

News, Notes and Queries

THE EDINBURGH PATHOLOGICAL CLUB

(Founded 1886)

by

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THE following is a brief account of the history of this Club, compiled from information contained in large Minute Books, beautifully kept throughout the 78 years of the Club's existence.

The first member to be mentioned is, of course, *Sir John Batty Tuke*, who founded the Club at a dinner party in his house on 22 July, 1886. Batty Tuke, who was knighted in 1898 when he was President of the Royal College of Physicians, was born at Beverley in Yorkshire in 1835, and graduated M.D. of Edinburgh in 1856. He spent the next six years in New Zealand, where he was involved in the Maori War, and on his return he became associated with Dr. David Skae at the Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum, as it was then called, besides conducting a private mental hospital of his own, and pursuing the researches on the brain for which he became famous. In 1874 he was Morison Lecturer at the Royal College of Physicians, and for 25 years he represented the College on the General Medical Council. He was also Member of Parliament for Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities for a period of 10 years.

At a Meeting of the Royal College of Physicians on 4 February 1885, Batty Tuke moved that the College should found a Laboratory for original research. At first opinions differed, but the project was reconsidered and approved two years later, and the laboratory began work in Lauriston Lane, and later in Forrest Road, where the Royal College of Surgeons joined the sister College in the effort, in 1895. The first scheme of research, undertaken at the request of the Fishery Board, concerned the life-history of the salmon. Obviously the laboratory was determined to cast its net wide.

I mention the laboratory at this point, because its fortunes were closely linked with those of the Pathological Club. Batty Tuke, as Chairman of the laboratory committee, was called the 'Curator', a position which he held for twenty-five years. There were also seven 'Superintendents' of the laboratory between 1887 and 1950, and three of them, Sims Woodhead, Noel Paton, R. Cranston Low, became, as I shall presently explain, Secretaries of the Club.

* Contributed to a meeting of the Club on 28 October 1964.

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SUPERINTENDENTS
of the
ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS LABORATORY

G. Sims Woodhead	1887–1890
D. Noel Paton	..	..	..	..	..	1890–1906
James Ritchie	..	..	..	..	..	1906–1920
A. G. McKendrick	..	..	..	..	..	1920–1941
W. F. Harvey	..	..	..	..	..	1941–1944
R. Cranston Low	..	..	..	..	..	1945–1949
John Ritchie	..	..	..	..	..	1949–1950

The history of the laboratory was written in 1953 by the last superintendent, Dr. John Ritchie; not to be confused with Dr. James Ritchie, an earlier superintendent who became professor of bacteriology.

In addition to founding the laboratory, Batty Tuke had a second scheme in view. On 22 July 1886, he invited a number of his friends to a dinner-party at his house, Balgreen, Murrayfield, at which the Edinburgh Pathological Club was duly founded. The guests, 15 in number, included such well-known figures of the Edinburgh Medical School as Sims Woodhead, Noel Paton, Barry Hart, Alexander Bruce, Freeland Barbour, George Gibson and Peter McBride. Not present at the dinner, but invited to join later, were Bramwell, Greenfield, Wyllie, Caird, Cathcart, Philip, and others.

The number was to be limited to twenty-five, and the Club, which, be it noted, was not to be a society, would meet once a month with the object of 'discussing subjects connected with pathology'.

In spite of its name, the Pathological Club has been largely concerned with matters not strictly pathological. Indeed, only two of the original members, Sims Woodhead and Greenfield, were pathologists in the narrow sense of the term, and Greenfield, although he was professor of pathology, also taught clinical medicine and was physician to the Royal Infirmary. At that time it was not unusual to combine pathology with medicine. Grainger Stewart, John Wyllie and William Russell were all lecturers on pathology in the Extra-Mural School before they became physicians. Among the original members of the Club there were 9 physicians, 4 surgeons and 3 'psychiatrists' (as we would now call them), and there were also 2 gynaecologists, 1 anatomist, 1 physiologist, 1 ophthalmologist and 1 laryngologist.

The essential object of the Club was to discuss short papers and many a new idea was first ventilated in this Club before it became the topic of a printed paper. Indeed, the papers read to the Club were not intended for the press, although many were rewritten and published after the original skeleton had been brought to life by open discussion. Those who founded the Club in a rapidly-growing atmosphere of specialism soon realised that, while it was essential to know as much as possible about one's own branch of medical learning, it was equally important to listen to the opinions and criticism of workers in other fields.

No seminar or staff-meeting, which focuses attention only upon the current problems and researches of a single university department, can ever take the place of a Club such as this, which enlists the co-operation of those engaged in almost every branch

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of medicine and surgery, and which regards pathology, not as a specialty, but as the basis of all medical knowledge.

The Annual Subscription was at first five shillings. The Chair was to be taken by the third person entering the room. I need not repeat the 28 laws, which have been revised and altered from time to time. Law No. 13 stated that 'no communication shall occupy more than half an hour'. One excellent law is still observed—namely, there was to be only one office-bearer, the secretary.

Throughout its existence, the Club has been most fortunate in having had a series of ideal secretaries; fifteen in number up to the present time.

SECRETARIES OF THE EDINBURGH PATHOLOGICAL CLUB

<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>No. of years in office</i>
1. G. Sims Woodhead	1886–1890	4
2. Alexander Bruce	1890–1892	2
3. D. Noel Paton	1892–1895	3
4. Robert Muir	1895–1898	3
5. J. C. Dunlop	1898–1904	6
6. T. Shennan	1904–1910	6
7. R. Cranston Low	1910–1913	3
8. A. M. Drennan	1913–1915	2
9. H. M. Traquair	1915–1920	5
10. W. R. Logan	1920–1921	1
11. W. A. Alexander	1921–1924	3
12. Whitridge Davies	1924–1926	2
13. James Davidson	1926–1934	8
14. C. P. Stewart	1934–1949	15
15. R. F. Ogilvie	1949–1964	15

The first Secretary was *G. Sims Woodhead* who, born in 1855, was 20 years younger than Batty Tuke, but both were of Yorkshire Quaker stock. Sims Woodhead graduated at Edinburgh in 1878 and became assistant to Professor Greenfield. A year after his appointment as the first Secretary of this Club, he was also appointed the first of the seven Superintendents of the Royal College of Physicians laboratory, a post which he held until he was elected professor of pathology at Cambridge in 1890. He was the founder, and first Editor, of the *Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology*. A man of wide interests and great personal charm, Sims Woodhead was a kind friend to everyone, and well deserved the honour of K.B.E., for his war services, in 1919. He died in 1921.

When Sims Woodhead went to be professor at Cambridge, he was succeeded by *Alexander Bruce*, the well-known physician and neurologist, the father of our own Dr. Ninian Bruce. I was a student in Bruce's extra-mural class of medicine and I can remember how he included in his lectures a description of the various health resorts which were greatly favoured at that day.

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Alexander Bruce was a man of brilliant intellect and wide interests. Born in Aberdeen in 1854, he studied medicine in Edinburgh after taking an arts degree in Aberdeen. He was Ettles Scholar of his year, and later his researches in neurology won for him the Keith Prize of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Cullen Prize of the Royal College of Physicians.

In his time, Dr. Bruce contributed to the Club no less than 19 papers, a record only equalled by Professor Gulland who also had 19 papers to his credit, and only exceeded by Noel Paton, professor of physiology at Glasgow, who reached a total of 22 papers, dealing mainly with the physiology of digestion.

It would serve no useful purpose to list in detail the titles of the numerous papers contributed to the Club. They covered a very wide range of subjects and dealt with such topics as: the life-history of red blood corpuscles, fat metabolism in muscular exercise, scabies in laboratory animals, fur dermatitis, hypnotism, rat-bite fever, louping ill in sheep, ear injuries in fracture of the skull, and speech disorders in childhood. In November 1914 Dr. John Tait and Miss Macnaughton gave a demonstration on the injection of inert substances into the blood stream, and the minutes mention that 'this is the first occasion on which a lady has given a communication to the Club'.

Meetings were continued during World War I, and I can well remember Professor Lorrain Smith's experiments with Eusol (Edinburgh University Solution), and how he and Professor J. S. Haldane tested the early form of gas-mask, by breathing chlorine gas through charcoal-filled masks, though I can find no record of these war efforts in the Minutes. Towards the close of the war, the Club sprang to new life, with a series of eight meetings devoted to child welfare in its various aspects. The success of this symposium seems to have stimulated the Club to devote the following winter session 1917-18 to a series of twelve discussions on 'The better education of medical students', led by the professors of each subject; Bayley Balfour on botany, Cossar Ewart on zoology, Waterston and Robinson on anatomy, Schafer and Haldane on physiology. A special feature of the series was a meeting in May 1918 dealing with 'School education in relation to the study of medicine' addressed by the headmasters of two boys' schools, Watson's and Merchiston, and the headmistress of a girls' school.

This was by no means the only contribution made by the Club to the subject of medical education. At two special meetings in July 1908, the subject had been fully discussed and a committee had been appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. James Ritchie to consider the whole question. Two reports were printed in 1909 for private circulation. Many of the suggestions made by the reports have been adopted, and there is no doubt that the Club rendered a most valuable service to the Edinburgh Medical School, which at that time included the School of Medicine of the Royal Colleges, as well as the University.

In more recent times the Club has again addressed itself to the question of medical education. In January 1955, a letter was received from the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine inviting the Club to discuss and give their opinion of the undergraduate curriculum. The matter was referred to a committee, and the result was a lengthy report for which the Faculty expressed deep appreciation.

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On 26 October 1900, the Club is reported to have held its 100th meeting, which was followed by a dinner in what was then called the New Library of the Royal College of Physicians. Thirty-three members were present, and Sir John Batty Tuke presided.

The 500th meeting was celebrated on 8 December 1954 by a dinner in the Royal College of Surgeons, with an attendance of 92, although it was a very stormy night. Professor Drennan was in the Chair, and Sir Robert Muir was the principal guest. One of the main topics that evening was the Clark Bequest to the 'Edinburgh Pathologist Society', which enabled the Club to found the Clark Lectureship. The Club, which for many years had only a very small income, suddenly became, if not affluent, at least solvent. Dr. A. W. G. Clark of Fauldhouse, West Lothian, left his entire estate of over £5,000 to the Club for 'lectures on cancer'; the first Clark Lecture was given by Professor Alexander Haddow, and the second by Professor Norman Davidson.

The institution of the Clark Lectureship has naturally added to the importance and usefulness of the Edinburgh Pathological Club, which now has a membership of 265.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE IN IRELAND

Section of the History of Medicine

During the 1964–65 session the following papers were read:

Sir William Wilde and the Census of 1851, by Dr. Peter Froggatt (Published in *Med. Hist.*, 1965, 9, 302–327).

George Gabriel Stokes on haemoglobin, by Dr. C. S. Breathnach.

Montgomery and the follicles of the areola as a sign of pregnancy, by Prof. J. B. Fleming.

The Georgian Squares of Dublin and their doctors, by Dr. F. O. Meenan.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Lecture on Linnaeus precedes annual meeting

Dr. Birger Strandell, a member of the faculty of the Caroline Institute, Stockholm, and editor of *Acta Medica Scandinavica*, will lecture on 'Linnaeus' at Rochester, Minnesota, on 10 May, 1966. Dr. Strandell is a direct descendant of Linnaeus and possesses an extensive library of volumes and papers by and about the great botanist, including a superb manuscript collection.

The lecture, sponsored by the Mayo Foundation chapter of Sigma Xi, will be held a day before the opening of the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine. It is hoped that members of the Association planning to attend the 1966 annual meeting (11–14 May, 1966) in Rochester, Minnesota, will plan to come a day early to hear Dr. Strandell.