

RES MEDICA

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Abstract

Office Bearers – 228th Session

The Old Order Changeth

House-jobs – In Search of Clarity

Syllabus Spring 1965

Private Meetings

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RES MEDICA

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'THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH'

The Royal Medical Society will leave its present premises for temporary ones, with the hope of eventually moving into new accommodation in the projected 'Island Site' near the McEwan Hall. Women are allowed full membership. At first Private Business time is spent on issues of pre-clinical interest, instead of Society matters. At such a time it is justifiable perhaps, to speculate on the future of the Society, to conjure up visions of its future. A nightmare and a dream emerge.

The nightmare is a fleeting one. A venerable institution, some 228 years old, its quarters surrendered, parts with its library — the old dusty tomes so much a part of the society — and moves into 'temporary' premises. With

no vision of its role in the student world of the 20th century, comforted by its past glories, it prefers quiet comfort as a small 'Medical Club'. It speaks with a small voice because student support is limited. The cries for help and for new premises grow weaker and weaker. They die away eventually. Nothing remains.

But the dream is insistent. The Society, leaving its premises, also leaves its lethargy behind. It is composed of students who visualise for the Society a central role in medical student life. Because of its activity and drive its temporary accommodation gives place to facilities in the Island Site which form a framework for Society activities. A Meeting Hall, a warm Library with journals and current text-books, a lounge where students can relax, drink coffee and talk, are continually in use. Erudite guest speakers learnedly address the Society, and the society members present dissertations. Private meetings are the hub of the Society, with lively, informative discussion, with films, debates, and clinical presentations. Freshers visiting for the first time are drawn into the discussion. It is a Society which combines its historic tradition of quality with vigour and enthusiasm.

One wonders whether the Society will be a dream or a nightmare.

HOUSE-JOBS

IN SEARCH OF CLARITY

The scramble for house-jobs in Edinburgh is a continuous one, spread, as it is, over the last two years of the medical course. As there is no official statement about obtaining these posts, information is handed down from year to year in a haphazard fashion. Some posts are offered early, before final year and sometimes before fifth year. On other units, housemen may be selected after finals.

The present system, if 'system' is the correct word for what occurs each year, has inherent frustrations for 'chief' and student alike. The consultant in charge of one of the less fashionable units may make his selection early to ensure that the posts are filled. But he may later meet students in senior clinics, in clerkships and in locums who he may prefer to have

as house-men. Furthermore, the student accepting a post early may, if offered what he considers a more preferable post, turn down the earlier offer. The annoyance of the 'chief' is understandable particularly if he has refused desirable applicants because the post was filled.

Another consequence of the present system is that students who are not given jobs early automatically apply for the still vacant jobs. Hence there are long lists of applicants in the final term, often for jobs already promised.

The chief has always had, quite correctly, complete responsibility for selecting his house-men. But surely his task can be made simpler, and the students position clarified. The following suggestions may bear consideration, discussion, and, who knows, introduction.

1) A fixed final date for applications, e.g. 1st March. Students are then clear when to apply, and many 'chiefs' have had wider contact with students before final selection.

2) A date by which selections should be made, perhaps a fortnight later.

3) Successful applicants are then informed, and are required to accept or refuse within a week. Those having been offered more than one post, will accept the post of choice. Successful applicants will also immediately withdraw other applications.

4) The position would then be that a large percentage of applicants will have been offered and will have accepted posts. Posts which have not been accepted can then be offered to remaining applicants.

Such an arrangement does not increase the work of the 'chief' in selecting house-men, nor does it detract from his freedom to select his house-men. He may still 'promise' jobs if he wish. The only alteration is in the time of selection. For those who select their house-men early, the frustration of late refusals of posts is eliminated, and their choice of house-men increased. For those who select their house-men late there is little alteration. Certainly it will bring clarity to the students who, perplexed by the wide range of times of selection, wonder whether they should make early applications, before the experience of a variety of clinics, before further clerkships and locums.

SYLLABUS

SPRING 1965

Fri. Jan. 15 ADDRESS: Profesor S. P. V. SHERLOCK, M.D., F.R.C.P. "Jaundice."

Fri. .. 22 Dissertation: R. A. CLARKE, Esq., B.Sc. "Medicine in Africa."

Fri. .. 29 Dissertation: T. BALFOUR, Esq. "Wayside Houses of Ill Repute."

Fri. Feb. 5 Dissertation: C. LOCKIE, Esq., B.Sc. "Experiences in Pharmacology."

Fri. .. 12 TALK: Dr M. K. MACDONALD, M.B., Ch.B. "The Ultrastructure of the Kidney in Health and Disease."

Fri. .. 19 To be arranged.

Fri. .. 26 ADDRESS: Dr E. SAMUEL, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.F.R., F.R.C.P.E. "The Anatomy of Diagnosis."

Fri. Mar. 5 President's Valedictory Address.

Wed. .. 10 Annual Extraordinary General Meeting.

PRIVATE MEETINGS

The Private Meetings of the Society provide a varied programme of Talks, discussions, case presentations, and debates. First Private Meetings, held at 7 p.m., are orientated towards pre-clinical students, and Second Private Meetings are orientated towards the clinical student.