

The Origins and Early Years of the Yorkshire Medical and Dental History Society

Bill Mathie, Secretary to the Society, 1991 to 2005.

From time to time I am asked how and why the Society was formed. Since I am no longer a member of the Committee and have retired from my full-time post in the School of Medicine, this seems to be a good opportunity to search my memory, and the Society's records, to write down an account of its origins and early years. However to describe the foundation of the Society in 1991 it is necessary to go back further.

The Origins of the Society

The success of the 150th anniversary of the School of Medicine in 1981 and the publication in 1982 of the History of the Leeds School of Medicine¹ had heightened an awareness of the history of the School. This anniversary had coincided roughly with the move of the School's Administration, the Library, the Pre-clinical Laboratories and Anatomy Dissection Room from their home in Thoresby Place, to the Worsley Building, a rather austere and functional building on the University of Leeds campus.

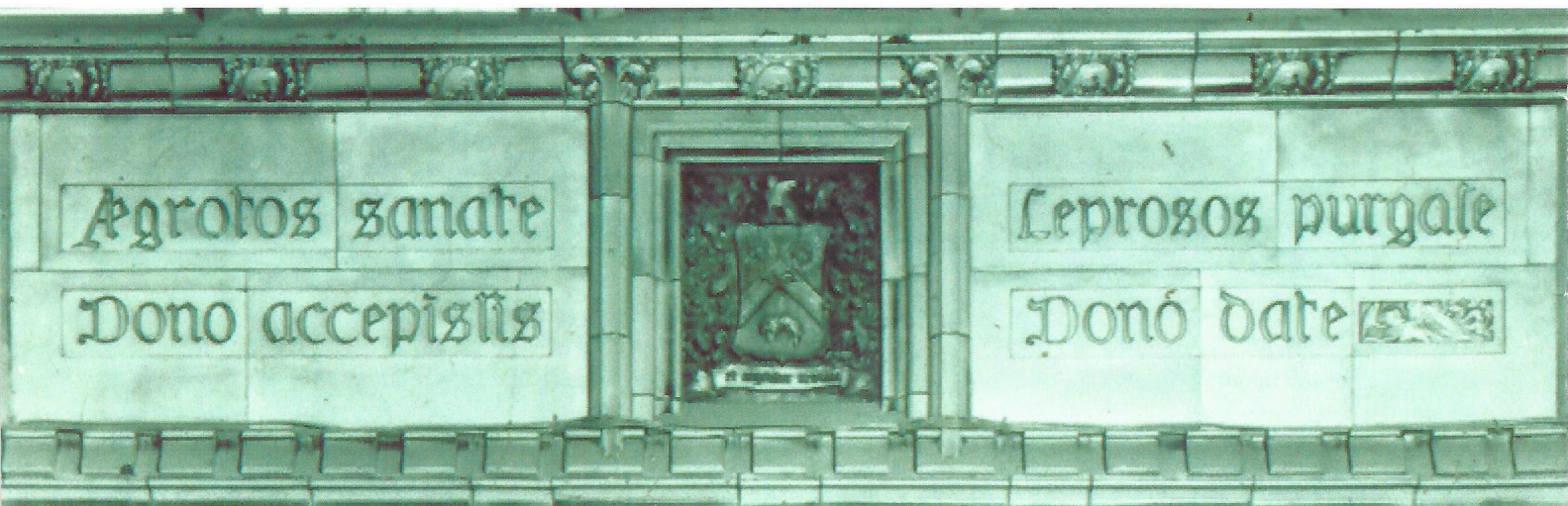
The moves had occurred between 1979 and 1981 and some attempt had been made to illustrate the long history of the School by displaying, in the entrance hall of the new building, a cast of the inscription in the Old Medical School entrance. In addition some items of furniture and portraits were placed in the School Administration and the new Library, but the impact on students, staff and visitors was minimal.

The future of the Old Medical School, which had been purpose built and opened in 1894, was uncertain. In 1987 it had been announced that the previous Medical School building in Park Street was to be demolished the following year to make way for the Leeds Magistrates Courts.

The Park Street School had been another purpose-built School which had opened in 1865 and from 1926 to 1985 had been occupied by Charles F. Thackray Ltd., Surgical Instrument Manufacturers. Would the Old Medical School share a similar fate, despite its listed status? Possibly not, but it galvanised those interested in the history of the School into action.



The Old Medical School



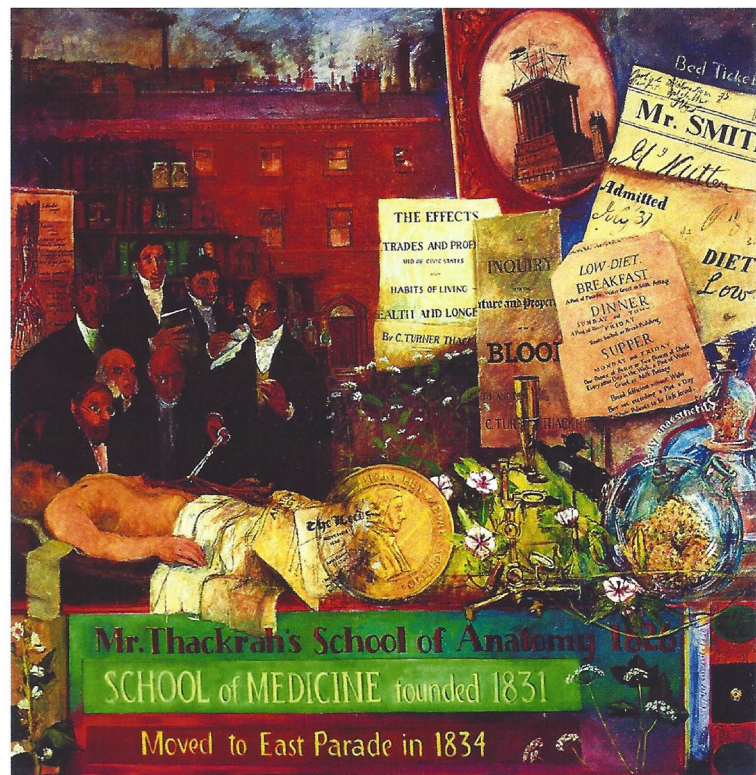
Inscription in the Entrance to the Old Medical School, Thoresby Place, Leeds. 1894 'Aegrotos Sanate, Leprosos Purgate,; Dono Accepistis, Dono Date' Translation- Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers: freely you have received, freely give.

David Wilson, a Leeds alumnus and The Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education for Yorkshire between 1986 and 1992, and Bill Mathie, Secretary to the School of Medicine since 1981, sought ways to make users of the Worsley Building aware of the School's history. During 1987-88 a small group of interested staff considered how best this might be done. A permanent exhibition on the history of the School was one idea explored, but did not gain support due to the lack of a suitable site and the costs of establishment and of long-term maintenance. However, inspired by the work of the Yorkshire Mural Artists Group, active at the time, the idea of commissioning a mural of the School's history gained favour for it would be a one-off project, with minimal long-term costs. And there was a suitable wall in the level 7 student common room in the Worsley Building, named by the students, 'the airport lounge', on account of its utilitarian furnishings.

The proposal for a mural was submitted to the School Executive and then the Faculty. Approval was given, subject to the costs being found by subscription. An appeal was launched and a public commissioning process begun, with a detailed brief of the history of the School being provided. The first submissions made did not meet the brief, but following a re-launching of the brief, the submission by Brian Holmes, a Leeds artist, was successful. He began work in late 1988 in space provided on Level 6 of the Building in the former Media Services Suite. There was an open invitation to sponsors and potential subscribers to view his progress. A year later it had been paid for and finished.

The work in oils, 8 feet high by 24 feet long was unveiled in December 1989, by the University's Pro-Chancellor, Col Alan Roberts. The mural is not a true mural, painted directly on to the wall, but comprises

four painted panels, each depicting a stage in the School's development in relation to the history of medicine in Leeds. There is a mass of detail and in due course, in January 1993, an illustrated 'Guide to the Mural' was published. Being on four panels proved a wise choice for ten years later it was to be moved a short distance into the adjacent Health Sciences Library.



(Above) The first (of four) panels of the Medical School Mural. Artist; Brian Holmes, 1989

The Foundation of the Society, 1991

Meanwhile some of the individual subscribers to the mural (almost 100 members of NHS and University staff, students and alumni) had expressed an interest in a forum for medical history. Amongst them was Dr Michael Waugh, Consultant in Genito-Urinary Medicine at the General Infirmary at Leeds, whom the Society of Apothecaries had appointed as a Lecturer in The History of Medicine. He agreed that his forthcoming public lecture in this role could be used to promote the formation of a local Society.

So on 12 March 1991 an Open Lecture at the Infirmary given by Dr Waugh on the History of Sexually Transmitted Diseases was followed by a discussion on the formation of a Leeds Medical and Dental History Society.

The attendance was good and the response positive and a small working group was established. The group comprised Dr John Beal, Consultant in Dental Public Health and District Dental Officer in Leeds Western and Leeds Eastern Health Authorities, Dr Ted Renvoize, Public Health Physician at the General Infirmary at Leeds, Dr Michael Waugh, Mr Paul Thackray of the Charles F Thackray Company, whose Medical Museum was then at Viaduct Road, Kirkstall, Leeds, Mr Paul Weiss a Leeds Medical Student and Mr Bill Mathie.

Shortly after this Mrs Ann Collins, Sub-Librarian of the Medical and Dental Library at the School of Medicine joined the working group, now renamed Steering Group, and during the summer of 1991 meetings were held to organise a programme and draft a constitution. At the very first the Steering Group decided to replace Leeds with Yorkshire in its title and its title became abbreviated to YMDHS.

The Group organised a lecture programme for the period October 1991 to December 1992 with the aim of establishing itself and attracting membership for the 1992 calendar year. The first, in October 1991, was given by David Wilson on The History of Medical Education in Leeds in October and the second, the following month, was given by Professor Michael Green entitled 'And this is the second cleverest - Lord Moynihan, Baron of Leeds'.

In January 1992, the first Newsletter of the society was able to report that after these two well attended and stimulating lectures, 70 had joined the Society, each paying a subscription of £10. The first Newsletter, just a simple two sided A4 sheet, 'looked forward to the support of the subscribers for many years to come.'

YORKSHIRE
MEDICAL AND DENTAL
HISTORY SOCIETY
Open Inaugural Lecture

The History of Medical Education in Leeds

David H. Wilson MBChB (Leeds), FRCS, FRCSEd,
DTM&H
Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education

7.30 pm
Tuesday 8 October 1991
Medical Lecture Theatre
Level 7, Worsley Medical and Dental Building
University of Leeds

YORKSHIRE
MEDICAL AND DENTAL
HISTORY SOCIETY
Lecture

'And this is the second cleverest' - Lord Moynihan, Baron of Leeds

Michael A. Green
Professor of Forensic Pathology
University of Sheffield

Wednesday 20 November 1991
7.30 pm

Medical Lecture Theatre
Level 7, Worsley Medical and Dental Building
University of Leeds

*Accompanying Exhibition
Medical Library Foyer* *All Welcome*

Posters of the first two YMDHS events in autumn 1991- the mauve colour was to become the colour used in all subsequent posters issued by the society.

YMDHS Programmes and Meetings

The first year's programme in 1992 of six approximately bi-monthly meetings with an AGM in October, established a pattern has been largely followed ever since. The programme in this inaugural year comprised the following;

Dr J Dunlop (Director of Public Health, Hull) on Midwifery Ancient and Modern

Dr H Bird (Consultant Rheumatologist, Leeds) and Mr Malcolm Neesam on Medical Aspects of Spa Treatment in Europe and UK

Mrs Sylvia Barnard (Friends of Beckett St Cemetery) on the Social History of the Cemetery

Dr Anne Young (Dental Surgeon) on Blood Letting

Dr C Olby (Reader in the History of Science, University of Leeds) on Diathesis, Constitution and Human Heredity

Dr AJNW Prag (Keeper of Archaeology, Manchester Museum) on Reconstructing Historic Heads

The events took place in the evenings in different locations. In this first year, lectures were held in St James's and the LGI in Leeds, The Dental School and The Medical School in Leeds and also in Harrogate (Spa Treatment). The programme in its first few years always had at least one meeting outside Leeds in order to reflect the Yorkshire base of the Society in its title, but this practice ceased over time. The AGM was held at the Thackray Medical Museum and the Society was privileged to have on this occasion a pre-opening tour of the Museum on the first of its two temporary sites at St James's.

The Society was very fortunate in its early years in that the two Leeds hospitals, the Medical and Dental Schools and the Medical Library have always been generous hosts, without whose support the Society would have had difficulties in its early days. Likewise the Institutions outside Leeds that have hosted meetings have been equally supportive. Over the next few years The York Medical Society in its distinguished rooms off Stonegate, and the Infirmaries at Huddersfield, Halifax and Bradford and Stanley Royd Hospital in Wakefield have all been welcoming hosts for our events, often supported by the local Postgraduate Education department. During the mid-1990s attendance at lectures qualified for Continuing Professional Development credits for doctors so entitled. Occasional collaboration with local Medico-Chirurgical Societies and the Leeds Medico-Legal Society has also been successful. From time to time the Society has hosted special lectures and events such as in 1994 on the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Old Medical School or student events in conjunction with the regional committee of The Royal Society of Medicine.

The Society

The Yorkshire Medical and Dental History Society was set up in Autumn 1991 'to encourage the advancement of knowledge of the history of medicine and dentistry within its membership and the community.'

Officers

Chairman: Dr F.J. Beal
Secretary & Treasurer: Mr W.K. Mathie

Elected Committee Members:
Dr. L. Parapia, Dr E. Renvoizis, Mr. M.J. Cooper, Mr S. Wilson.

Co-opted Committee Members:
Mrs A.M. Collins, Mr C.P. Thackray, Dr C. Toothill.


Correspondence to:
Mr W.K. Mathie,
Secretary to the School of Medicine,
University of Leeds,
Leeds, LS2 9JT
Tel. (0113) 233 4363 Fax. (0113) 233 4373

Membership Enquiries to:
Membership Secretary
c/o Thackray Medical Museum
131 Beckett Street
Leeds, LS9 7LP
Tel. (0113) 244 4343 Fax. (0113) 247 0219

YORKSHIRE

MEDICAL AND DENTAL

HISTORY SOCIETY



Programme and Membership Card 1995

Name: Mr. W.K. Mathie
Membership Number: 2

PROGRAMME 1995

Thursday 19 January
The Early History of the Leeds Dental School
Mr Alan Stanley, General Dental Practitioner and Postgraduate Research Student in Dental History, University of Leeds.
Venue: Forte Crest Hotel, Bramhope, 8.15 p.m. (Joint Meeting with BDA Leeds and District Section) Members only.

Tuesday 7 February
The Making of Man-Midwifery, Childbirth in England, 1660 to 1770
Mr Adrian Wilson, Wellcome Research Lecturer in the History of Medicine, University of Leeds

Wednesday 22 February
Visit to Psychiatric Museum, Stanley Royd Hospital, Wakefield, 6.30 p.m. Members only.

Tuesday 21 March
The Discovery of Insulin
Professor Rhys Williams, Nuffield Institute for Health, University of Leeds

Tuesday 16 May
The Heliotic Controversy - An Historical Perspective
Mr Ian Rothwell, Consultant in Clinical Oncology, Cookridge Hospital, Leeds

Wednesday 14 June
The Leeds Mummy
Dr E. Tapp, Home Office Pathologist for Lancashire and Cumbria
Venue: Leeds City Museum, The Headrow, Leeds

Tuesday 19 September
The Work of Henry Shucksmith, Surgeon
Mr Geoffrey Bunch, Consultant Surgeon, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Venue: Huddersfield R.I., Postgraduate Medical Education Centre

Tuesday 24 October
Annual General Meeting and Members' Short Papers
Venue: Medical Lecture Theatre, Clinical Sciences Building, St James's University Hospital.

Tuesday 7 November
The Life and Work of Charles Turner Thackrah 1795-1833
Mr Steven Burt, Chairman of the Thorsley Society
Venue: Medical Lecture Theatre, Worsley Medical and Dental Building, University of Leeds

Meetings are open to all interested persons except those of Thursday 19 January and 22 February.

All meetings commence at 7.30 p.m. and are preceded by light refreshments at 7.00 p.m. Venue is Conference Room, Level 7 Worsley Medical and Dental Building, University of Leeds, unless shown otherwise. The Worsley Medical and Dental Building is on Clarendon Way. Enquiries about the activities of the Society should be addressed to Mr W.K. Mathie, Secretary to the School of Medicine, University of Leeds, LS2 9JT and about membership to Mr M. Cooper, The Thackray Medical Museum, 131 Beckett Street, Leeds LS9 7LP

The Society

The Yorkshire Medical and Dental History Society was set up in 1991 'to encourage the advancement of knowledge of the history of medicine and dentistry within its membership and the community.'

Hon. President
Mr C.P. Thackray

Officers

Chairman: Dr. L. Parapia
Secretary & Treasurer: Mr. W.K. Mathie
Membership Secretary: Mr. M.J. Cooper

Elected Committee Members:
Dr. J.F. Beal, Dr. I.H. Cameron, Mr. C. Toothill

Co-opted Committee Member: Dr. H.V. Wyatt


Correspondence to:
Mr W.K. Mathie
Secretary to the School of Medicine
University of Leeds,
Leeds LS2 9JT

Membership Enquiries to:
Mr. M.J. Cooper, Membership Secretary
c/o Thackray Medical Museum
Beckett Street
Leeds LS9 7LN

YORKSHIRE

MEDICAL AND DENTAL

HISTORY SOCIETY



Programme and Membership Card 1999

PROGRAMME 1999

Lectures take place, unless stated otherwise, at 7.30pm at the Thackray Medical Museum, Beckett Street, Leeds (adjacent to St. James's Hospital and well signed). Car parking is available. The Museum is open until 10pm when meetings take place there.

Tuesday 23rd March
The Holiday of Home Medicine, Dr Layitka Swinburne, Leeds

Tuesday 20th April
The History of Obstetric Forceps, Mr John Phillips, Bradford
Yorkshire Clinic, Bingley

Thursday 20th May
How to make a Maltese cross: the story of Malta Fever and Sir Theroastokles Zanniti, Dr Vivian Wyatt, Leeds

June (date to be confirmed)
Famous Irish Physicians, Dr Brian Lalor, Halifax
Halifax General Hospital

Wednesday 7th July
Return of the Cancer Germ, Dr Milton Wainwright, Sheffield

8th - 11th September
18th Congress of the British Society for the History of Medicine, Bodington Hall, University of Leeds
See separate notice below

Wednesday 20th October
Annual General Meeting

November
To be arranged

18th Congress of the British Society for the History of Medicine 8 - 11 September 1999

The Congress is being organised by the Society in conjunction with the Thackray Medical Museum, Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society and the Yorkshire branch of the Society of Occupational Medicine.

The main theme of the Congress is Occupational Medicine as the society wishes to build on the industrial heritage of West Yorkshire and the fact that Charles Turner Thackrah, the founder of the discipline, was born and practised on Leeds. However topics on all aspects of the History of Medicine and Dentistry will be included in the programme and contributions from our own members will be particularly welcomed.

Enquiries about meetings should be made to either:
Mr. Bill Mathie tel: 0113 233 4363
or
Mr. Mike Cooper tel: 0113 244 4343

For up-to-date information of the Society's activities see our web pages at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ymdhs>

The link with the Museum from the early days has been extraordinarily significant. Paul Thackray's membership of the Steering Group was at a time when he was establishing his own Museum. In 1991 it was still in a warehouse in Kirkstall and he was looking for a suitable site in the city. A number of places were identified as potential homes and though the first of two temporary sites at St James's was found in 1992, it was not until 1997 that the Museum was to open to the public in their present location. Since their establishment here the Society's meetings in Leeds have been held in the superb conference facilities that they have. The continuous support provided by the Museum for the Society's activities has been critical to the success of the Society.

There is not usually a meeting in December, January or August and the number of meetings per annum has been between six and eight. So up until the present time, December 2007, over the 17 years of the society, well over 100 meetings have been held. This is not the place to list the subjects and speakers – it would be too long – but the Society's lectures have covered the whole range of medical, dental and nursing history topics with contributions too on their science and social history base and on alternative medicine topics. Some of our speakers have lectured more than once.

The AGM has, in addition to the formal business of receiving and approving reports from the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, always provided an opportunity for some alternative to the lecture format. On two occasions a successful quiz, devised by the Museum, took place. Now the practice is for two or three Society members to present short papers on their own research.

This same format of short papers was also established for student contributions. From the mid-1990s the opportunity was given by Leeds Medical School to medical students, to undertake Special Study Modules (now known as Student Selected Components) as part of their curriculum. Medical History modules are offered by medical staff with an interest in medical history, University staff in academic departments and the Thackray Museum² amongst others. They provide supervision for these six week study periods. About a dozen students take modules in the history of medicine annually. Occasionally an individual student undertakes an intercalated degree in The History of Medicine outside Leeds. Since 2000 the Society has invited all of these students to provide a short talk to the Society on their research and we have always had two or three who take the opportunity at the February meeting, and they have been to a very high quality.

(Left) The front cover and programme of the 1995 and 1999 membership cards. (NB on each the illustrations of instruments from the Thackray Collection.) The Programmes illustrated are typical of the range of topic that the Society offers.

(Right) The poster format introduced in January 2002 showing two events in that year.

YORKSHIRE
Medical & Dental
History Society

LECTURE

**Two Medical History Presentations from
Medical Students**

**The Nadi is not the pulse – different
ways of knowing the body**
Mr Anupam Goenka

**Laennec, The Stethoscope and
Pleurisy**
Mr Pravin Jayakumar

7.30 p.m. Wednesday 13 March 2002
Thackray Museum, Beckett Street, Leeds
(adjacent to St James' University Hospital)

The two presentations are based on medical history projects undertaken for a Year 3 Special Study Module in Leeds and the intercalated BSc in Medical History undertaken at UCL and the Wellcome Institute in London.

If you attend the event you may visit the Museum either before or afterwards without charge.

ALL WELCOME **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AT 7.00p.m.**
especially students and non-members

Enquiries about the lecture may be made to Mr Bill Mathie, Secretary to the Society, School of Medicine, University of Leeds. Telephone 0113 233 4363 E-mail w.k.mathie@leeds.ac.uk

www.leeds.ac.uk/ymdhs

AFFILIATED TO
THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR
THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

YORKSHIRE
Medical & Dental
History Society

LECTURE

**DR WILLIAM HEBERDEN
(1710-1801)
HIS LIFE, WORK AND
POSTHUMOUS RECOGNITION**

Dr John Moll,
Editor, Journal of Medical Biography

Dr William Heberden, a distinguished London Physician, now recognised for his contribution to Rheumatology

7.30 p.m. Thursday 12 September 2002
**Thackray Medical Museum, Beckett Street,
Leeds**
(adjacent to St James's University Hospital)

ALL WELCOME

Light Refreshments from 7.00 p.m.

Enquiries about the lecture may be made to Mr Bill Mathie, Secretary to the Society, School of Medicine, University of Leeds. Telephone 0113 34 34363 E-mail w.k.mathie@leeds.ac.uk

www.leeds.ac.uk/ymdhs

AFFILIATED TO
THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR
THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Structure, Links and Processes – The Society in Action

The British Society for the History of Medicine (BSHM) and the 18th BSHM Congress 1999

Dr John Beal, the first chairman of the Society, proposed affiliation of the Yorkshire Society to the British Society for the History of Medicine. This national organisation of regional and special interest medical history societies provides a newsletter once or twice a year and every two years organises a national congress. Each society may send a delegate to BSHM committee meetings and there is an expectation that each will also provide reports of their activities. The Yorkshire Society soon after its foundation affiliated to the BSHM. The establishment of the Society in Yorkshire, where there had been none before, and of the Thackray Museum, soon caught the eye of the National Committee and in 1995 we were invited to host the 18th BSHM Congress in 1999.

This the Society did in collaboration with the Thackray Museum, Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society and the Yorkshire Branch of the Society of Occupational Medicine. It took place at Bodington Hall, University of Leeds, in September 1999, and was attended by almost 100 delegates. The main theme was of industrial and occupational medicine and some 30 papers were presented over the two days of the event. The following YMDHS members contributed to the 18th Congress; Dr Christine Alvin on Woolsorters' Disease in 19th century Bradford; Dr Michael Waugh, The Development of Genito-Urinary Medicine in Leeds; Professor Geoffrey Cantor, Dissenting Doctors - Quakers at Edinburgh Medical School; Mr David Wilson, History on the Wall; Dr John Weatherill, The York Medical School and Dr Vivian Wyatt, Contaminated Glucose Drips.

A visit to the Museum was made by delegates, and the University's Thackrah Lecture, in honour of Charles Turner Thackrah, pioneer in Occupational Medicine and co-founder of the Leeds Medical School, was organised by the Medical School to coincide with the Congress. Col. Alan Roberts, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Leeds and a member of the Society, welcomed delegates to Leeds on behalf of the University at a grand dinner at Bodington Hall.

YMDHS members have been frequent contributors to subsequent Congresses.

The Congress was organised by Bill Mathie and Colin Toothill on behalf of the Society and took up such a considerable time that something had to give and that was the Newsletter, suspended as it turned out for two years in 1998 and 1999.

The Society's 10th anniversary

The success of the Congress established its reputation and also provided the Society with a good boost to its financial reserves. A little of this was used to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Society (in autumn 2001) with a dinner held at the University of Leeds on 29 November 2002 at which our guest was Sir Christopher Booth, a Yorkshireman and Honorary Professor at the Wellcome Centre for the History of Medicine at University College of London.

The Thackray Museum

In the early years we were fortunate to have Paul Thackray on the Committee through to 1995. Paul's vision for the Museum was an inspiration to the committee members and the YMDHS programme of evening lectures established Leeds as a centre for such events. From 1991 until 2001, first with Jack Sims and then with Mike Cooper, who was to become Chief Executive of the Museum, a Museum staff member has been on the committee. The support received has been immeasurable in that the membership database was maintained at the Museum (until 2001), and financial support provided in the form of printed membership cards (until 1999). In addition advertising in Museum literature and websites and the provision of staffing, rooms and superb AV facilities for the meetings of the Society, have all been offered freely. The Successive Chief Executives since Mike Cooper, firstly Fiona Elliott, then Joanne Stewardson (acting) and currently Almut Grüner, and all their staff without exception over the years, have provided invaluable support for the Society. The Museum, under its current Executive Chairman, Professor Monty Losowsky, has established a very successful programme of Saturday lectures and Friends of the Museum events. The Society has been delighted to be supported by a Museum which has received numerous awards for its achievements and which continues to expand its public engagement events and its academic and publishing activities.

The Newsletter

The Newsletter, first provided in January 1992, developed into a forum for articles and reviews under the editorship of medical student, Simon Wilson in April 1993, when it appeared in A5 format and with 12 pages (No 7). In addition to an Editorial, there were articles by Dr Kenneth Walls, retired Lecturer in Anatomy and co-author of the History of Leeds School of Medicine, and by Paul Weiss, another medical student, together with a report of Professor Maurice Beresford's lecture on the Back-to-Back house in Leeds, given in March 1993. There was also news of membership and future meetings. Simon Wilson raised the standard and also increased the page length to sixteen with No 9 in January 1994.

On Simon's graduation at the end of 1994, the newsletter editorship passed to Dr Colin Toothill, shortly to retire from his position as Senior Lecturer in Chemical Pathology at the University. Colin developed the Newsletter's more scholarly content. Edition 15 in December 1997 was the last with the A5 format. It was also the last for just over two years, as Colin's time was to be taken up with the organisation of the British Society for the History of Medicine Congress. The next edition (No 16) appeared in March 2000 under the joint editorship of Dr Toothill and Dr Malcolm Parsons. Dr Parsons was soon to publish books on Yorkshire and the History of Medicine³ in 2002 and on the General Infirmary at Leeds⁴ in 2003.

Under their joint editorship the Newsletter initially remained at about eight A4 pages but comprised more substantial articles and book reviews, many contributed by Dr Parsons himself. The first illustrated content appeared in Edition 20 in August 2002 in an article by Colin Toothill on Dr Guy Alfred Wyon, a pioneer in Chemical Pathology in Leeds. Edition 22 in September 2003 proved to be the last under joint editorship, owing to Dr Toothill's ill health and subsequent retirement from the post. Dr Parsons continued as sole Editor and replaced Dr Toothill on the Committee in October 2003.

In May 2005, an additional edition of the Newsletter appeared between numbers 25 and 26, headed with a tribute to Colin who had sadly died the previous month. Dr Malcolm Parsons has continued as sole editor and the newsletter is now appearing two or three times a year, with generally 12 pages and always illustrated. Illustrations are still in black and white, as colour reproduction would be too expensive. Now at number 34 in 2008 it has come a long way from the two sided A4 sheet of 16 years previously.

Membership

Membership of the Society has always been open to all and has ranged generally between 70 and 90, throughout the life of the Society. A high of 91 was reached in 1994 and a low of 61 was reached in 2000, but membership rose again to 80 for the 2002-3 membership year. In the early years concessionary membership fees to retired and students members were offered, but with barely any student members and an increasing age profile of our members, this was ceased in 1999 in order to maintain income levels.

Running the Society – People and Roles - The Constitution and Committee

The Constitution approved at the first AGM in October 1992 has proved remarkably robust in providing a framework for the Society's activities. Amongst other provisions it defines the officers of the committee; a Chair, a Secretary, and Treasurer together with three additional members. The Secretary organises the meetings as well as the business of the committee and the AGM. In practice two of the additional members would be the Editor of the Newsletter and Membership Secretary, unless these positions were filled by any of the other officers. There is also provision for co-opted members.

The Officers of the Society

Chairman

Dr John Beal (Consultant in Dental Public Health, Leeds) 1992 - 1996
Dr Liakat Parapia (Consultant Haematologist, Bradford) 1997 - 1999
Dr Ian Cameron (Consultant Public Health Physician, Leeds) 2000 - 2003
Dr Michael Johnson (Consultant Neurologist, Leeds) 2004 - present

Secretary

Mr Bill Mathie 1991 - 2005
Dr John Turney
(Retired Consultant Physician) 2006 - present

Treasurer

Mr Bill Mathie 1991 - 2000
Dr Colin Toothill 2000 - 2004
Mrs June Smith (Teacher, Leeds) 2004 - present

Membership Secretary

Mr Jack Sims (Thackray Museum) 1992 - 93
Mr Mike Cooper (Thackray Museum) 1994 - 2001
Dr Colin Toothill 2002 - 2004
Mrs Ruth Wheeler,
(Retired Dental Surgeon) 2004 - present

Newsletter Editor

Mr Bill Mathie No. 1 to No. 6 (1991 - 1993)
Mr Simon Wilson (Medical Student)
No. 7 to No.11 (1993 - 94)
Dr Colin Toothill, No. 12 to No 15
(1994 - 1997)
(no newsletters in 1998 and 1999)
Dr Colin Toothill and Dr Malcolm Parsons
(Jt Editors) No 16 – No 22 (2000-2003)
Dr Malcolm Parsons (Retired Consultant
Neurologist) No 23 – present (33 in January 2008)
2003 - present

Other members on the committee during the period up to 2003, who have not been mentioned in this paper, are Dr Vivian Wyatt and Mrs Elizabeth Griffin both of whom have played invaluable roles.

How it all worked

The original constitution allowed continuous committee membership, if so desired, through re-election. This continued until constitutional changes in 2005 which limited the length of office as a committee member. While it lasted continuous membership was a two-edged sword as, though it did provide stability so long as the Society was progressing in the right direction, it did not encourage new blood onto the committee. With the commitment to the BSHM conference in 1999, new membership to the Committee was sought to ease the burdens of running the Society and organising the Conference. It was not forthcoming sufficiently and the late 1990s saw the disappearance temporarily of the Newsletter and a decline in membership. However regular communication from the Secretary to members continued, not only by mail but also via the Society's website set up at this time on the University of Leeds server.

Bill Mathie and Colin Toothill were bearing the bulk of the burden of the Society during the late 1990s with Bill as Secretary and Treasurer until 2000 and Colin as Newsletter Editor, all the while taking the lion's share of the Congress organisation since 1996, owing to their University membership. After the Congress in 1999 Bill was persuaded to continue as Secretary for a further three year term and eventually continued until the end of 2005. Colin reduced his editorial role in 2000 and shared the Newsletter editorship with Malcolm Parsons, with an increasing part of the work being taken by Malcolm, until he took over altogether in 2003. But this reduction in editorial activity was replaced by Colin taking over the role of Treasurer from 2000 until 2004, when he had to give up due to his declining health.

Malcolm's experience as a published author on the history of medicine in Yorkshire, and as a distinguished neurologist in Leeds, has revived the Newsletter. Meanwhile the membership secretary role and financial administration in the hands of Ruth Wheeler and June Smith respectively strengthened the committee immeasurably and they continue in these roles at the time of writing in 2008.

At the time of Colin's death in 2005, he had been a member since its foundation in 1991 and had served the committee since 1996, which he joined in order to assist in the organisation of the Congress in 1999, for which his academic experience was to be invaluable.

Bill Mathie retired from the Committee in October 2006 after having been involved with the Society's foundation from the very first exploration of the opportunities with David Wilson and John Beal almost twenty years previously. Leaving the Committee enabled him to be fully engaged in the organisation of the 175th anniversary celebrations of the School of Medicine, taking place during 2006. Bill retired from his full time role as Secretary to the School of Medicine in July 2007, having served the School for over 26 years and now continues his employment there on a part-time basis as Editor of Medicine Matters, the School's alumni magazine.

The Secretaryship was taken over by Dr John Turney, who had recently retired as a Consultant Physician at the General Infirmary at Leeds and is currently studying for a postgraduate degree in Medical History at the Wellcome Centre for Medical History at Manchester, when not birdwatching or undertaking volunteer warden duties for the National Trust at Fountains Abbey.

Of our Chairmen, John Beal remains a consultant in Public Dental Health in Leeds and Liakat Parapia is a Consultant Haematologist at Bradford. Our present chairman, Michael Johnson is a Consultant Neurologist at the General Infirmary at Leeds.

Bill Mathie, May 2008

References and Further Reading

1. A History of the Leeds School of Medicine, S.T. Anning and WKJ Walls, Leeds University Press 1982, ISBN 0 85316 131 3
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