

Path 1963; FRCS&P Glas 1966; Fellowship 1943

Guru Charan Mookerjee FRCP Edin

Specialty: General Internal Medicine

b. 16.03.1917; d. 01.03.2007

MSc Kolkata 1938; MB Kolkata 1942; MRCP Edin 1953; MRCP Lond 1956; FRCP Lond 1971; FACCP; FAIID; FICP; Fellowship 1964

Fellowship 1971

Sir James Parlane Baird KBE FRCP Edin

Specialty: General Internal Medicine

b. 12.05.1915; d. 26.05.2007

MB ChB Edin 1937; MD Edin 1958; MRCP Lond 1946; FRCP Lond 1959; MRCP Edin 1947; Fellowship 1952

Richard Harold Charles Rischbieth FRCP Edin

Specialty: Neurology

b. 4.08.1927; d. 26.04.2007

MB Adelaide 1951; MRCP Edin 1955; MRCP Lond 1955; MRACP 1958; FRCP Lond 1976; FRACP 1978;

PAST PRESIDENTS

Sir Alexander Dick (1703–1785)

Not all presidents of our College achieved fame as physicians or medical academics. John Hope was a famous Professor of Botany; Joseph Black was as well-known as a chemist as a physician. John Pringle was equally famous as a Professor of Moral Philosophy, and Alexander Dick gained fame because of his residence, Prestonfield House, and the guests he entertained there – men such as Benjamin Franklin, Dr Samuel Johnson and his biographer Boswell, and John Morgan, one of the founders of the College of Physicians of Pennsylvania.

Dick studied medicine at Edinburgh, then, like so many of his contemporaries, under Boerhaave in Leiden where he was awarded his MD. For the next 20 years, he practised as

a physician in Edinburgh and Wales until, on the death of his elder brother in 1746, he inherited the magnificent house, estate and baronetcy. Managing the estate was a full time job, but in 1756 he took on the Presidency of our College for seven years.

Prestonfield had already seen much excitement in its short history. It had been burnt down in 1689 by students angry about Sir William Dick's continuing friendship with the Catholic Duke of York (later to be King James II). Thwarted when trying to set alight an effigy of the Pope, they inadvertently set fire to the house. It was duly rebuilt. A young accountant who lived and worked there later became the first Accountant of the newly founded Bank of England, his name – George Watson, founder of one of Edinburgh's most famous schools. Franklin may have stayed there

because of the interest he and Dick shared in electricity, but it is known that it was he who brought John Morgan to Scotland to study under Cullen and Dick (1761–63). Today, we associate Franklin with Hewson, the father of haematology, with William and John Hunter, the anatomists, and with Alexander Monro *Secundus*, whose rift with Hunter and Hewson he tried to heal. Johnson stayed there at the end of his Scottish travels; enjoyed meeting Hope the Botanist (and another President of the College) and later wrote of his pleasure at the hospitality he had enjoyed. Since 1959 Prestonfield has been a hotel and popular restaurant for new doctors celebrating their graduation (www.prestonfield.com). Some might become presidents!

Derek Doyle
Obituaries Editor, The Journal RCPE