

## Smoking Ears and Screaming Teeth: A Celebration of Scientific Eccentricity and Self-Experimentation

Trevor Norton



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### A witty celebration of the great eccentrics who have performed dangerous experiments on themselves for the benefit of humankind.

Many scientists have followed the advice of the great Victorian doctor Jack Haldane to "never experiment on an animal if a man will do" and "never ask anyone to do anything you wouldn't do yourself." He and his father inhaled poisonous gases to test the efficacy of the prototype gas mask they had invented. While breathing gases under pressure, he suffered the smoking ears and screaming teeth of the title.

The stories in Norton's new book are astonishing, disturbing or absurd. The zoologist Frank Buckland made a concentrated effort to widen the nation's diet by personally testing everything that crossed his path, from boiled elephant's trunk to slug soup. Some medics deliberately contracted deadly blood diseases in the hope of finding cures. Then there was the surgeon who was fired and subsequently won the Nobel Prize for thrusting a catheter into his own beating heart.

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