

PAST PRESIDENTS

Dr James Forrest (birth date unknown–1722)

In spite of being a Fellow and later President (1719–1722) in those early and highly charged years of the College, we know little about James Forrest, though he is mentioned many times in Peel-Ritchie's *The Early Years of the College of Physicians of Edinburgh*. Whether or not he was a follower of Stevenson and Pitcairne or the Sibbald faction is not clear from the Minutes, the latter being more likely.

We know that like many of the founders of the College he qualified in Leiden, in his case in June 1691, ten years after the College's founding. In that same year, even before he was a Licentiate or Fellow, he delivered one of the annual lectures that brought fame to the fledgling College. His subject was *de mensibus vitiosis* – menstrual problems.

Where he worked is unknown, but in November 1696 he applied to be a Licentiate of the College and successfully passed the three-part examination. By 1702 he must have become a Fellow because he was himself appointed as an examiner.

Next we read of him being appointed with two others to decide whether a man could be awarded an MD from the University of Edinburgh when it did not yet have a Faculty of Medicine. His next appointment was to work with others to produce a College Pharmacopoeia – one of the great achievements of the College's early years.

He died early in 1722 while still in office as President, but curiously his death is not mentioned in the Minutes.

Derek Doyle
Obituaries Editor, The Journal RCPE

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