different ways. The Royal College of Anaesthetists in the UK where anaesthesia is the largest single NHS hospital specialty, mark the day with a collection of articles in the profession's journal and web podcasts.

Source and image credit: [Royal College of Anaethesists](#)

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