

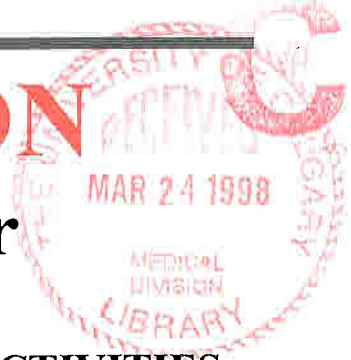


CHEIRON

Newsletter

of the

HISTORY OF MEDICINE ACTIVITIES OF THE PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL STUDENTS OF CALGARY



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CHOMS Meeting - University Club

The Calgary History of Medicine Society met at the University Club on Thursday evening 20 November 1997.



Hamilton

After an excellent meal, Dr. Roy Hamilton, Head of Anaesthesia at the Gimbel Eye Centre presented an illustrated lecture on Mr. Harold Ridley, MD, FRCS, the Father of the Intraocular Lens. Roy Hamilton had made a video of his

interview with this 92 year old pioneer in England. Hamilton described that operations on cataracts had been practiced for centuries; however, it was not until the late 1940's that an intraocular lens was conceived and implanted by Harold Ridley, an ophthalmologist practicing in London, England. With this operation Ridley became the most important figure in the history of cataract surgery since the French surgeon Daviel who practiced two centuries earlier.

The idea for implanting lenses came to Ridley during WWII. He observed that fragments of airplane canopies in the eyes of wounded airmen appeared to be inert and well tolerated as foreign bodies. "Unless a sharp edge of the material rests in contact with a sensitive and mobile portion of the eye, the tissue reaction is insignificant."



Harold Ridley

He collaborated with John Pike, an optical scientist and they produced a biconvex lenticule using their chosen inert substance, the plastic PMMA (poly methyl methacrylate).

The turning point in cataract surgery occurred on 29 November 1949 when Mr. Ridley implanted

his first intraocular lens. He was convinced that, "the proper place for an artificial lenticulus must surely be where nature intended the crystalline lens to be, viz in the posterior chamber."

"Two volunteers came forward, the first a 45 year old woman and the other a man, brave Londoners both who gladly risked the possible loss of one eye in experimental surgery in order to advance science and help future cataract patients."

Over the next few years Ridley implanted about 1000 intraocular lenses. There were several complications, including dislocated lenses some of which had to be removed. Nevertheless, some excellent results were obtained.

He endured the hostile skepticism and scorn of critical colleagues during the years after the first implantations. Even in the 1970's few ophthalmologists gave any thought to Ridley's operation. Recognition finally occurred. He received the highest honor that British Scientists can confer when he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Many feel he should have been awarded a knighthood but to date, this has not been bestowed. Mr. Ridley has lived to be, in his words, "almost certainly the only surgeon ever to design a new operation that was to be used in both of my own eyes some 40 years later." He feels rewarded by the knowledge that sight of natural quality is restored to millions of patients all over the world.

Now in his 92nd year he lives with his wife Elisabeth in their thatched seventeenth century cottage by the banks of the River Wylie in the picturesque village of Stapleford in the county of Wiltshire in S.W. England.

In the discussion following the presentation, members of CHOMS signed a petition to the Prime Minister of Great Britain recommending Mr. Ridley be considered for a Knighthood.

Members attending were: Martin Austin, Peter & Diana Cruse, John & Pauline Dawson, Hugh & Dorothy Gallie, Howard & Judy Grimbel, Roy & Betty Hamilton, Ray & Jane Lewkoria, Roger Maltby, Malcolm McDonald, Tait & Jean McPhedran, George & Marilyn Milles, Hugh & Catherine Morrish, Bob & Joan Pow, Barry, Newcastle, Tom Ringrose, Max Shafto, Julius Szekrenyes, Keith & Jane Todd. The six medical students present were introduced: Amanda Fortin, James Howard, Trina Liew, Melanie Stapleton, Gerald Stewart & Steve Tsekrekos. Melanie Stapleton was congratulated on having won the Texas Heart Institute prize for History of Medicine Research. Melanie was supported by the Alberta Medical Association to fly to London to interview Sir James Black, the inventor of Propanalol. We hope Melanie will present this paper to CHOMS in the Fall of '98.

The next meeting of CHOMS will be held at the Faculty Club, University of Calgary on Thursday, 22 January 1998. The speakers will be Dr. Tom Ringrose & Ms. Ania Zanussi, who will speak on the topic **Goya & the Duchess of Alba.**

For more information about CHOMS contact any of the officers:

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**THE COURSE IN HISTORY OF MEDICINE
FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**

The History of Medicine lunch time seminars are held from 12:00 - 13:30 on most Mondays in the Health Sciences Centre Room 741 and all members of CHOMS, physicians and medical students are welcome to attend.

On 3 November 1997 Dr. Gregory McKinnon, surgical oncologist and medical student Eric Lehr, presented the Medical History of Rome and Alexandria.

McKinnon described the vast extent of the Roman Empire and the medical practice in Rome, where the leading physicians were all from Greece, notably Galen. McKinnon then discussed the Roman engineering feats in public health: the aqueducts, the public baths and the sewer system.

Eric Lehr concentrated on the Roman Legions and the medical care they received on the battle grounds. He then described the frontier hospitals or valetudinaria - all with private or semi-private wards. With this background Lehr then focused on Pedanius Dioscorides c AD 50, the Greek army surgeon in the service of Nero. Dioscorides used his army travels to study plants and to compile the first herbal in which he described 600 plants and many animal and mineral products. His "De materia medica" remained a textbook for 1600 years and 90 of his drugs are still in use. He explicitly recommended the use of mandragora wine to relieve the pain of surgical operations and cauterization.

On 13 Nov 98 the History of Wound Management was discussed in an evening workshop. Every student was then presented with a pig's trotter and instruments to practice the suturing of wounds - a skill dating back 5000 years to the Ancient Egyptians.



Trina Liew, Jason Brunetta and Shashan Amed with preceptor Dr. N. Tait McPhedran.

On 17 Nov 98 Dr. William Whitelaw and Vanessa Weir presented the medical history of the Middle Ages. Vanessa concentrated on Henri de Mondeville (1260-1320) who strove to free medicine from religious control. He taught that wounds could heal without suppuration by simple cleanliness - as originally taught by Hippocrates.

On 24 Nov 98 Dr. Keith Todd presented the overview of the Renaissance. David Flaschner then traced the rapid development of art during this period. The new realism, culminated with Da Vinci who practiced dissection. Pressure from the artistic and medical communities resulted in the Church lifting the proscription of human dissection. This liberalization allowed the Fabrica, the masterpiece of Vesalius and the Titian School to be produced in 1543.

Chris Prusinkiewicz then spoke about the Physician Priest and Astronomer, Nicholas Copernicus who first enunciated the heliocentric concept of our solar system. He was an able physician who practiced medicine and controlled the spread of epidemics with hygienic measures.

On 8 Dec 97 Dr. Michael Tarrant, Acting Head of Faculty Medicine presented the 16th and 17th century - his chosen period. Shazhan Amed then presented the life of William Harvey and his discovery of the circulation.

On 15 Dec 97 Peter Cruse presented an overview of the life of the great John Hunter, the man who changed surgery from a craft to a profession. He had taught some 1000 pupils and James Howard concentrated on his most famous American protégé Philip Syng Physick, Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at Philadelphia.

History repeats itself; historians repeat each other.
Philip Guedalla (1889-1944)

The easiest way to change history is to become a historian.

Anon

Each time history repeats itself the price goes up.

Anon

Doctors bury their mistakes. Lawyers hang them. But journalists put them on the front page.

Anon.

Poems by Physician Poets

EDWARD JENNER, FRS 1749-1823

Physician Naturalist

Discoverer of Vaccination 1796

The Glass is Low

The hollow winds begin to blow,
 The clouds look black, the glass is low.
 The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,
 The spiders from their cobwebs creep.
 Last night the sun went pale to bed,
 The moon in haloes hid her head.
 The boding shepherd heaves a sigh,
 For see! A rainbow spans the sky.
 The walls are damp, the ditches smell,
 Clos'd is the pink-eyed pimperl.
 Hark how the chairs and tables crack.
 Old Betty's joints are on the rack:
 Loud quack the ducks, the peacocks cry;
 the distant hills are looking nigh;
 How restless are the snorting swine,
 The busy flies disturb the kine.
 Low o'er the grass the swallow wings:
 The cricket too, how loud it sings!
 Puss on the hearth with velvet paws
 Sits smoothing o'er her whiskered jaws.
 Through the clear stream the fishes rise,
 And nimbly catch the incautious flies.
 The sheep were seen at early light,
 Cropping the meads with eager bite.
 Though June, the air is cold and chill;
 The mellow blackbird's voice is still.
 The glow-worms numerous and bright,
 Illumed the dewy dell last night.
 At dusk the squalid toad was seen
 Hopping and crawling o'er the green.
 The frog has lost his yellow vest,
 And in a dingy suit is dressed.
 The leech, disturbed, is newly risen,
 Quite to the summit of his prison.
 The whirling winds the dust obeys,
 And in the rapid eddy plays.
 My dog, so altered in his taste,
 Quits marrow-bones on grass to feast.

And see, yon rooks, how odd their flight!
 They imitate the gliding kite,
 Or seem precipitate to fall,
 As if they felt the piercing ball.
 "Twill surely rain, I see with sorrow,
 Our jaunt must be put off tomorrow."

EDWARD LOWBURY 1913 -
(Bacteriologist, Epidemiologist, Poet & Pianist)

Falls

Pulled by the sky's gravitation
 Smoke falls upwards;
 The money-spider floats, in perfect balance;
 And a child on shaky limbs
 Drops into its mother's arms,
 Or falls light - no need to fear the fall
 When earth is near and motherly.

But no maternal arms
 Reach out to save those on shaky limbs
 Who fall in second childhood.
 The earth is hard and far away beneath them,
 The bones are brittle
 And every fall brings pain or injury -
 Until, at last, light
 As smoke, they feel once more
 The gravity of the sky
 And learn to fall upwards.

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