



## Early History of The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

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### Abstract

Factors that led to the award of the College's Royal Charter. The definitive history of the College written in 1976 by Craig runs to over 1,100 pages, and that by Ritchie in 1899 is also substantial.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely therefore that this account could be other than a very brief chronology of the principal events associated with the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh between the early 17th century and the present time. While the College eventually received its Royal Charter in 1681 this was only after three previous abortive attempts had been made in 1617, 1630 and again in 1656. These various attempts were each made by small groups of dedicated physicians, all of whom had received their medical training on the Continent. On returning to Edinburgh, they particularly wished to elevate the status of their city, and the standard of medical practice in Scotland, but particularly in Edinburgh and its surrounding area. They were certainly aware that the standard of medical practice was without question far lower than it was on the Continent and even in England at that time. The award of a Royal Charter would also undoubtedly elevate the status of the Physicians as a corporate entity from the others that practised medicine in the same area. The Physicians in Edinburgh also believed that they would be in a similar position to their clinical brethren in London who had received their Royal Charter in 1518. Considerable difficulties were encountered over the years, however, before the Edinburgh physicians successfully obtained their Royal Charter. These came from a number of quarters, but particularly from the Edinburgh Surgeons, from the Church, from factions within the Town Council and from the University.

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# Early History of The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

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Factors that led to the award of the College's Royal Charter. The definitive history of the College written in 1976 by Craig runs to over 1,100 pages, and that by Ritchie in 1899 is also substantial.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely therefore that this account could be other than a very brief chronology of the principal events associated with the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh between the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and the present time. While the College eventually received its Royal Charter in 1681, this was only after three previous abortive attempts had been made in 1617, 1630 and again in 1656. These various attempts were each made by small groups of dedicated physicians, all of whom had received their medical training on the Continent. On returning to Edinburgh, they particularly wished to elevate the status of their city, and the standard of medical practice in Scotland, but particularly in Edinburgh and its surrounding area. They were certainly aware that the standard of medical practice was without question far lower than it was on the Continent and even in England at that time. The award of a Royal Charter would also undoubtedly elevate the status of the Physicians as a corporate entity from the others that practised medicine in the same area. The Physicians in Edinburgh also believed that they would be in a similar position to their clinical brethren in London who had received their Royal Charter in 1518. Considerable difficulties were encountered over the years, however, before the Edinburgh physicians successfully obtained their Royal Charter. These came from a number of quarters, but particularly from the Edinburgh Surgeons, from the Church, from factions within the Town Council and from the University.

In 1617, for example, the establishment of such a Charter undoubtedly had the blessing of King James VI, but the opposition at that time principally came from the Archbishops and Bishops. They were of the view that the establishment of such a College might restrict their privilege of awarding degrees, as at that time they were the Chancellors of Britain's three oldest Universities.<sup>2</sup> The Surgeons who, rightly or wrongly, believed that the establishment of a College of Physicians might restrict their rights and privileges, also expressed strong reservations. For these and other reasons, this, their first request for a Royal Charter, was unsuccessful. A second request, in 1630, was made to Charles I. Possibly because of the unsettled state of his Kingdom at that time, he referred the matter to his Privy Council. The physicians had supported their application with 17 Articles, all of which appeared to them to be particularly reasonable, although others did not necessarily agree with them. These included the following: that their senior officers, their President, Council and all of



Figure 1. Physician's Hall, George Street, Edinburgh. Drawn and engraved by J & HS Storer (1820). This building was designed in 1775 by James Craig, and demolished in 1811.



Figure 2. Another view of Physician's Hall, George Street, Edinburgh. Drawn by Thomas H. Shepherd and engraved by J. Henshall (1829).

their Office Bearers, would be selected only from amongst their appropriately qualified membership. They also indicated that within their sphere of influence they would supervise the sale of drugs, so that only drugs that they thought were safe were in fact sold, and that only certain appropriately qualified individuals would be able to sell them. One of the Articles indicated that all that practised medicine as Surgeons, Apothecaries or Physicians should be appropriately examined, and that all appropriately qualified individuals would be licensed. If physicians passed certain examinations, they would also be awarded a doctorate. This was the first indication that they wished to have the power to award appropriately qualified individuals medical degrees. They also proposed that they should have the legal authority to deal with "unqualified" medical practitioners. For reasons that are now unclear, this application was also rejected.

The third unsuccessful application was made in 1656, in the time of Oliver Cromwell. On that occasion, a Commission was established to seek further advice on the matter. Recommendations were made to the Lords of Council. After additional advice had been sought, the various interested parties in Scotland were sent a copy of the proposed Charter for their consideration. The abreaction this received was considerable. This was principally from the City of Glasgow, as their own Faculty already possessed a Charter that was all-embracing and included Physicians, Surgeons and Apothecaries. The Glasgow Faculty was also concerned at the suggestion made in the Charter that the territory over which the Edinburgh Physicians proposed that they should have control was all of Scotland, rather than exclusively Edinburgh and the area immediately around it. Similarly, the Edinburgh surgeons were also particularly concerned. They believed that amongst other things, the effect of this exercise would almost certainly be to diminish the value put on their acknowledged expertise as well as restricting their activities. This was despite the fact that they already possessed a Royal Charter that dated from 1505.<sup>3</sup>

The surgeons also emphasised that Members of their Incorporation had carried out almost all of the teaching of the apprentices that had been undertaken in Edinburgh over the previous century and a half. They also objected to the fact that almost all of the physicians who were applying for a Charter had qualified in foreign universities. The Members of the Incorporation also noted that the role and status of the surgeons in these countries was invariably subservient to that of the physicians. The universities, but particularly Aberdeen that had for some centuries granted medical degrees, were also extremely agitated. It appeared to them that

the physicians wished to take over the granting of medical degrees, and that they (i.e. the proposed Edinburgh College of Physicians) rather than the universities would thenceforth take over this role.

This and other points were discussed at a meeting held in Dundee in July 1657. In 1672, the Incorporation of Surgeons indicated that they were unanimously supportive of elevating the Town's College of Edinburgh into a University. This was clearly to prevent the physicians from being given the powers to award medical degrees. They were also agitated about the possibility that the Physicians wished to award licentiate diplomas to others that they considered to be appropriately qualified practitioners, such as the Surgeons and Apothecaries.

Probably due to the dedicated influence of Dr Robert Sibbald (1641-1722), a fourth application, on this occasion to Charles II, was eventually rewarded.<sup>4</sup> The Edinburgh College of Physicians received its Royal Charter, and this was dated 29 November 1681, despite strenuous opposition, as previously principally from the Edinburgh Incorporation of Surgeons, from the Town Council as well as from other interested parties. The Charter was ratified by Parliament on 16 June 1685. The Physicians were particularly agitated that they should be given legal authority to inhibit the activities of persons whom they considered to be illiterate and/or unqualified practitioners or "Quacks." It was principally because there was no indication in their Charter of 1681 that they would in any way influence the practice of the surgeons, that the Incorporation eventually withdrew its reservations about the award of the Charter to the Physicians. It was understood that the Members of the Incorporation would retain the right to treat all conditions that had previously been treated by them, and any subsequent conditions that may have resulted from their activities. It should be noted that the apothecaries also indicated their support for the Physicians, particularly for their desire to control the activities of unqualified practitioners. The Glasgow Faculty's objections were also countered by the insertion of the clause into the Physician's Charter that they would restrict their activities to Edinburgh and its immediate environs rather than to Scotland as a whole, as had been suggested in their earlier application of 1656.

It appears that when Sibbald showed Charles II the Warrant signed by his grandfather James VI in 1621, he immediately recognised his handwriting, and was happy to offer the applicants his full support. Furthermore, Archibald Pitcairne, one of the Edinburgh petitioners, like some of the Members of the Council of the London College of Physicians, had all either been pupils or strong advocates of the teaching of William Harvey. Out of the original 21 Physicians who constituted the College at the time they received their Charter, 11 were graduates of the University of Leyden, while a further 6 were graduates of other Continental universities.<sup>5</sup> During 1682, the College received as a gift from Sibbald of a substantial number of his books, and these were to form the basis of the College's important Library.

As a result of the passing of the Universities' Act of 1858, a number of the items in the College's Charter of 1681 became obsolete, and it became necessary for them to obtain an updated Charter. This was obtained on 31 October 1861. A short supplementary Charter dated 8 January 1920 gave the College the authority to admit women on the same terms as men.

#### College accommodation

The College was particularly keen to possess its own Hall where all of their meetings could take place. However, before a suitable Hall was found, the Fellows used to meet at regular intervals in Sibbald's lodgings. In 1698, it was decided that a suitable house should be purchased, but for various reasons this plan was not pursued. In 1704, a Committee of 6 Fellows was established to consider other possibilities. A decision was made later that year to purchase a house and its associated grounds at the foot of Fountain Close, near to the Cowgate-port, that would be used as their official meeting place. Some years later, when these premises were found to be somewhat smaller than they had anticipated, they found that they had insufficient funds to move elsewhere. In 1722, funds were borrowed from a city merchant to allow the College to erect a new Hall on the Fountain Close site. Eventually, even this was also found to be inadequate for their needs, and the site was sold in 1770 for only £800, principally because of its very poor state of repair at that time. This site

was sold to gentlemen of the episcopal communion in Edinburgh, and on it they later erected the English Chapel.<sup>6</sup>

Because some of the more valuable books in their Library were already showing considerable signs of deterioration, they approached the Managers of the Royal Infirmary (then located in Infirmary Street) to see whether they might be able to store their books, on a temporary basis, somewhere in the Infirmary. As the Managers were extremely sympathetic to the activities of the College, they provided them with a suitable apartment within the Infirmary in which they could store their books. In addition, the Fellows were allowed to meet at regular intervals in the Managers' Board Room. These arrangements persisted for the following 15 years, until the College eventually acquired a suitable site in George Street on which they could build their new Hall. An architect was therefore engaged to draw up the necessary plans. The College had originally been offered the site of the present Register House, at the eastern end of Princes Street. However, the Government decided that Mr Robert Adam's architectural plans for this site would be more suitable for their own needs, rather than for those of the College. The work on the George Street site commenced in 1775, and although parts were occupied during August 1781, the Hall was not completed until about 1830. While the entire building was not yet completed when certain engravings were prepared, its handsome exterior is clearly displayed in Storer's engraving published in 1820 (*Figure 1*) and in Shepherd's engraving published in 1829 (*Figure 2*).<sup>7</sup> The land on which the George Street Hall was built was feued from the Town Council, and Mr James Craig, the architect of much of Edinburgh's New Town, was engaged to design and supervise the building of the Hall. Dr Cullen laid its foundation stone in the presence of all of the Fellows on 27 November 1775.<sup>8</sup>

Because of the very considerable expense involved in the actual building of their Hall, the College went into increasing debt over the years, so that even before it was occupied proposals were made for its sale should a suitable purchaser be found. Indeed, the College was almost plunged into bankruptcy over the inordinate cost involved. Because of the latter, many of the internal fittings meant for the various apartments within the building and in the Hall simply failed to materialise. Because the College had no capital, it had no option but to sell its Hall when the first available reasonable offer was received. This was for £19,700, and had been received



*Figure 3.* Recent photograph of the main entrance to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in Queen Street, Edinburgh. (Published with Permission, RCAMHS, ED 2158).



Figure 1. Perspective view, dating from about 1865, of the interior of the College's Library. (Published with Permission of Royal Incorporation of Architects of Scotland).

from agents acting on behalf of the Commercial Bank of Scotland. It was desperately hoped that this sum would prove adequate for them to build a slightly less ostentatious Hall. This also meant that from 1843 to 1846 the College was without its own Hall. They were forced to rent premises that were then located at 119 George Street,<sup>9</sup> and it was in a house on this site that the College used as their meeting place during this period.

It was also during extensive reconstruction work undertaken on their previous Hall in George Street that its original foundation stone was discovered. As with other foundation stones laid at about that time,<sup>10</sup> this was found to contain a number of items within it that related to the date that the stone was incorporated into the building. Also found within the stone, were two silver medals. One of these bore the College's coat of arms on one side with the names of the President and the architect on the other side. The second medal had an image of the College's Hall, associated with the Aesculapian serpent and rod, on one side, while on the other side was the name of the architect, associated with the following inscription: "*Architecto Propter Optimam Edinburgi Novi Ichnographiam.*"

The foundation stone of the College's present Hall, in Queen Street, the main entrance to which is shown in Figure 3, was laid on 8 August 1844. As previously, the President of the College laid the foundation stone in the presence of numerous Fellows. In addition, Civic dignitaries and representatives of the University were also present. Once again, following tradition, contained within the foundation stone was a copy of the *Edinburgh Pharmacopoeia* associated with a full list of the College Fellows. The foundation stone also contained a copy of the *Edinburgh Almanac* for 1844, several coins bearing the date 1844 and an item of silver plate with an appropriate Latin inscription. The Hall's architect was Thomas Hamilton, who had also shortly before designed the Royal High School of Edinburgh. The ornate Meeting Hall of the College was completed in 1868, and over the years has been modified and refurbished on a number of occasions. In order to erect their new Hall in Queen Street, the houses then located on the site (Numbers 9 and 10 Queen Street) had first to be demolished. The total cost of the College's new Hall was close to £10,000.

Even by 1864, further accommodation was required, due principally to the increased number of Fellows and the addition of a substantial number of books to the Library (Figure 4). In order to achieve the necessary expansion, the property at Number 8 Queen Street was purchased for £6,000. This house was to the east of the College's Hall, at Number 9 Queen Street. Number 8 was designed by Robert Adam, and was believed to have been the first house erected in Queen Street. It dated from 1770, was built on three storeys, and suited the needs of the College at that time. This also allowed extensions to be made to both the main Hall and the Library. A further property, Number 11 Queen Street, to the west of the College's main Hall was purchased in 1970, and has also allowed the College to extend further, as well as improving the facilities for its Fellows.

Physic Gardens.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both the Surgeons, but particularly the Apothecaries associated with them, and the Physicians in Edinburgh recognised the value of establishing Physic Gardens. In these gardens they were able to grow considerable numbers of different medicinal plants and herbs that would be of great value to them in their clinical practice. In 1670, for example, two physicians in Edinburgh were principally instrumental in establishing one of these Physic Gardens. These were Drs Robert Sibbald and Andrew Balfour (1630-94), and this was established in the small garden attached to Dr Balfour's house. In order to obtain the necessary plants, they sought advice from Mr John Brown "gardener of the North Yards in the Abbey" (i.e. of Holyrood Abbey). They also became acquainted with James Sutherland and he, because of his industry and very considerable botanical knowledge, was appointed in overall charge of the garden. The Town Council later leased a second Physic Garden, within the grounds of Trinity Church and Hospital, to Mr Sutherland. Despite initial reservations from the Surgeon-Apothecaries, it was they who had assisted Drs Sibbald and Balfour in obtaining a long lease for Mr Sutherland from the Town Council. This garden was, from 1676, termed the (Edinburgh) Botanical Garden, and both Sibbald and Balfour were appointed its honorary "visitors."

The fact that the Surgeon-Apothecaries had approached the Town Council on behalf of Mr Sutherland is of some interest. The Surgeons had since about 1664, or possibly even earlier, their own Physic Garden in which their gardener, Mr George Cathcart, grew considerable numbers of medicinal plants. This garden was located in High School Yards, and Mr Cathcart, albeit unpaid, occupied a small house rent-free beneath the Surgeons' convening room at Curryhill House.<sup>11</sup> This was located in what became known as Surgeons' Square. Flowering plants were also grown in this garden, principally but not exclusively for the benefit of the Surgeons. Mr Cathcart also grew plants for his own use that he could sell to the public, and was additionally allowed to sell liquor and keep a bowling alley. These were all on condition that the rowdier elements of the population were denied access to the garden, the liquor and the bowling alley. Similarly, the Scholars at the High School were also denied access to the bowling alley.

James Sutherland's skills and very considerable botanical knowledge were soon recognised by the Town Council, and he was then appointed their Professor of Botany in 1676.<sup>12</sup> In 1683, he published his important *Hortus Medicus Edinburgensis*,<sup>13</sup> and received a salary of £20 Sterling *per annum* from the Town Council. In 1689, during the siege of the Castle, when it was considered necessary to drain the North Loch, the water ran over the Physic Garden at Trinity Hospital, completely ruining it. Sutherland then had no option but to concentrate his efforts in extending and improving the Garden at Holyrood. This became the second oldest Botanical Garden in Britain, that in Oxford having been founded in 1632. For his services, Sutherland was appointed King's Botanist for Scotland when he was in charge of the Royal Garden at Holyrood Palace.<sup>14</sup>

Towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, James Sutherland was authorised by the Surgeons to instruct their apprentices and servants in the elements of medicinal botany. His teaching course was given four times yearly, and for which he received a guinea from each of his pupils. Because of a difference of opinion with the Town Council,<sup>15</sup> he resigned his College Professorship, and Charles Preston succeeded him in 1705. He was requested by the Surgeons to continue teaching their apprentices and servants in a similar manner to that of his predecessor. When Charles Preston died in 1711, his brother George succeeded him in this office. During his period of office, the surgical apprentices attended his garden from the middle of May until the end of September, from 5-7 am each morning. During the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were four Physic Gardens in Edinburgh.<sup>16</sup>

Close association between the College of Physicians and the University during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

While the Town's College of Edinburgh had been established in October 1583, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century it required the appointment of three Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh to Professorships in Medicine to elevate its status to that of a University. The Town Council appointed, but without salary, Sir Robert Sibbald, Drs James Halket and

Archibald Pitcairne (1652-1713) to these posts. The Town Council Minute records as follows:

That the University was:

"indowed with the privileges of erecting professions of all sorts, particularly of Medicen," and that there is "a necessity ther be ane professor of Physick in the said Colledge, therefor as Patrons of the said Colledge and University unanimously elect, nominate, and choyse the sd Sir Robert Sibbald to be Professor of Physick in ye sd University." On 4 September 1685, the Minute intimates as follows: "that the Counsell appoynts two Professors of Medicen to be joyned with Sir Robert Sibbald in the University." On 9 September the Minute records "Considering that ther is ane necessity ther be more Professors of Medicen in the said University, and understanding the abilities and great qualifications of Doctor James Halkie and Doctor Archibald Pitcairne, Doctors of Medicen, and ther fitness to teach the airt of Medicen in the said University, Doe therfore elect, nominate, and choyse ye sds two Doctors to be joyned with the said Sir Robert Sibbald, his Majestie's Phisitian in ordinary, to be Professors of Medicen in the sd University," etc., etc.<sup>17</sup>

While always a controversialist, after one particular difference of opinion with the College of Physicians, Pitcairne decided to transfer his allegiance to the Surgeons. He became a Fellow of the Incorporation, without examination, on 16 October 1701. He always had a strong interest in the teaching of Anatomy, and played a critical role in their public dissections of 1702 and 1704, carried out in Surgeons' Hall. On both occasions he presented the epilogue or conclusion on the last day of each of these public demonstrations. This undoubtedly led to the appointment of Robert Elliot as their "public dissector," and he was, on 29 August 1705, appointed the first Professor of Anatomy in the University of Edinburgh.

Since neither Sibbald, Halket or Pitcairne were apparently ever instructed to teach students, it is unclear whether they delivered any lectures. While, theoretically at least these three Professors of Medicine formed the nucleus of a Faculty of Medicine, this did not formally materialise until 1726. This was when their successors formally gave lecture courses in their disciplines to complement those already given by Professor Alexander Monro *primus*, who had been appointed by the Town Council to the Chair of Anatomy on 22 January 1720. He had succeeded Professors Robert Elliot, Adam Drummond and John McGill as Professor of Anatomy in the University of Edinburgh and, as they had, he received a salary of £15 Sterling *per annum* from the Treasurers of the Town's College.

Professors Andrew St Clair (also spelled Sinclair) (d. 1728), John Rutherford (1695-1779), Andrew Plummer (d. 1756) and John Innes (d. 1733) were all appointed to University Chairs. The latter had been appointed by the College of Physicians to teach the Theory and Practice of Medicine, as well as Chemistry. They, with Monro *primus*, constituted the first Faculty of Medicine in Edinburgh and, from 12 October 1726, constituted an organized School of Medicine.<sup>18</sup> On 9 February 1726 they applied to the Town Council to be appointed Professors in the University on the same footing on which their colleague Monro had been appointed several years previously, but without salaries. Their petition was granted.<sup>19</sup>

In 1725, Lord Provost Drummond with the support of John and Alexander Monro, the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians and a number of influential citizens, played a critical role in obtaining sufficient funds to allow the erection of a small teaching hospital in Edinburgh. It was formally opened on 6 July 1729. This was called the "Little House," and was to be a Hospital for the Sick Poor of Edinburgh. It later became the first "Royal" Infirmary when it received a Royal Charter from King George II on 25 August 1736.<sup>20</sup>

Endnotes and References.

<sup>1</sup> Craig, W.S. (1976). *History of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*. Oxford, London etc.: Blackwell Scientific Publications. See also: Ritchie, R.P. (1899). *The Early Days of the Royall Colledge of Phisicians, Edinburgh: the extended oration of the Harveian Society, Edinburgh, delivered at the 114<sup>th</sup> Festival by the President*. Edinburgh: George P. Johnston.

<sup>2</sup> In Scotland at that time, the Chancellors of St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities were also either Bishops or Archbishops.

<sup>3</sup> For a copy of this Seal of Cause, that is preserved in the Records of the Town Council of the City of Edinburgh, and a full transcription of its text, see: Comrie, J.D. (1932). *History of Scottish Medicine*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. In 2 Volumes. London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, Volume 1, 160-64.

<sup>4</sup> Sibbald had first studied theology in Edinburgh before proceeding to Leyden where he studied medicine. For further details of his medical career, see: Sibbald, R. (1833, but published after his death). *The Autobiography of Sir Robert Sibbald, Knt., M.D. To which is prefixed some account of his MSS*. Edinburgh: Thomas Stevenson; London: John Wilson, 15-17 [autobiography began on 23 September 1695, pp. 11-44]. This is an extremely interesting and valuable volume, and should be perused by those interested in the early history of what was to become the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. It is probably also relevant to note that Sibbald received a knighthood at Holyrood Palace during the following year, in 1682, as did two other College Fellows, Drs Archibald Stevenson (1629-1710) and Andrew Balfour (1630-1694). All of those to be awarded a knighthood apparently went to Holyrood Palace on other business, and the award of a knighthood came as a complete surprise to them. See: Sibbald, *ibid.*, 32.

<sup>5</sup> For a complete list of the original petitioners, see Craig, *op. cit.* ref. 1, 65-6.

<sup>6</sup> Arnot, H. (1779). *The History of Edinburgh*. Edinburgh: W. Creech; London: J. Murray, 322-23.

<sup>7</sup> Storer, J. & Storer, H.S. (1820). *Views in Edinburgh and its Vicinity; drawn and engraved by J. & H.S. Storer; Exhibiting remains of Antiquity, Public Buildings, and Picturesque Scenery*. In 2 Volumes. Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co.; London: J.M. Richardson, Chappell & Son, Normaville & Fell, Smith & Elder, Cowie & Co., Taylor & Hessey, T. Wilson & Sherwood, Neely, & Jones [the section in Volume 1 with the engravings is unpaginated, as is all of Volume 2]. See also: Shepherd, T.H. (1829). *Modern Athens! Displayed in a Series of Views: or Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century: Exhibiting the Whole of the New Buildings, Modern Improvements, Antiquities, and Picturesque scenery of the Scottish Metropolis and its Environs, from Original Drawings*. London: Jones & Company [the pages on which the engravings are displayed are unpaginated].

<sup>8</sup> A detailed description of the architectural features of both the interior and exterior of the College's Hall and Library were published by Arnot. See: Arnot, *op. cit.* ref. 6, 322-24.

<sup>9</sup> This is part of the site presently occupied by the offices of the Church of Scotland, and is located towards the western end and northern side of George Street.

<sup>10</sup> The foundation stone of the first Hall of the Royal Medical Society (RMS), at 11 Surgeons' Square, was found when this building was demolished, and was later incorporated into the stairwell of the Society's second Hall in Melbourne Place. This foundation stone was laid on Friday 21 April 1775 by the President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Professor William Cullen. He had suggested both the site and plan of the building. This foundation stone, when examined carefully, was found to contain a glass bottle and a hermetically-sealed leaden case. Inside the bottle was found the inscribed silver medal that is now worn by the Society's Senior President on official occasions. It is also relevant to note that Cullen was presented with a suitably inscribed handsome gold medal by the Society in 1775 in recognition of his services to them. This medal is now on display in the Extension to the National Museum of Scotland, in Chambers Street. The RMS obtained their Royal Charter in 1778. William Cullen had been elected President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh on 3 August 1773, and held this post until 30 November 1775. He was Professor of Medicine between 1773-90, when James Gregory succeeded him.

<sup>11</sup> Shortly after the Surgeons took possession of Curryhill House, they extensively altered this property, and a gardener's house was subsequently built in its grounds. While the main house soon proved unsatisfactory for their needs, the Incorporation were unable to afford to build a more suitable Hall on this site. By the early 1670s the house became increasingly dilapidated. In about 1694 it was re-roofed, and rented by the Presbyterians, who used it for some years as their meeting hall and place of worship. At this time, the Surgeons used another house nearby as their meeting hall. This had been built by the Town Council for the use of the Professor of Divinity. See: Creswell, C.H. (1926). *The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh: Historical Notes from 1505 to 1905*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 48-50.

<sup>12</sup> Although in 1695 he was apparently more formally elevated to the post of Professor of Botany in the Town's College. See: Comrie, *op. cit.* ref. 3, Volume 1, 264.

<sup>13</sup> Sutherland, J. (1683). *Hortus Medicus Edinburgensis. or a Catalogue of the Plants in the Physical Garden at Edinburgh; containing their most proper Latin and English names; with an English Alphabetical Index.* Edinburgh: printed by the heir of Andrew Anderson.

<sup>14</sup> He held this post until the death of Queen Anne in 1714. See: Comrie, *op. cit.* ref. 3, Volume 1, 264.

<sup>15</sup> Because it had been suggested that he had neglected their own garden. This was established in 1702, and located on a piece of ground just to the east of the Town's College. See: Comrie, *ibid.*, Volume 1, 265.

<sup>16</sup> See: Comrie, *ibid.*, Volume 1, 265. These were the Royal Garden at Holyrood Palace, the Garden in the grounds of the Town's College, that in Trinity Hospital (also referred to as the Town's garden) and that in High School Yards, associated with the Incorporation of Surgeons. The fate of the original Physicians' Garden associated with Dr Balfour's house is, however, unclear, although it is likely that it no longer served as a Physic Garden after the establishment of the Physic Garden in the grounds of Trinity Hospital. For further details about the various Botanical Gardens

in Edinburgh during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, see: Comrie, *ibid.*, Volume 1, 266.

<sup>17</sup> Sir Robert Sibbald was appointed the first Professor of Physic in the Town's College, or University, on 25 March 1685. Later that year, on 4 September 1685, two additional Professors of Medicine were appointed. These were Drs James Halket and Archibald Pitcairne. See: Ritchie (*op. cit.* ref. 1), 25.

<sup>18</sup> This group of four succeeded Sibbald, Pitcairne and Halket, as well as James Sutherland, Professor of Botany from 1676, and William Porterfield from 1724, briefly Professor of Medicine. Andrew Sinclair MD Angers 1720 and John Rutherford MD Rheims 1719 were appointed Professors of the Theory and Practice of Medicine, while Andrew Plummer MD Leyden 1722 and John Innes MD Padua 1722 were appointed Professors of Medicine and Chemistry. Sinclair, Plummer and Innes were all pupils of Boerhaave, see: Turner, A.L. (1937). *Story of a Great Hospital: the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh 1729-1929.* Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Gairdner, J. (1864). Sketch of the early history of the medical profession in Edinburgh. Being an Address delivered at a Conversazione in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, on 22d January 1864. *Edinburgh Medical Journal* 9, 681-701, see p.700.

<sup>20</sup> Turner, *op. cit.* ref. 18, 39-67; Kaufman, M.H. (2003). *Medical education in Edinburgh during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.* Edinburgh: Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, 39-42.

