

RES MEDICA

Journal of the Royal Medical Society



Reflections

Abstract

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Dr. David Stafford Clark opened the 224th session with a most elegant address which captured the imagination of the audience that filled 'the debating hall. This was a successful start and the promise of an excellent series of dissertations, talks and addresses to follow was entirely maintained. It is not however, the public face of the society which concerns me here, the articles of this journal are sufficient testimony of its workings. I shall attempt briefly to cast a lingering look behind and summon up the more personal impressions gleaned in the past session.

The vigour with which the members engage in "Private Business" is the essential measure of the success or otherwise of a session. In this respect the 224th was unusually fortunate. However there is room for improvement and all too often members look on the society as a lending library with an optional lecture course. This apathetic attitude must be dispelled. "The more a member puts into the society the more he derives from it," is admittedly an old Tory jingle but experience repeatedly proves it to be true.

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ISSN: 2051-7580 (Online) ISSN: 0482-3206 (Print)

Res Medica is published by the Royal Medical Society, 5/5 Bristo Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9AL

Res Medica, May 1961, 2(4): 59-60

doi: [10.2218/resmedica.v2i4.368](https://doi.org/10.2218/resmedica.v2i4.368)

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It is customary to discuss medical matters at Second Private Business. This year we augmented these proceedings by a series of discussions on the society, its constitution and its laws. To aid us in these debates we had the report of the Questionnaire Committee, which had been formed to feel out the attitude of the members to their society.

Needless to say the laws of the society forbid me to write on such *in camera* sessions. It is possible to reveal that many evenings were spent in self-analysis and an endeavour was made to allow, if not a wind of change, at least a fresh breeze to clear away some of the anachronisms that burden society business.

The various committees enjoyed successful seasons. The library committee under the iron rule of Mr Legge, was conducted with exemplary efficiency. We understand that the unenviable task of cataloguing the library continues and is nearing completion. The museum looked particularly tidy this year and the medicine demonstrations provided an ever present source of solace on wet wintry afternoons.

Of the house committee I shall say nothing save that thanks to the prompt action of Sir Derrick Dunlop the Society has a new roof and our caretakers can sleep calmly, safe in the knowledge that the eagle which surmounts our premises will not take off and dive headlong into the street below. This stone eagle, like the ravens of the Tower, is a symbol of continuity and steadfastness for the society.

This year was marked by an abundance of social occasions. The Presidents' Annual Dinner achieved its customary success. Dr. Gaddum, our guest of honour, proved decisively that it is possible for him to bestride the two cultures of art and science. (This theme was to recur in the Senior President's unique appraisal of this subject in his valedictory address.) The dinner itself

was a gastronomic triumph. The marriage of Vouvray Sec '59 to a salmon mayonnaise filled us with admiration for the matchmaker, Mr Wilson.

There was another more intimate yet no less memorable dinner for Sir David Henderson before receiving an honorary fellowship from the society. We were all most fortunate in having this opportunity of honouring such a famous product of the Edinburgh School.

The Museum Committee celebrated its centenary year, and what better excuse for yet another dinner. Those present immortalised the occasion by inscribing their names on a specially prepared bread roll, which it is hoped will be preserved in the museum to be a marvel for future generations. It is but rarely that one is given such an opportunity of carving one's name for posterity. There were many other occasions, beer and skittles, industrial visits (to Sandemans and the Scotsman), a film show; all most successful and of course the annual ball, happily restored this year to the Carlton Hotel.

What of next year? The stage seems set for Mr Friend (The Senior President Elect) to lead the society to further achievements in its 225th year.

SOCIUS

DAVID STUART MURDOCK

We regret to announce the death of David Murdock in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 25th April, 1961. As a medical student in his fifth year he was an active member of our Society. He was also well known in the University Squash and Swimming Clubs and took an active interest in amateur dramatics. Among his student friends many will remember him for his friendly and generous nature.

We would like to convey our deepest sympathy to his family and friends at this time of their sudden bereavement.

THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OFFICE-BEARERS DURING THE 224th SESSION

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E. A. W. SLATER

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