

Proceedings of the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine

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5. Andrew Little, 'Life and work of Dr. John Henry Bell of Bradford,' *Caledonian med. J.*, 1909, 7: 126–137.
6. John Henry Bell, *A system of medicine*, edited by T. C. Allbutt, London, Macmillan, 1897. Article 'Anthrax', p. 526.
7. John Henry Bell, *Dangerous trades*, edited by Thomas Oliver, London, John Murray, 1902; Article 'Anthrax—its relation to the wool industry', p. 635.
8. F. W. Eurich, 'History of anthrax in the wool industry of Bradford and of its control', *Lancet*, 1926, i: 57.
9. Ministry of Labour, *Report of the committee of inquiry on anthrax*, London, H.M.S.O., 1959, Cmnd 846, p. 84.
10. 'Woolsorters' disease', *Lancet*, 1884, ii: 291.
11. Eurich, op. cit., note 8 above, p. 58.
12. Margaret Bligh, *Dr. Eurich of Bradford*, London, James Clarke, p. 162.
13. Eurich, op. cit., note 8 above, pp. 108–109.
14. Ministry of Labour, op. cit., note 9 above, p. 95.
15. Bligh, op. cit., note 12 above, pp. 170–184, 247–264.

THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH ORDINARY MEETING

The Seventy-Eighth Ordinary Meeting was held at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow on 7 March 1975, when Dr. A. T. Sandison spoke on:

DISEASES IN PRE-CONTACT AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES

The following is a brief note on the substance of Dr. Sandison's paper.

The Australian aborigines probably entered that continent from South Asia at least 20,000 years ago. In isolation from the rest of mankind they developed an intimate relationship with their often harsh environment and a rich culture while their technology remained palaeolithic. A study of large numbers of pre-European contact skeletons showed evidence of congenital anomalies, trauma, including fractures, osteoarthritis, and an apparently geographically determined treponemal disease. Gross dental attrition (but *not* dental caries) was common.

THE SEVENTY-NINTH ORDINARY MEETING

Members and their guests met on 31 May 1975 at the Eight Acres Hotel, Elgin, where, after a reception by the local District Council, followed by lunch, they adjourned for the meeting which was held in the hotel for convenience. Two papers were presented, by Drs. John Gammie and J. C. M. MacDonald respectively. Dr. Gammie spoke on:

THE HISTORY OF ELGIN

This was a delightful, racy account of Elgin from early times. Dr. Gammie drew attention to the many historic buildings in the locality and recalled that it was in the Red Lion Hotel, one of the oldest buildings in Elgin, that Boswell and Samuel

Johnson stayed while passing through the city. Johnson thought it about the worst hotel he had ever been in and that the food was atrocious. But the hotel had a good excuse!

Dr. MacDonald read a paper on:

THE HISTORY OF DR. GRAY'S HOSPITAL, ELGIN

The hospital was conceived in India one hundred and sixty-eight years ago in the dreams and in the homeward longings of an Elgin man, Dr. Alexander Gray, surgeon to the Bengal establishment of the Honourable East India Company, who had fretted and pined for home for ten years before his death in 1807. He was fifty-six years old when he died, bequeathing more than £20,000 to the town of his birth, "for the establishment of a hospital in the town of Elgin for the benefit of the sick of the poor of that town and in the County of Moray." His will is an extraordinary complex, often vituperative document and is, alas, the only relic existing to guide us in understanding the character of Gray.

After a painful period of litigation by the family of the deceased who contested the will bitterly, James Gillespie Graham was chosen as architect by the Committee of Gentlemen whom Gray had appointed to look after the affairs of the hospital. In 1815 the foundation stone was laid, at the same time as the news of Wellington's victory at Waterloo reached Elgin, which event doubled the importance of the celebrations of that day. Great credit must go to the Committee of Gentlemen, Trustees, and later the Governors of the Hospital for the preservation of every minute of transaction since the hospital was first placed upon the drawing board of James Graham. These minutes not only reveal the gradual progress in medical, surgical and psychiatric care that has evolved during the hospital's existence but also disclose a scene of social deprivation, class privilege, personal feuds and religious controversy. In the minutes can be discerned the trials, tribulations and endeavours of the various house surgeons who laboured for the good of the hospital under their seniors, surgeons and physicians in the city and royal burgh.

The fine, flowing longhand of the hospital secretaries of long ago detail the desperate battles against ignorance and disease, including typhoid fever, cholera and smallpox; the valiant attempts of surgeons dealing with tuberculous disease of bone, tertiary syphilis, cancerous abdominal growths only half understood, and the struggles of the nursing staff to maintain hygiene and compassion in days before Pasteur and Lister. The hospital became a focal point in the struggle between town and gown, between council and established kirk. Costly legal battles were pursued in the tussles between the various parties for supremacy, precipitated by magnanimous legacies hedged with conditions made unacceptable by the original will of Alexander Gray.

Despite of and because of the great wordy battles of the nineteenth century, the hospital prospered and was able to play its part during the First World War as a treatment centre in association with the First Scottish General Hospital at Woodend, Aberdeen. In the sweet air of Morayshire the hospital nursed back to health more than 900 casualties.

The history of the hospital in the present century is mainly a history of the growth of specialism, the disappearance of the general practitioner-surgeon, and thus the

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gradual change of Gray's from a general practitioner hospital to a general practitioner specialist one and finally to a consultant general practitioner one. The fine old Georgian building is now part of a complex, including psychiatric, maternity, medical and geriatric wards, which serves a population of upwards of 70,000 and satisfies the aspirations of both consultants and general practitioners who have enjoyed functional integration for more than half a century.

Following the papers the Society and its guests visited the nearby ancient Pluscarden Abbey.

This highly successful first meeting at Elgin brought the session's activities to a close.

C. G. Drummond, *President*. H. P. Tait, *Joint Honorary Secretary*.