CHAPTER 21

The World as a Parish

On 2nd December 1982 I felt very much honoured when I was elected unopposed to be President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. It is intended that this book should deal with travel but first there is need for a few words about the College which is primarily concerned with medical standards and postgraduate medical affairs but has an international role.

In some ways it was a critical time because a decision had already been taken to launch a major appeal for funds to enable a Conference Centre to be built. There was a Conference Centre Appeal Committee with Sir John Crofton, a past President, as chairman and a Project Team was holding meetings. Draft plans for a lecture theatre had been published and a site behind the College in the centre of the city was available. There was certainly a need for this building because up till this time lectures had to be held in the main hall which had to be used for dinners, examinations and numerous other functions. There had been a previous appeal which had not met the necessary target because of inflation but the outgoing President, John Strong, had realized that the time was ripe to launch a new and major appeal. I agreed, particularly since space was available for a larger theatre than had previously been planned, but was worried about the lack of car parking space; no solution could be found to this problem which is very important for doctors 'on call'.

The President was *ex officio* a member of all College committees and in addition had to attend many other committee meetings, mainly in London or Edinburgh. He could, if he so wished, examine in the MRCP examinations and this I preferred to do; he also participated in the committee which decided which Member in any part of the world should, because of the quality of his activities, be elected in due course to be a Fellow of the College and this was another reason for travelling widely to meet both Members and Fellows at home and abroad, obtaining opinions and sizing up the local situation.

I found that it was not well realized outside Edinburgh to what extent the Edinburgh College is an international body or accepted that it is a College based in Scotland rather than a Scottish College,

something I was well aware of when I was Dean of the Faculty of Medicine which had been established in 1726 largely by Fellows of the College to provide in Edinburgh an international medical school. I had to explain this to many people including Government ministers and civil servants. An analysis of the numbers of our Fellows demonstrated that we had more in the Far East than in Scotland, the figures at the time of the analysis showing that there were nearly 3000 Fellows, but that only 20% were in Scotland and 52% overseas; so far as England was concerned there were more south of Watford than in Scotland. Former Presidents, all of whom had done their share of such duties, stressed to me the importance of visiting our Fellows and Members wherever they resided and clearly this meant that a great deal of travelling was likely to be necessary.

Before I started such journeys I found that in my first two months in office I attended 58 committees or functions related to the College. Additional to the normal duties there were the problems that arose because of the new Conference Centre. I was not very actively involved in making personal appeals for money apart from signing several thousand letters and speaking on a few occasions in the course of my travels or at special meetings; Sir John Crofton, Dr. Dale Falconer and two former Presidents were running the appeal most energetically and effectively but it became clear that our original target of £750,000 was too low and that we would have to raise about £1,250,000. By December 1st, 1983 sufficient funding had already been received or promised to allow the College to agree that the scheme should go ahead and the destruction of an old warehouse and building of the new conference centre began in earnest. The College was not wealthy enough to employ a large staff and indeed there was no Manager, but fortunately Dr. Ian Campbell, who, like me had qualified in 1939, was a skilled administrator and was Treasurer of the College. Since we had both retired we felt that we could be the day to day administrators provided we spent most of our time at the College dealing with problems as they arose. This we did during the mornings and afternoons but there were very many meetings in the evening so that post-retiral home life practically ceased before it had begun. One annoyance was similar to the one that had troubled me when I became the Dean in that neither Dr. Campbell nor I could park our cars because of the building operations and so we had to travel by bus which was no joke after a late meeting if the rain was pouring down. Since in theory (though not in fact because it was being used as an office) there was a President's Room above the College, I tried to obtain a resident's

car-parking permit but without success. Three years later I received a demand from the income tax for an explanation of my failure to fill up an income tax form when I was a resident at 9 Queen Street, the College's address. I was able to explain that I never had been resident there, that I was unpaid and that by far the greater part of my travelling expenses in relation to the College affairs were paid by me personally; the tax authorities did not offer me a refund!

My first Presidential journey abroad was the very pleasant one of going to San Francisco in March, 1983 to be made an Honorary Fellow of the American College of Physicians and this time there was no earthquake. I looked forward to travelling on the cable cars but unfortunately none of them were running as the system was being overhauled. I was accomodated in what is probably the best hotel in San Francisco and was given a splendid room looking downhill and over the bay. This hotel has opened in 1906 and was immediately hit by the earthquake, the interior being completely gutted by the ensuing fire. For this visit the Edinburgh College was generously paying most of my expenses and I felt that the cost of my room would be too great so enquiried at the desk and, having learned the price, was transferred to a financially more appropriate one which overlooked the air-conditioning plant, thus saving £400 of College money. I had to stay for a week to get the cheapest Economy air fare, but this was no hardship as I have found California to be one of the most pleasant States of the Union. The convocation was held in the War Memorial Opera House on a Monday and was followed by a Champagne Reception for the new Fellows; Californian champagne can be most acceptable. There were scientific papers and a trade display in a downtown convention centre with a peak attendance of about 4000 doctors. I learned about the seriousness of AIDS as a new disease that was already causing great concern in California and that it might become epidemic; my particular interest afterwards was, in my capacity as Chairman of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion, to do all that I could to back up the aims of the Scottish Blood Transfusion Service to be self-sufficient in the supply of blood and blood products, the ideal being to import none from abroad and preferably not even from outside Scotland.

San Francisco is a truly delightful place with both modern buildings and quaint old streets but of course it should never have been built there since another major earthquake is inevitable because of the San Andreas fault, at present occupied at its surface level to the south of the city by lakes which provide a water supply. Houses are built with a space between each in case earth tremors occur and the telephone

directory advises on what to do when it happens. The city is on a peninsula with the well known Golden Gate bridge to the north and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridge to the east. Many nations have contributed to the population of this metropolis over which have flown the flags of England, Spain, Mexico, Russia, the Republic of California and the United States. Because of its frequent fogs San Francisco Bay was overlooked by foreign navigators for more than 200 years; Francis Drake landed a few miles above the bay in 1579 and annexed the land for England, giving it the name 'Nova Albion.' It is said that it was not until 1775 that a foreign ship entered the bay when the Spanish Naval Lieutenant, Juan Manuel de Ayala sailed in.

During the journey home I dealt with two passengers suffering from minor illnesses but was more concerned about the pilot of the shuttle flight plane from London to Edinburgh who said that if passengers looked out they would see the two bridges over the River Tay; I looked out and saw three bridges including the one at Kincardine, but they were spanning the Forth, not the Tay.

The pace of life was now becoming more brisk with, on occasion, meetings to attend in both Edinburgh and London on the same day, but in September I joined the Presidents of other Colleges at the 17th Malaysia Singapore Congress of Medicine in Kuala Lumpur, the theme being 'Update 1983'. The temperature was 90 degrees and there were thunderstorms, but I spent four days attending the scientific meetings and in the evenings was most pleasantly entertained at dinners including one organized by Fellows and Members of our College. On the fourth day I did not go to bed as my flight was supposed to take off at 0045 hrs; it was late but I arrived back home on the Monday in time to attend a reception at Edinburgh Castle and then a dinner in honour of a visiting lecturer whose talk I had missed. The journey back had not been without incident as a number of young passengers became ill with an intestinal infection and the head steward had a migraine attack. Having done my best to sort them out I had fallen asleep and when I awoke there was a bottle of champagne (Veuve Clicquot nv) between my feet. I found that I had to speak at the dinner but had so many after dinner speeches to make, often without warning, that I seldom had the opportunity to prepare them and the results were variable. Sometimes I was able to cheer up the audience by saying 'The only thing that is certain about this speech is that it will last ten minutes', (or some appropriate time).

In the next four days I chaired an international meeting, attended a reception plus two dinners and a grandchild's birthday party, then set

off with my wife for Calgary where the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada was holding its 52nd annual meeting. We flew by day and upset the other passengers by daring to look out of the window at icebergs and glaciers when they wanted to watch a film named 'Superman III'. In Calgary our very friendly hosts presented each of us with a white stetson hat and I went out to buy more of them so that all five grandchildren could have one, thus adding to our luggage problems on the return journey. In addition to the scientific programme we were guests at a dinner and once again I discovered that I was expected to speak but was introduced as the President of the Royal College of Physicians of Glasgow. It so happened that at our table the Canadians spoke French so I attempted to speak in that tongue when I was telling the diners that, much as I admired Glasgow, I represented the Edinburgh College. This cannot have been too successful because the following day I heard the Glasgow President, who had not been a speaker, being congratulated on his talk.

We enjoyed our visit to Calgary, the home of very many oil companies and were interested to know that it is named after Calgary Bay on the Isle of Mull. We were much entertained by a rodeo where I decided that 'bareback bronco riding' was not for me and, having a free day we took the opportunity to see Banff and something of the Rockies; now we were entering into an area of spectacular beauty but there was much to be done back in Britain and we were home for only a day before I started out on my travels. My duties occupied fifty-nine of the next sixty-five days and I zig-zagged about, chairing or attending meetings, lecturing, speaking at dinners or attending other social functions. My secretary had made out a list of the venues of my engagements in consecutive order and they read as follows; Dundee, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Derby, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Edinburgh, London, Stockton, Dublin, London, Edinburgh, Colchester, Edinburgh, London, Edinburgh, Stratford, Nottingham, Edinburgh, London, Edinburgh, London, Edinburgh, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, Edinburgh, London, Edinburgh. Because of the building operations much of our College was unusable but most fortunately the management of the Dragonara Hotel which was about a mile and a half from the College had offered us the free use of their conference room facilities as a contribution to our appeal and we were able to hold our meetings in this attractive retreat.

However my wife and I decided that once the Christmas festivities were over we should have a few days rest and decided to go to Cairo, not normally regarded as the most restful place in the world. It so

happened however that the London College was holding an Anglo-Egyptian Conference in Cairo with side trips for those who wished to go to Luxor and Aswan. I had always hoped that Fellows in Scotland who belonged to the London College would support its activities but on this occasion although, in all, 180 booked for the Cairo trip only one other pair was from Scotland. However there were many old friends to meet again. A first joint meeting of the Edinburgh and London Colleges had been held in Salisbury, Wiltshire in June, 1983.

On Sunday 8th January, 1984 we flew off from freezing Edinburgh to Heathrow and went to the departure lounge for the Air Egypt flight but there was a snag. Some member of the catering staff had opened an escape chute in error and this had not happened before on any Airbus while it was in Britain. Special equipment was needed to put it back in place but none was available in this country; the staff appealed first to Paris then to Frankfurt and the equipment was flown to London. In theory we had emigrated so we had to re-enter Britain and hand in our 'duty-free' purchases; a meal was supplied, we were reunited with our 'duty-free' and set off five hours late. There was a problem about both our transport and the luggage at Cairo airport but at 5 am (local time) I found our belongings on a barrow outside Shepheard's Hotel and quickly took them up to our room before they disappeared. This of course was not the hotel that I had visited in wartime and it was now on a site nearer to the Nile; the description of it as a five star hotel betrayed considerable optimism on somebody's part, but upgrading was about to commence. We had filled up official forms at the airport to enable us to change currency but were besieged by Egyptians offering to give a much better rate of exchange. This occurred in the streets, in shops, and in the hotel; it was even possible to obtain black market currency in the lift when going up to one's room.

It was warm and sunny so we soon forgot the British climate and got down to the serious problem of crossing the road in front of the hotel, a truly Herculean feat since drivers of all vehicles seem to ignore pedestrians. An attempt to snatch my wallet as I crossed the road was foiled. The meeting, held in the Arab League Building, was opened by the Prime Minister, Professor Dr. F Mohy El Din, and the scientific programme, which occupied five days, was patchy and would no doubt have been better had all the speakers turned up. Excellent entertainment had been arranged and my wife and I particularly enjoyed a dinner at the Mena House Hotel given by Dr. Abd El Hamid Hassan, the Governor of Giza. The last time I had seen the hotel was on 15th December, 1943 and now the date was 10th January, 1984 but

it goes without saying that the three Pyramids were as impressive as when I had first seen them and now it was possible to climb up into the chambers of the Pyramid of Cheops which was erected about 2690 BC. We were told that a British visitor on a day flight to Cairo and the Pyramids had climbed up into the central chamber and promptly expired. Once again I admired and photographed the Pyramids and the inscrutable Sphinx; this time we were entertained by a *Son et Lumière* performance, but the night air was chilly.

The following day I had a ridiculous discussion with the head waiter in our hotel about a bottle of beer. When it arrived I was astonished to find that inside it there was not only beer but at the bottom there was a folded Pepsi-Cola top which could not be extracted. This seemed to be a trophy worth preserving but the waiter said I could not keep the bottle and when I asked 'Why not?' he brought the head waiter who agreed with him, pointing out that I had purchased only the contents of the bottle. To this I replied that the bottle top was now part of the contents and that I wanted to keep it. The discussion became more and more animated, but to prevent an international incident I gave in.

Now it was time to have the holiday part of our trip and we went to the airport to fly to Aswan, 534 miles south of Cairo. As we prepared to embark there was chaos, with planes overbooked, milling throngs of bewildered passengers seeking enlightenment, beggars and touts looking for business and heavily burdened porters trying to push overloaded trolleys through doors that were not large enough to permit their passage. Once we had been allocated our seats we were asked to give them up again because a Government minister and his family had decided at the last minute to travel on the plane; I had seen the Secretary of State for Scotland failing to get a seat on the Edinburgh plane at Heathrow and we did not budge. In coming from London and on the return journey the planes were overbooked and, with it usual courtesy, the London College had us transferred to first class accommodation for which the airline made no extra charge.

First we saw the new Aswan Dam, and I was surprised to learn that there was still to be seen the old Aswan Dam, constructed in 1902. We sailed by felucca to Kitchener's Island (presented to Lord Kitchener and containing botanical gardens with exotic trees and flowers) and to Elephantine Island with its museum and tombs of the princesses of Aswan. From the point of view of a photographer however I was particularly pleased with pictures taken at the Temple of Philae on an island lying between the old and new dams. When the new dam was built this temple with all its buildings was dismantled and re-erected on

a new site so that it would be free from floods all the year round; the oldest part dates from the 4th century BC, the rest being built during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. Here there was worshipped the goddess Isis. We saw the Agha Khan's mausoleum and had some leisure time in the bright sunshine before flying northwards again to Luxor on the east bank of the Nile some 400 miles south of Cairo and on the site of ancient Thebes.

Egypt had first become a united country about 3100 BC with a capital at Memphis, near Cairo but later there was civil war and foreign infiltration. Thebes became prominent under the princes who reunited Egypt in the XIth dynasty (about 2060 BC) and was the capital of Egypt for several hundred years until the time of the Greek Ptolomies in 323 BC. It seems to have occupied the area of land on the east bank of the Nile stretching from Luxor northwards to Karnak, with funerary temples on the east bank in the Valley of the Kings under the Theban cliffs. At the Temples of Luxor and of Karnak we saw enormous columns, monuments and statues while overhead the sun shone in the cloudless blue sky. We saw the Nile steamers which cruise between Cairo, Luxor and Aswan but all we did in the way of sailing was to be ferried across the river so that we could visit the Valley of the Kings on the west bank. We were told that sixty-four pharaoh's tombs had been discovered but our main interest was in that of Tutankhamun, or Tut Ankh Amon, a king of the XVIIIth dynasty (about 1550-1295 BC) whose importance lies, not in his deeds, but the fact that his tomb survived practically intact until 1922 when all its contents were revealed to the world by Howard Carter. We had seen most of them in the Cairo Museum where they were of such magnificence that they were obviously worthy of inclusion on any list of the wonders of the world but the sarcophagus, the mummy and the outer coffin are still in the tomb and those we now could see.

To the south of the tombs of the Kings are those of the Queens and Princes, but we were taken instead the short walk to Deir el Bahari where, against the rugged rock face, is the funerary temple of Queen Hatshepsut of the XVIIIth dynasty, access to the sanctuary (which is carved out of the cliff) being through three courts on different levels, lined with colonnades. The queen had been buried in a corridor tomb deep in the rock behind. Adjacent to it are the remains of the funerary temple of Mentuhotep, built five hundred years earlier about 2065 BC and rather similar in form but with a pyramid serving as a symbolic tombstone on top. My last photographs in the course of this outstanding excursion to Egypt were fittingly of those majestic

monuments to early civilisations which were truly remarkable.

Returning to London after a 4.00 am call we had time to shake the sand from our clothes and have a night's sleep before going to the House of Lords where Lord Richardson of Lee, an honorary Fellow of our Edinburgh College had arranged a reception for Fellows and Members which was held in the Peers' Dining Room. Together with spouses the attendance was about 200 and no doubt as I addressed them they wondered how it was that we were so sunburned. There was certainly reason for wonder because when we arrived home there was heavy snow and the temperature in our house was off the scale of the thermometer in our hall which does not record readings below 46 degrees F (7.8°C). As a precaution we turn the heating off when we go away for more than a week, but this drop of 40 degrees in temperature was a remarkable change. The next day I flew back to London for two days of meetings and then returned to Edinburgh for three more days of the same. So life went on until the beginning of March, a College symposium in Belfast being included, and then my wife and I set off for Burma in response to a request from our Burmese Fellows and Members.

I was, of course, returning to a land which I knew and correctly did not imagine that there would have been major structural changes in the course of thirty-eight years in this country of pagodas and smiling friendly people. We had to change planes at Bangkok and Professor Pinit Kullavanijaya insisted that we must stay at his home and this we were pleased to do. At the airport he and the Burmese Ambassador met us and we were taken to areas of Bangkok that we had not seen on our prevous visit including an amazing 'Ancient City' containing 75 full size reproductions of important buildings from all parts of Thailand. In complete contrast we were taken to the luxury Oriental Hotel for luncheon, one of the great habitations of the east, and one in which have stayed Joseph Conrad, Noel Coward and Somerset Maugham. We went to Somerset Maugham's former bedroom to have a photograph taken, much to the concern of members of the hotel staff, but all was well because the picture was being taken for us by a captain in the Royal Thai Police who, together with our hosts, had accompanied us throughout the day apparently for our protection. There was an account in the *Bangkok World* newspaper that day of an incursion into Thailand by Burmese troops, but that was not related, the unlikely danger being that on occasion visitors to the capital may be mugged by criminal elements.

It was splendid to return to Rangoon and to be whisked through

Customs by a welcoming party and I was immediately handed the programme for our very efficiently organized trip which at first sight was daunting in that every hour of every day for nine days was included on the list. When I read it, however, it was reassuring to find that much of the time was devoted to sight-seeing in various parts of the country. I pointed out that our visa permitted us to stay for only seven days, but this discrepancy was attended to at once and we were driven off in state to the Inya Lake Hotel. It is large and, having been built with Russian aid does not have a typical Burmese appearance but we had a wonderful suite overlooking the lake while adjacent to it was a smaller room where Dr U Nyunt Win, a consultant neurologist who had worked in Edinburgh stayed to ensure that we had no problems; not only that but he accompanied us on our travels, something that we found to be most helpful.

First I paid a courtesy call on His Excellency U Tin Wai, the Minister for Health and then, after other courtesy visits to various senior medical administrators was taken round the Institute of Medicine and a 220 bedded teaching hospital. Everywhere we went an official car with motor cycle escort was provided and always there was an official photographer whose very successful pictures were given to me before we left. On one occasion we were approaching a road junction in Rangoon from one direction with our escort in front when the President of Burma in his limousine came from a different direction, also being led by an escort; I photographed the puzzled traffic policeman as he was deciding how to sort that one out! It goes without saying that I visited many hospitals and medical research or teaching departments and that while I was doing so my wife was entertained by local lady doctors or wives.

On the second day there was an official conducted tour of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda which, of course, I had known well in 1945-46, but this time I was able to take better pictures and we were given a lot of information about this, the best known and most spectacular of all pagodas. It occurred to me that I would be expected to contribute to the funds for its upkeep so I asked our accompanying medical friend how much would be appropriate and he indicated that it should be the equivalent of £50. I contributed the suggested amount and then discreetly found out the number of pagodas we would be visiting; currency restrictions being what they were we would have had to shorten our visit by a few days if I maintained this level of donation so moved from the desirable to the possible in later contributions. I thought of the various wonders I had recently seen and calculated that

if the original Shwe Dagon Pagoda had been built 2500 years ago as we believed, then the Pyramids of Ghiza were already over 2000 years old at that time and although the original Babylon had been constructed about 1790 BC its reconstruction by Nebuchadnezzar had been about 597 BC which was just before the Pagoda's construction had been begun. Perhaps however this lateral thinking on a hot day in the blazing sun was unwise. We met and were entertained to dinner by our Fellows and Members from lower Burma and of course at all the dinners I gave a talk but only two formal lectures were listed on my programme. We flew on to Mandalay where we were most hospitably looked after and I met our local Fellows and Members, gave a lecture to the Burma Medical Association, the members of which entertained us to dinner, and visited the Institute of Medicine where two of the textbooks which I had edited were pointed out to me in the library.

Mandalay had been destroyed in May, 1942 by Japanese air-raids and on 14th March, 1945 I had heard that the 19th Indian Division (to which I was the medical specialist when it was forming at Deolali) had recaptured Mandalay Hill which overlooks the town, but although Major-General Rees did all he could to prevent further destruction, Mandalay Fort had to be attacked. On 19th March the Japanese withdrew and Mandalay was retaken. By chance it was now 14th March, 1984 thirty-nine years from the day the hill which we could see from our hotel was recaptured and now my wife and I were in that rebuilt city, which unfortunately suffered further destruction from a major fire after our visit.

Our programme said that we must now go 26 miles further north to Maymyo, a well known hill station for the British in colonial days, named after a Colonel May (myo means city). We were taken in a private car by an obliging driver of Chinese descent who assured us that we had nothing to worry about on the winding road up to the hills as he had already on this very road survived three car crashes (the car having rolled over only once) and that he brought good luck because he had also survived a snake bite, a scorpion bite, a fire, an earthquake and an attack of botulism. We drove upwards, almost reassured. The botanic garden in Maymyo reminded us of home and the town still had a British look but what interested me most was that I was asked to carry out an inspection of the military hospital nearby. This was done in a most formal manner with the doctors and nursing sisters standing at the entrances to the wards as we came along the main corridor and then accompanying us on our rounds where I was able to discuss medical details with some of the patients, most of the accompanying group being able to interpret for me; as always I had my stethoscope with me

and felt quite at home once again carrying out an inspection of a military hospital in Burma. Cerebral malaria was one of the conditions that was troublesome, but on the surgical side of the hospital I had to remember that after British military rule ended in 1948 the mainly Christian Karen hill people, some three million in number, had been demanding the establishment of an autonomous state and sporadic fighting had gone on throughout the days after the second world war. The Karens had always supported the British and we were north and west of the area where they lived but after we left Rangoon my wife and I were discreetly accompanied by an armed officer and two of his men; when I asked what this was for I was told that it was to protect us from the Karens and the Communists.

Next we were taken to Sagaing, first to see the Kaunghmudaw Pagoda, built as a perfect hemisphere with a small dome on top. I had heard of it before because it was a well known landmark during the Irrawaddy crossings in 1945, being given the irreverent title of the 'Tit Pagoda', but for us it supplied a fine background for a group photograph before we went up Sagaing hill to see more pagodas and a glorious view of the Irrawaddy river. Back we went to Mandalay, and saw many sights including the Kithodaw Pagoda which is said to have the world's largest book because on 729 stone slabs there are inscribed the entire Budhist scriptures.

We flew to Pagan, said to be the richest area of archaeological treasures in South-East Asia. In an area of 42 square kilometres there are thousands of pagodas almost all built between AD 1057 and the time two hundred and thirty years later when the land was overrun by the Tatars (or Tartars). There are many architectural styles but most of the buildings are partly or completely ruined, matters being made worse by an earthquake in 1975; renovation of the most important temples has been going on for centuries and is being continued, but the total number is very large indeed. We were taken to several, the most notable being the highest one, built in AD 1144 and rising to 200 feet. It is named the Thatbyinnyu which means 'omniscience', and it has two main storeys with an image of Buddha enshrined on the upper floor. Our young guide seemed quite mobile despite the fact that her leg bore the scars of a bite from a possibly rapid dog and her enthusiasm was undiminished even although she was having daily injections of anti-rabies serum into her abdominal wall. Apart from pagodas we were most interested to visit a lacquerware workshop where we saw articles going through as many as 20 processes, mainly by hand, before they were ready for sale.

It was at Pagan that the South Lancashire Regiment to which I had

been attached at one time crossed the Irrawaddy in February 1945 to find, not the expected Japanese troops, but some from the Indian National Army who promptly surrendered.

In the afternoon we flew to Rangoon where on the following day, a Sunday, we had an 8 am visit to the zoo, a special display being put on for us including one by a glamorous young lady who appeared to kiss a poisonous snake despite the fact that she had already been in hospital twice as a result of previous performances, and then we were taken round the National Museum which was opened specially despite the fact that it was a holiday. Here there was much gold and ivory, but we were whisked off so that I could give a lecture; in the evening there was a Burma Medical Association dinner where everybody signed a series of menu cards which I still have, bearing 73 signatures.

The Minister for Health had discovered (presumably someone having seen it in my passport) that the next day was my birthday and had organized a party to end all parties. In addition he had been told that in 1945-46 I had worked in the Dufferin Hospital (then 38 BGH) which was taken over by us from the Japanese; I still have the notice in Japanese from the door of the psychiatrist's office. The hospital was still in action, now being used for obstetrics, but it was arranged that we would visit it, and I was delighted about this.

Almost forty years previously I had driven a battered jeep to and from the hospital when carrying out duties in various parts of Rangoon at a time when my wife was working in Calcutta but now we were together as we were driven there in an official car with a motor cycle escort. We crossed a railway bridge from which in 1946 I had seen the first train steaming off to Mandalay after hostilities had ceased and rounded the corner where I could see that the hospital was almost unchanged externally; there were no drastic changes in the interior either. I saw the bungalow in which I had slept and had an office and also the one in which there had resided on the upper floor a CO who tended to suffer from hangovers; one Sunday morning I had arranged for the local Salvation Army band to play outside this bungalow and those who were mobile had serenaded him with hymns, much to his annoyance and detriment of the hangover. I could still identify the houses in which the British Army nurses had lived and we went into the lecture theatre where I, as Entertainments Officer, had arranged film shows.

Next came a visit to the British Embassy where His Excellency the British Ambassador and Mrs Fenn had very kindly invited us to a birthday luncheon and of course conversation was easy since I hardly

felt that I was in a strange land. In the evening the Minister for Health had arranged the special birthday celebrations in the Karaweik Hotel which is a large concrete structure designed like a royal barge at the end of the Royal Lake where I had been badly bitten by leeches when swimming in 1945. When we had returned to Rangoon on the Saturday afternoon and heard about the birthday celebrations my wife was most concerned about not having a suitable dress (a similar problem to the time when our wedding had been arranged in Calcutta at equally short notice). There was no difficulty because Dr. Soe Soe Aye, a lady who had been most helpful, whisked my wife off to the bazaar where she bought a suitable length of Burmese silk and then to a dressmaker who took the measurements, made the dress, arranged a fitting and delivered the finished elegant article in time for the Minister for Health's dinner.

First came the splendid meal including Lobster à la Thermidor which caused me some concern since my wife would have had to be admitted to hospital in the middle of the dinner because of her allergy had she eaten it, but there was no problem in that a whispered explanation resulted in an alternative being provided at once. The Minister gave a speech and then to our surprise a birthday cake with candles was produced and of course I was photographed blowing them out. In turn I gave a speech which was very easy on this occasion since I had so much gratitude to express.

There followed a cultural show specially arranged for us with eight elegant dances which represented different regions of the country, followed by an acrobatic display, puppets and Burmese songs. All the time the photographer was flashing away so I have pictures of a young lady acrobat in mid air, men and very good looking girls dancing in their colourful costumes and, finally, the line up where I shook hands with each of the performers, all the while feeling that we had been mistaken for royalty because of the title of our College, which is a Royal College in Queen Street.

Each morning my wife had been presented with a corsage of orchids and various gifts had been given to us including a carved ivory elephant for our College. I have never bought an article made from ivory but feared there might be trouble at the Customs at Heathrow as indeed there was. I went through the red channel and declared everything, explaining to a sympathetic Customs official my problem in that the elephant was a gift on behalf of the Burmese government to a Royal College. I was unable to say whether there had been an Indian, Burmese or African source for the ivory and I did not know whether it

had been carved in Burma or Hong Kong; the value was quite unknown to me, but in any case the official had to impound the article. It so happened that the Burmese Minister for Health was coming to Scotland; I had invited him to dinner and was worried about the fact that his elephant would not be on display so wrote to the Secretary of State who ruled that I could have it returned to the College, particularly since I did not know the original source of the ivory. When the Burmese Minister came for dinner the elephant was in place on the table. I could not produce acrobats for him but at least I had flown to London and successfully recovered the elephant.

We had arrived back just in time for our College Ladies Dinner and I had no problem in speaking about the ladies who had been so helpful to both of us in Burma. From this I left for a two day Army Study Period in Pitlochry and then rushed back to deal with College affairs, my main immediate responsibility being in relation to the Conference Centre. Demolition work had been completed and thereafter every week when in Edinburgh I photographed the stages of construction. There was another dinner to attend before I flew back to London, the first of three visits in a week; I had resumed the programme of careering around the country from one meeting to another.

In June I felt much honoured when I was elected to be a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and from Dublin my wife and I flew to Singapore where I was examining in the higher degree of the National University of Singapore, the Mastership of Medicine (Internal Medicine). We were met at Changi airport by one of our Senior Fellows, Dato Professor Seah Cheng Siang, and during our stay we were both extremely well looked after while the examination, a very thorough one, was of a high standard. We had always known of Raffles Hotel but had chosen to stay in one that was more convenient for my duties but I heard interesting war time stories to add to the ones I had already been told by released prisoners of war. Apparently although the Japanese were bombing Singapore on Christmas Day, 1941, it was still necessary to book a table for dinner at Raffles then and during January 1942. My friend and former fellow student Dr. Stanley Pavillard, author of the *Bamboo Doctor* was in Singapore on Christmas Day, having come south ahead of the Japanese who already held Penang, and he noted that in Singapore itself there was a fairly peacetime air. Although the Japanese were advancing down the Malay peninsula he told me that our Intelligence still believed they would invade Singapore from the sea. In fact they landed on Singapore Island from the peninsula to the north on the night of February 7th and Singapore had

to capitulate on February 15th. The Japanese massacred the sick and wounded at the Alexander Military Hospital, an outrageous event vouched for by Dr. Pavillard who visited the hospital just afterwards.

The Japanese used Raffles Hotel, renamed Syonan Ryokan, for high ranking officers and when they left on September 4th 1945, men from *H.M.S. Providence* who arrived at the hotel were not admitted as it was reserved for those of the rank of Lieut.-Colonel (or equivalent) and above. Habits die hard.

I was too busy for us to take a holiday in 1984 except that we were able to have a very pleasant three day side trip to Penang followed by two on the island of Langkawi, further north near the border with Thailand, flying in a small nine seater plane with no co-pilot, radar or pressurisation. With difficulty land was seen through the clouds and we touched down on a landing strip in a jungle clearing. Beside the country club hotel complex was a shrine with a notice which read 'We had to suffer the consequences of workers' accidents and unfortunate delays during the construction of the hotel in 1971. It was only much later, after having investigated the series of bad luck befalling us that we learned of the existence of this spirit. Following the advice of the villagers we built this shrine to give the wandering spirit a home and since then nothing has happened.' Unfortunately this last claim was incorrect because just after I photographed the shrine and its notice my camera mysteriously fell off a shelf in our room and the lens which was smashed could not be repaired; when I attempted to put the picture in an album, for the first time ever the transparent surface covering, when pulled back, tore a hole in the page. Moreover, when I typed the above quotation from the notice board I developed migraine for the first time in over a year. I am glad that I am not superstitious!

After a very busy week dealing with College affairs I set off for Bangladesh, this time on my own. I had been invited to examine in the Fellowship Examination of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Dhaka and there were a number of problems. Usually the travelling expenses of an examiner are paid but Bangladesh is a very poor country (113th in a list of 114 countries whose Gross National Product *per capita* was listed in a book that I had) and in any case there are severe currency restrictions, so first I had to attempt to obtain funds to pay an economy air fare. I managed to obtain about a third of it from a sympathetic drug company director and, since I was retired, there was no objection to my acceptance of this contribution. Then on our way we seemed to be about to be stranded at Doha in Qatar because of a broken fuel pipe, but after three hours of waiting in the plane we were

first told to disembark and then that it was not necessary as, unexpectedly, somebody had managed to mend the fuel pipe. Finally this was the wrong time of year to go to Bangladesh because of the monsoon deluges. Bombay at the other side of the Indian sub-continent had had the heaviest monsoon for a hundred years and in areas in the north of Bangladesh there were the heaviest rains ever recorded. The basic trouble is that the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra-Jamuna and Meghna rivers with their vast numbers of tributaries which keep changing their courses is not really a suitable area for there to be a country especially in the rainy season, and the deforestation of the Himalayan forests in India and Nepal was now making matters much worse because less water was being absorbed in the hills and more topsoil was being dislodged. About 25 per cent of the river waters of the world flow through Bangladesh. Each year matters were becoming worse and in the month of my visit nearly 300,000 people in Bangladesh were affected by floods sweeping through 19 districts with more than 200 known deaths. As we came in to land at Dhaka I could see the flooded areas and only hoped there was enough runway for our plane to touch down without submerging in the waters. I was met at the airport and once again overwhelmed by hospitality. My accommodation was in the guest house of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research and despite its name this was most satisfactory and when I had to eat in the guest house (which was seldom) the food was most acceptable.

Bangladesh is overcrowded with about 90 million inhabitants, the population density being about seven times that of the United Kingdom. I was told that ten million children suffered from malnutrition and yet life expectancy at birth was said to be 55 years. There were 25,000 hospital beds and about 10,000 doctors but only 3,700 registered nurses. All manner of diseases were to be found but at least I had worked in Bangladesh during the war, including having a spell in Dhaka itself, so would know something about any condition that might turn up in the examinations in which I was to participate. The main roads were wider, there were some large new buildings but there were pedal rickshaws as before, while the hospital in which I had worked showed little change. The President of the Bangladesh College, Professor M A Martin, had been an ophthalmic surgeon, then became Minister of Health and was now Minister of Trade and Commerce. He had discovered that I had worked in a military hospital at Sirajgunj nearly forty years previously and that I had met my wife when she was a 'QA' there, so had planned an expedition to Sirajgunj despite the fact

that it was difficult to get to, but it was something that was particularly appropriate since he came from there himself and had been an eight year old schoolboy at the time my wife and I were working in the military hospital.

In two official cars eight of us set off for what, to some of the group who had never been there, was an unexpected destination with the flag of Bangladesh fluttering proudly on our leading vehicle. In this flooded country we were starting off from the capital city to visit a much smaller town on the other side of the mighty Brahmaputra, the name by which I had known it, but when Bangladesh became independent the name of that part of the river which was outside India was changed to Jamuna. Communications whether by road, rail or river are difficult and in the rainy season unpredictable so even with a map I was uncertain about our route. However we drove along roads with flooded lands on either side, animals having taken to the road to avoid drowning. The journey must have been well planned for when we stopped for refreshment at a guest house a guard of honour appeared and when a bugler had sounded a rallying call Professor Matin carried out an inspection. We drove on past the floods to Bhuapur where a car-carrying ferry was waiting to take us across the river, now so swollen that it was like the open sea. At Sirajgunj Ghat, part of which was submerged, we were met by large shouting crowds; having been in several riots on the Indian sub-continent I thought at first that this was another one but it was a welcoming crowd greeting their favourite Minister. We drove slowly to the Base Eye Hospital with its Conference Hall and here I learned to my great surprise that because of my long connections with the area and my work there I was being made a freeman of the township. The conference room was full, television cameras were there, Professor Matin made a speech, the Chairman of Sirajgunj Municipality presented the key, I made a speech and we all went out into the sunlight where I was garlanded and photographed. Professor Matin had to leave temporarily to meet the President of Bangladesh who was arriving by helicopter and the rest of us went in search of my former hospital. First we went to the General Hospital which was unchanged, the surgical instruments being in a box bearing the date 1909. The doctor there was physician, surgeon, neurosurgeon and obstetrician and deserved every credit for his work. Nobody knew where the former Army hospital had been but there are not many streets in Sirajgunj and I still knew my way around so directed our driver to the bungalow which had been the administrative headquarters of 67 IGH (C). The present owners of the house emerged and

confirmed what I had said and although most of the hospital had reverted to jungle the former nursing sisters' rooms were still there, the doors all being firmly locked. A puzzled group of local inhabitants joined me for a photograph in front of the bolted rooms, not knowing that we were standing on the surface of the former tennis court where there had been taken the first picture of my wife and me together in 1945 when we were playing tennis.

Professor Matin having returned, he kindly took me to the home of his parents and then we visited first a jute mill then a milk processing factory where we were to stay the night. On the following day we visited a house in which there had lived the poet and Nobel Prize winning author Rabindranath Tagore who later became an artist, some of his pictures being on display in the house and then we recrossed the swollen river by ferry, driving 90 miles on to Dhaka. As we sped past we saw on four occasions buses that had gone off the road then plunged down the embankment and still we had the animals standing on the roads to avoid the flooded fields.

I had corrected the written examination papers before we set out on our journey but now on a Saturday there were the clinical and oral parts of the ordeal for the candidates and the six of the twenty-six who passed were very good. On the Sunday morning I visited Professor Nurul Islam, a Fellow of our College, and saw the Institute of Postgraduate Medicine and Research which he directed, then went on to Dhaka Medical College to give a lecture and visit the hospital wards. Strangely enough the rains had ceased during my visit but the temperature was 90 degrees and the humidity 92%; just after I left the monsoon struck again, even more severely than before. Because I had to attend a meeting in London on the Monday I had booked a return flight on the Bangladesh Biman Airline leaving at 23.30 on the Sunday but unfortunately it did not take off until 0850 on the Monday. Apart from that the only problem about the flight was that the passenger sitting next to me became somewhat disorientated about the position of the plane when we were flying over the Middle East and when he put his prayer mat down in the aisle needed assistance in deciding how to face Mecca. While I was trying to help him an official of the airline moved me from Economy to First Class. I arrived back too late to catch a flight to Edinburgh but managed to find a bed in a hotel, caught the first morning flight and reached the College in time to show a group of visitors round it as had been arranged, opened two tins to make a rapid lunch, attended to the mail, presided over a Council meeting which lasted even longer than usual, and finally went home to find that my

wife, while sitting on a rug in front of the fireplace as she liked to do, had fallen asleep while awaiting my arrival and had dropped a lighted cigarette on the rug and set it on fire. I produced a verse from Tagore's poems that had been given to me. It included the phrase 'Screened by her skirt it burns on all night.'

We had only one further trip overseas that year and it was a most pleasant one to the meeting of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in Montreal and there I met many of our Fellows and saw amongst other things the Royal Victoria Hospital which was built to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 using the plans of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. In Edinburgh we are still using the wards but in Montreal they are now administrative offices and there has been much rebuilding around the original structure. Just after we returned Lord Home of the Hirsel, an Honorary Fellow of our College, laid the foundation stone of our Conference Centre, the date being 21st September, 1984.

CHAPTER 22

In the Year of the Rat

Although this is mainly an account of travels it should be said that most of the duties of a College President are in his home country and that it was only because I had retired that I was able to accept so many invitations to visit our College Fellows and Members overseas. Even so 85% of my working time in 1984 had been spent in the United Kingdom.

I had always thought that the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh should hold a meeting overseas and had tried to have one arranged in the Netherlands because of the connection of so many of our founding fathers with Leyden but unfortunately the plans were unsuccessful because of the illness of the doctor with whom we were attempting to make the arrangements. My second idea was to have a meeting in Hong Kong and our professorial friends there were most enthusiastic as was Dr David Boyd in Edinburgh who negotiated the detailed arrangements.

The omens were good; I had a book of Chinese horoscopes which (although it said that my wife and I were quite unsuited for each other) told me that at the beginning of January 1985 we would still be in the Year of the Rat and that all ventures begun at this time would be succesful if one prepared well. It appears that the Lord Buddha summoned all the animals to come to him before he departed from the earth, but only twelve came and he rewarded them by naming a year after each in the order of their arrival. During a 60 year cycle each of the animal signs is combined with one of the five main elements and at this time it was wood, so having the name Girdwood we should be doubly fortunate.

Our travel agent had suggested an excursion into mainland China and my wife and I were two of the twenty-eight people who signed up for this extension of the journey. In a way this made the excursion an official one, because it was the first time that a Royal College, including its President, had arranged to visit China and so the Foreign Office was notified as was the British Council while the Lord Provost of Edinburgh gave me a message of greetings to deliver in person to the

Mayor of Xi'an, a historic Chinese city with which Edinburgh is twinned.

First however was the important matter of the reason for our journey, an official College meeting in Hong Kong, the first in the College's history to be held outside Edinburgh since this was not a symposium but a properly constituted official meeting. I did in fact overhear a few critical remarks about College funds being used for this when we were having an appeal for a new building but nothing could have been further from the truth in that we paid our own travel costs and expenses (including the President!). About 250 attended from 15 countries and at the opening ceremony Dr the Hon K.L. Thong (the Director of Medical and Health Services) and I were the speakers. There was a most interesting scientific programme and a comprehensive social one including a dinner attended by His Excellency the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Edward Youde, and Lady Youde.

After five days those of us who were going to mainland China flew to Shanghai but before we went I accepted informed advice and had visiting cards printed in Chinese. I also had a note written to explain that my wife was allergic to any form of shellfish. We were accompanied by an experienced British guide and by a helpful young man who was a resident of Beijing (Peking). For Customs we had to list all the items of value that we were taking in and were told that we must keep the carbon copy of this form or we might not be allowed to take them out again. However we were arriving in China at a time when the regime was becoming less restrictive and contact with foreigners was not discouraged, the atmosphere being something like that encountered by us in Prague in 1968 before the Russians moved in with their tanks and guns. As we travelled around we were made most welcome by medical colleagues and others while we were objects of interest to many, particulary children who may never have seen anything quite like us before. Mothers were delighted to be photographed with their fond offspring, muffled up like humpty dumpties in the cold of a Chinese winter. Our currency in yuans was a different colour from that used by the local inhabitants and we could not take it out of the country. There was more to be bought in the shops than we had expected, but for us, being foreigners, there were the special Friendship Stores which had a large selection of goods; we did not encounter queues in the streets outside food shops such as we had seen in Warsaw and it seemed that more colourful articles of clothing were becoming available than in the past. We began to be more optimistic

than we had been about the immediate future of China and thought that by 1997 the bridging of the differences between Hong Kong and China might not be as difficult as had been expected.

There were very many bicycles but few cars and the atmosphere was often dusty or foggy; many of the Chinese wore masks as protection against the dust and smog or perhaps to keep out infection. The hotels were warm and reasonably modern with vacuum flasks of boiling water and loose tea leaves provided in each room but all meals were of Chinese type food, chopsticks being provided. This created problems since we seldom really knew what we were eating and I did not want to see my wife being admitted to a Chinese hospital because of her extreme allergy to shellfish. I carried my syringe and ampoules of hydrocortisone as well as my stethoscope and the whole party spontaneously decided to study each dish of food for anything that had, for example a pink colour like prawns or lobster. I had a list of the hundred most popular dishes but it was not of much practical value. For example I did not want to have Toad-like Ablone, Brooding Phoenix and certainly not Carp served Alive. Fried Squirrel, Stewed Bear's Paw and Stewed Silver Fungus with Pangolin were not for me, while Stewed Mixture of Snake, Wild Cat and Hen Meat was too close to Sweet and Sour Pork to my untutored eye when attempting to read Chinese characters. In any case we normally ate what was brought to us in the hotels, usually without knowing what it was.

We had two pleasant nights in the Shanghai Hotel and were interested to walk along the Bund, looking at the shops and being gazed at by the local people; we saw one old lady with unbelieavably tiny feet, the aftermath of binding. Special arrangements had been made for us to visit the Chung Shan Hospital and we were told that it was so named in memory of Dr Sun Yat Sen who had been a student when Dr Patrick Manson, an Aberdeen graduate, was the first Dean of the Hong Kong medical school. The dowager empress Tz'u Hsi had been a ruthless tyrant and Sun Yat Sen had attempted to organize an uprising in Canton in 1895 but without success. She died in 1908, leaving a child emperor and in 1911 Sun Yat Sen managed to arrange simultaneous revolutions in various parts of China. Transiently he became President of the country. In 1896 he had been kidnapped in Devonshire Street in London and detained in the Chinese Legation, the intention apparently being to put him in a barrel and throw him into the Thames. Manson was in Britain and went to see Lord Salisbury who persuaded the captors to free Sun Yat Sen. I had known of Sir Patrick Manson as a tropical medicine expert but now I learned how he

had changed the whole course of history in China.

At the entrance to the hospital there was prominently displayed a message of welcome to us and inside we learned that there were 840 beds, 367 doctors, 464 nurses and 235 technicians and that 2000 out-patients a day attended the hospital. It was not up-to-date, but the staff were keen to learn about new developments because this was a hospital in which there was practiced both Western and traditional Chinese methods of treatment.

We went on by train to Nanjing, a name meaning 'southern capital' and there we found that we were in the splendid modern Jinling Hotel while in the Jiangsu Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine we saw acupuncture being used on a patient with a duodenal ulcer. This in itself did not prove much and we would have been more convinced had we seen it being used to cover an operation on the thyroid gland or a gallbladder where it was claimed to be effective. We were impressed by the Sun Yat Sen mausoleum where he is buried on the southern slope of the Zijin Shan in the eastern suburbs. It covers an area of 321 acres and from the entrance to the Memorial Hall there are 392 steps to be ascended. Dr Sun Yat Sen is represented by a white marble statue which portrays him gazing placidly into the far distance from the centre of the hall. The tomb of Tai Zu, founding Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368-1644) is nearby.

Now there was a problem; we were told that, because of bad weather, our plane could not manage the four hour flight to Xi'an which we were expecting and that instead of having two nights in Nanjing we would spend a night in a train. The train was very comfortable for us because special sleeping and dining cars had been attached, but as we passed through the accommodation for the other passengers it was worse than anything I had seen in any country. Our food was satisfactory and we saw a lot of the featureless countryside in the course of our 24 hour journey, but there was no sign of the bad weather that we had been told about.

The lack of birds was said to be because during the 'Cultural Revolution' attempts had been made to include in the general desecration the slaughter of all bird life. This was a disastrous attempt begun in 1966 to change the whole structure of the country by political, social and economic upheaval on a vast scale. Scholars and professional men were driven from their posts and humiliated, many leaders and officials were ousted, the economy was ruined, international relations were sabotaged, buildings were destroyed, the British mission in Beijing was burned to the ground and China went into a period of

cultureless isolation. The Cultural Revolution was officially initiated by Chairman Mao Zedong in August 1966 with a mass rally in Beijing, the intention being to bring the country closer to Mao's idea of an ideal Communist state. Schools were closed and teachers and other intellectuals were paraded through the streets wearing dunce's caps. The repression continued until Mao died on 9th September 1976 at the age of 82. A power struggle then broke out and on 11th October 1976 Mao's widow, Chiang Ching and three others, (the Gang of Four) were arrested and the liberalization of the country which now made our visit possible began.

At Xi'an we were met by a group of civic dignitaries with whom I exchanged cards and then were taken to the comfort of the Lian Hotel. Our first visit was to the Xi'an 4th Hospital where Dr Jian Dun Xin and his colleagues welcomed us, had a joint group photograph taken before we saw round the hospital and told us about the many British doctors who had worked there particularly from 1920 to 1929. Apparently the British had initiated the hospital in 1920 but the present building dated from 1974. The staff of this 314 bedded hospital were keen to know about modern developments and I later arranged for information and medical books to be sent to them. At no time during the trip did we discuss politics with our hosts or colleagues so I do not know what medical care was like in the bleak period of isolation. The situation was not yet sufficiently stable for me to compromise friendly colleagues by asking political questions, a problem that we encountered in other countries.

We were of course taken to see the 'terra cotta army' which had so recently been discovered. In 246 BC a new king ascended the throne of the state of Qin on the Wei River, on the south bank of which Xi'an now stands. He was the first ruler to unify all China and decreed amongst other things one written language, while to the north of the country he had the Great Wall built. The latter was of course much extended, altered and restored in later dynasties. As the first Emperor he took the title Qin Shi Huang and hundreds of thousands of workers were employed for many years to build his tomb, which was filled with great treasures while, on his death, his wives were immured with him. The tomb was immediately plundered and his capital destroyed. What was overlooked, however, was the vast army of life-size clay figures which guarded the approach to the tomb, something discovered by farmers digging for a well in 1974. There they stand in the solid lines of the ancient Chinese battle formation gazing impassively into the far distance. Those that have been excavated are protected by a roofed

building but the excavations continue and the Chinese believe that there are, in all, 7000 warriors, 600 horses and over a hundred war chariots.

Nearby we saw the Huaqing Hot Springs, used for treating various ailments but also the place where the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai Shek in 1936 attempted to use Manchurian and other soldiers against the Communists rather than against the Japanese and was arrested. Shots were fired through a window and this with its bullet hole has been preserved, so naturally I photographed it. Chiang Kai Shek was captured but after negotiations the Nationalists and Communists agreed to co-operate against the Japanese and he was released.

In the evening the Mayor invited us to a reception at which I handed over the message from our Lord Provost together with an illuminated address from our College. We were taken from the Town Hall to the Sian restaurant where a particularly splendid Chinese meal awaited us together with large quantities of the alcoholic beverage known as Mao Tai, a famous banquet drink but an acquired taste. It is unique to China and its preparation apparently involves repeated fermentation and distillation, the resulting product being particularly breath-taking, with an alcoholic content said to be about twice that of our whisky. We were seated at small tables with colourful lanterns above them and at one stage a hot pot was brought in with a flaming source of heat below; the heat was supposed to make the lanterns revolve but at our table the thermal current was not sufficient so the Mayor threw his glass of Mao Tai into the flames and, thankfully. I quickly followed. Even this was not sufficient to cause gyration of the illumination which was unwilling to move, so the Mayor took the bottle of Mao Tai and poured it into the source of heat, still failing in his efforts but setting the table on fire.

Later the Mayor visited Edinburgh and was looking rather lost at a reception so I asked him through an interpreter if he remembered having set the table in the Sian restaurant on fire. His face lit up at once, he spoke to one of his aides, a bottle of Mao Tai was produced and together we drank to my return visit to Xi'an.

The next day we were supposed to fly by scheduled airline to Beijing but again there was a problem of finding room not only for us but also for a party of French visitors, so it was arranged that the Chinese Air Force would fly us to our destination. The French party had a bottle of Mao Tai with them and offered to share it but with a shudder we politely refused, preferring to watch them becoming progressively merrier, one of the Frenchmen dressing up as a Chinese assistant to the stewardess.

In Beijing we were rather doubtful when we heard that we were being accommodated in the Friendship Hotel in the suburbs but it had recently been upgraded and the rooms were comfortable. By now we had acquired a local guide, a very determined lady who insisted that we would follow the programme that she had designed for us. When I heard of the arrangements I pointed out that we had been invited by the Cultural Counsellor of the British Embassy to his flat to meet some of the leading figures in medicine in Beijing and she retorted that her programme did not allow for this and we could not go. The conversation then was as follows:–

'We have been invited and we are going.'

'You are not. I can't provide transport for that and you are going to the opera.'

'We have accepted the invitation and I'll get taxis.'

'You will not be able to get taxis to take you there.'

'I want to speak to one of your superiors.'

'All right, I'll see what can be arranged.'

In the end we were successful and had an interesting time at Mr Adrian Johnson's flat where we met eight very senior members of the Beijing medical profession, a doctor and his wife from the Australian Embassy and a British nurse. It was the only time during the visit that we did not require to use chopsticks. After this we were in time to rejoin our guide at the opera.

Beijing itself was large, in the main drab and uniform in appearance while everywhere there were bicycles. The temperature was –12 degrees C. but inside the hotel we were warm and had the vacuum flasks of boiling water plus tea leaves provided. It was interesting to visit a community centre and learn how care was given to townspeople in their homes and factories. Families were strictly limited to only one child so the occurrence of twins was very welcome. We admired a kindergarten where we were applauded by a group of happy and healthy children but this was something of a showpiece. On behalf of the party I again rebelled when an effort was made to take us round the zoo except that we saw the pandas but none of us accepted the offer to be photographed with a baby panda on the knee for the equivalent of £100.

There is much to see in Beijing and it would make tedious reading if I were to list the sights but we drove through snow covered roads the 30 miles to the site of the Ming tombs where first we saw the sacred way with its avenue of 24 white marble animals in facing pairs on each side of the road, some standing and others kneeling. The only excavated tomb is the Ding Ling, tomb of the Wan Li Emperor who

ascended the throne in 1573 AD and much of what is now to be seen is in museums at the tomb. The intention had been to take us to the Great Wall but our guide told us to that the weather was so bad that our bus could not make the journey to the bastion which we could just see snaking over the hills in the far distance. I offered to send for taxis but at that point the French party turned up and told us their bus had attempted to reach the wall but had to turn back and had performed that manoeuvre with some difficulty while a bus-load of Chinese visitors had been involved in an accident when they endeavoured to continue. Our guide told us that as a special consolation prize we were going to be taken to see the embalmed body of Chairman Mao when we visited Tian An Men Square.

This square, also ironically called the Gate of Heavenly Peace Square was snow-covered as I photographed my wife standing in the middle of its 98 acres. What, of course we could not know was that we had slipped in through a window in the history of China when liberalization had begun but that the process was not to continue uninterrupted and that we were standing in a square which was to be the scene of massacres in 1989. In April of that year students, impatient at the slowness of change, marched into the square shouting 'Long Live Democracy,' 'Long live the People,' and in May, the month in which Gorbachev came from Russia in a spirit of reconciliation, it was estimated that a million people were demonstrating in Beijing alone. The students had set up camps in Tian An Men Square and troops moved in. The party chief, Zhao Ziyang, was deposed and the hard liners, led by Li Peng, the Prime Minister, on 4th June sent in not only troops, but armoured cars and tanks which proceeded to mow down the protestors, events which were seen on television by horrified viewers throughout the world. Most striking of all was the picture of a lone student standing firmly in front of a tank to halt its progress. He too disappeared and for some time at least all hope of freedom and democracy in China was lost.

Without having to join the queue of visitors we were taken into the Memorial Hall to gaze briefly on what remained of the once powerful leader and then were led away to be conducted round a few of the treasured buildings of Beijing including the Imperial Palace (once the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace. It was strange to think when in those magnificent surroundings that Reginald Johnston, the tutor to the Last Emperor, Pu Yi, had been born in a house, Goshan Hall, which stands little more than a stone's throw from my own home.

On our last night in China we went to the Dong Lai Shun restaurant

where once again we found the French party, merry as ever. The European guide, Mr Deacon rose to thank us for having caused so little trouble and mentioned that it was his birthday at which point we all started singing 'Happy Birthday to You,' being joined in this by the French party, applauding vigorously. The head cook, thinking that the applause was for him, emerged from the kitchen, bowing, so there was a great deal more applause in which the whole staff also now participated. A number of speeches were going on simultaneously between the two parties but eventually order was restored and we returned to the Friendship Hotel.

On the following day we flew to London by CAAC, the Chinese airline and then on to the snow and ice of Edinburgh, but the following morning I had to return to London for two days of meetings, then to Edinburgh for two Blood Transfusion meetings of which I was Chairman and back that same night by sleeper to London for yet another meeting.

In all I was in forty-eight planes and eighteen trains in 1985, a year in which I travelled 112,000 miles on College business. In Edinburgh the building of the Conference Centre was going ahead rapidly but the fire brigade were annoyed because frequently the dust set off the automatic fire alarms. I already had had two problems about travel overseas. First of all I had said that I would be willing to examine again in Bangladesh on the way home from China, but an error had been made in the calculations and at a late stage I was informed that this would cost me an extra £1000. I would have been delighted to examine but this on top of our two fares to Hong Kong and China was more than I could afford. Next I had been asked to preside over a scientific meeting in Iraq and had agreed to do so; all the necessary invitations and official documents had been sent to me and I had gone to the Embassy in London with those, together with my passport, and after an interminable wait the Iraqi female at the desk had looked at the papers, checked a list, said that she had never heard of me, and refused to take my passport for further enquiries. It so happened that already I had received an invitation to be in Pakistan at the time of the meeting in Iraq so I told the unco-operative lady that nothing on earth would now make me go to Iraq and flew back to Edinburgh where I immediately accepted the invitation from our Fellows in Pakistan. In fairness I must add that when I wrote to Iraq I soon received a telephoned apology from the Embassy in London but by then it was too late.

It was on the 1st of April that I flew from Edinburgh, where it was still snowing, to London for a meeting and the following day set off for

Islamabad, a capital city which had not existed when I was in the same area in 1944. Its construction was commenced in 1961 and it is only 12 miles from the old and larger metropolis of Rawalpindi. Islamabad is a planned city with green tree-lined avenues and from a high point I was able to take a panoramic view of its white buildings with the Margalla Hills dominating behind. The present Rawalpindi was a major cantonment town for the British; the General Headquarters of the Pakistan Army is still there and soon the two cities will sprawl into each other. In both one has a feeling of being well on the way up to the mountains.

My reason for being in Pakistan was that I had been invited to participate in the examinations for the higher qualification of the Pakistan College of Physicians and Surgeons that was being held in Karachi from the 9th to the 12th of the month but a programme had been arranged to enable me to meet as many Fellows and Members of our Edinburgh College throughout the country as possible. Much of the time I was in the capable hands of Army doctors and I was met at Islamabad airport by a Major who found me after a certain amount of confusion because I had not realized that a call over the loudspeaker for a Dr. Ronald had been intended for me. Both in Pakistan and India I very occasionally met somebody I had known in GHQ (Delhi) during the war.

Of all my overseas visits this was the one most closely packed with medically related activities since quite apart from the examinations I visited eleven medical colleges, met some 150 consultants and about 100 junior doctors, found that I had nine unscheduled speaking engagements, and was entertained to luncheon on eleven occasions and to dinner on ten. First I saw the hospital in Rawalpindi where I had worked for a very short period more than forty years previously; it was now larger and bustling with activity. Most of the rest of the time in the city was spent seeing Army medical establishments but I was driven the 20 miles north-east to Taxila, an impressive archaeological site that is well worth a visit. It is said that half a million years ago man settled in this area. To it came waves of invaders and there is a splendid museum at the site in which there are displayed the coins of the successive cultures. Alexander the Great brought his troops through the Khyber pass in 327 BC and they moved southwards, some, it is said getting as far as the site of modern Karachi from whence, having been away from their home country for years, they soon left what to them was a distant alien land. Alexander had been wounded and set out for home before this but died near Babylon as he journeyed home. What I

was told about Taxila however was that the people there were friendly and that a Greek princess married Chandragupta Maurya, a union which led to the establishment of the Mauryan Empire which admittedly did not last long as waves of invaders followed and supplanted each other. In AD 711 Mohamed Bin Qasim, a 19-year old Arab general from Basra, conquered much of present day Pakistan and brought Islam to the country, but various invaders followed. The war-like Mongols took Lahore and Delhi in the 13th century and in 1526 Babar from Kabul, having conquered Agra and Delhi, founded an Islamic Moghul dynasty on the Indian subcontinent.

Arrangements had been made for me to fly on a very early plane to Peshawar and I was particularly pleased about this as it was closer to the mountains and to the Khyber pass which I had always wanted to see. The Principal and Dean of the Khyber Medical College welcomed me and showed me round and I was pleased to see my own textbooks in the library of this efficient and well equipped medical school. I was asked whether there was anything in particular that I wanted to see so I said 'The Khyber Pass.' At the time the war between the Mujahedeen and the Russians with their Afghan allies was still in progress across the border and I was told that this would be unsafe. Apart from the danger that I might be shot up as a side issue in the war there were problems about drug smuggling and the efforts to prevent it so the reason for my presence might be misunderstood. I replied that I still would like to go as near as possible to the Khyber Pass so my hosts phoned the politial agent but spoke in Pushtu so I could not make out what was said but the answer was that the visit would not be possible. However one of the doctors drove me to an Afghan refugee camp where the children played in the sunshine between the mud walls which surrounded their temporary tented homes. Apparently there were about three million refugees in Pakistan and although the United States was helping this was clearly a drain on the economy. The doctor escorting me interpreted when we met some Mujahedeen and I admired one of the Mercedes buses which had been purloined and driven by them into Pakistan. I was told that there many CIA agents about but in contrast was shown where a bomb had blown up a house, allegedly having been planted by the KGB.

I like Peshawar with its colourful confused streets, tribesmen, women in colourful clothing or thick white burkas, motor cars, horse drawn tongas, motorised rickshaws and brightly decorated buses. The most colourful street is perhaps the Qissa Khawani Bazaar with fruit-stalls and vendors of all manner of goods, but there is the Bazaar of the

Coppersmiths and the Bazaar of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths. Peshawar became rich because of its position at the entrance to the Khyber Pass when the silk route to China was important and this was of interest and me since I had so recently been in Xi'an, at one time the important town at the Chinese end of the silk route. All the time whether in the town or on its outskirts one is conscious of the distant ranges of mountains.

Back I flew to Islamabad to spend another night in Rawalpindi, returning late because the President, General Zia-ul-hag, was arriving and all incoming flights were delayed. It had been intended that I would be introduced to the President when I first arrived since the time of my arrival was suitable for this to be easily arranged by my plane had been late. General Zia was himself killed in a plane crash on August 17th, 1988.

Throughout my stay the entertainment everywhere went on late into the evening but the planes took off very early and the flight from Islamabad to Lahore was no exception in that I had to leave for the airport at 4.30am. I ws met by Dr. Khurram Manzoor Chowdry and he very kindly escorted me around Lahore for three days during which time I visited eight hospitals or medical institutions and gave three unplanned lectures in this attractive city where I had once been stationed. Our driver came from a northern hill tribe and usually steered an ambulance but seemed to think that I was an emergency as he tore through the traffic lights, weaving his way rapidly between the cars, cycles and pedestrians before coming each time to a shuddering halt at our final destination. The streets were bustling and colourful and there was time to visit the Badshahi Mosque (built by the Emperor Aurangzeb), the courtyard of which is the largest in the world. After an interval of more than forty years I was delighted to revisit the Fort, originally built by Akbar in 1566 on the site of an older one, later being richly extended by his successors, and to see again the Shalimar Gardens laid out by Shah Jahan in 1642 at a time when efforts were being made to have a College of Physicians founded in Edinburgh. Those splendid gardens have three terraces and in the water between there are 450 fountains spraying their sparkling jets upwards. It was Easter Sunday as I watched the charming young ladies of Lahore in their colourful costumes walking through the gardens in bright warm sunshine.

Next day I flew to Karachi and was immediately involved in the examinations, my chief host being Professor Rab. The hotel was most comfortable and I was entertained to meals each day, but was surprised

to find that a lecture which I was to give at the end of my visit was advertised as a major event with television and press coverage. There was a large and friendly outdoor evening party and I was given a most splendid silver salver to add to the many gifts which I had received and were causing me to worry about the weight of my suitcase; most of them were attractive badges of medical colleges on which had been inscribed my name.

The final dinner finished at 11pm but I had to be up again at 2.15am to catch my plane for London which I reached just in time to attend the Executive Committee of the Medico-Pharmaceutical Forum then flew back to Edinburgh.

There were two busy weeks at home before we set off again, this time for Australia. In Edinburgh the College Conference Centre was being built expeditiously because the weather had been good. Meantime there was the problem of working in a dust filled building with access corridors blocked off so that if I wanted a morning cup of coffee I had to phone for it and either have it brought by one of the secretaries to the front door or meet her outside on the pavement. I still had a cooking stove up in the attic area and there I was able to cook the contents of two tins at lunch time, this being the sum total of my culinary ability. Since a College President has to attend so many dinners it is no disadvantage to have a minimal lunch.

The reason why we were returning to Australia at this time was that the Royal Australasian College of Physicians had most generously included me amongst those to whom the Honorary Fellowship was being offered, so we set off on 4th May and all went well until we were approaching Sydney where the astonished pilot was informed that he could not land as the airport was closed by fog. In Sydney the weather in April had been the worst for fifty years but during our stay the sun shone, our preliminary navigational difficulty being but a hiccup which resulted in us being diverted to Adelaide. We were put on a domstic flight where I was first told that I could not carry my hand luggage but I refused to put it in the hold since its main contents were the Presidential robes and gold badge together with my stethoscope and a clean shirt. After I had won this minor battle we were told that we would be diverted to Canberra but then the weather improved and we reached our intended destination, always a splendid sight as one circles the Botany Bay area and then sees the harbour, bridge and opera house. On the evening of our arrival there was a dinner that had been organized for our Fellows and Members and throughout our stay in Sydney we were most generously entertained. The official College

Convocation was on the 40th anniversary of V-E day and the Governor of New South Wales, Sir James Rowland, who gave an address at the College meeting had already attended a service to commemorate this. The ceremony went without a hitch but the Governor and I got lost in the darkness because of a locked gate when we were heading for the reception which was in the skeleton room of the Australian Museum; a search party soon found us. Apart from scientific meetings and a comprehensive programme of social events for the ladies we had time for a cruise around the splendid harbour.

Next we flew to Melbourne for a visit to our daughter-in-law's mother at her sheep farm near to the former capital and there we were back not only amongst sheep but kangaroos, koala bears, cockatoos, rosellas, red back spiders and tarantulas. I had the use of a car and it was pleasant for the three of us to drive down to the beach near Geelong or into the town of Ballarat with its lake where we could admire the black swans; a nearby hotel provided agreeable meals and its off licence shop had Australian champagne at less than £2 a bottle.

Our final visit in Australia on this occasion was to the city of Perth which is rather cut off from the rest of the country geographically and feels this separation. We were surprised that we had to go through Customs as though we were immigrants when we had flown only from Melbourne, but after a long delay at Customs because two planes had arrived at the same time we were welcomed by Dr. and Mrs. Millar Forbes who had been members of our party visiting China. A splendid dinner for Fellows and Members of our College had been arranged and we met many old friends. We were puzzled by large banners in the streets saying 'Quit Week May 12-19'. The people of Perth were not being unfriendly as this was part of an anti-smoking compaign. Perth is a pleasant city, well worth a visit, and has the port of Freemantle adjoining.

The gentleman in the seat beside us on the plane home had just come out of an intensive care unit after a heart attack and should not been allowed to fly but as always I had my stethoscope in my hand luggage and contented myself with working out where I might ask the pilot to divert to if matters became serious; fortunately this was not necessary. The journey from Perth to Edinburgh took twenty-seven hours and I arrived home to find that during the next two days I would be chairing all-day meetings of the Scottish Royal Colleges before leaving on the night train for a College scientific meeting and dinner in Lincoln, always a difficult place to reach from Edinburgh but most pleasant when one gets there. Life was back to normal because it was a whole

nine weeks before we had to be abroad again and I merely had to deal with the building operations, the mail, examinations, meetings, dinners and internal travel arrangements. I calculated that I attended 55 meetings in this short period.

Mary and I set off on 29th July for the 19th Malaysia-Singapore Congress of Medicine in Kuala Lumpur. There were four of us in the three seats on the flight to London, the fourth being a small boy aged 10 months. Over Manchester the mother became ill but I decided that she had hysterial overbreathing and that it was not necessary to land there, so sent a message asking the pilot to arrange a straight run in at Heathrow which he did and there the mother was met and taken away by medical orderlies while my wife and I were left literally holding the baby. We found the mother and her attendants who were awaiting the arrival of the airport doctor and were then free to cross to the correct terminal for our onward journey.

When we arrived at the hotel in Kuala Lumpur a cable was awaiting our arrival and my wife was most concerned but when I opened the envelope we found that it was from our son and his wife sending best wishes for our fortieth wedding anniversary, an occasion which we ourselves had overlooked, but when the receptionist overheard me reading the message to my wife she took action and an impressive arrangement of forty red roses was delivered to our room by the hotel management. At the time of our wedding the atom bomb had not been dropped, the Japanese were in Kuala Lumpur and I was on my way to an unknown destination which might have brought me into Operation Zipper, the invasion of Malayasia by Allied forces. An attenuated fleet did in fact sail and there were landings in Malaysia, the fear having been that not all the Japanese might obey the surrender instructions.

It was almost obligatory for me to go as President of a College to this type of meeting because on this occasion for instance there were 14 Presidents of Colleges or Masters of Academies of Medicine present. As usual there were splendid scientific papers given including some on the difficulties that were worrying Malaysia at the time which were mainly the possible introduction and spread of AIDS and the problems of heroin trafficking which in Malaysia carries the death penalty. Once again there was a social programme for wives and at a banquet and dinner dance the President of the Malaysian College of Surgeons who was also Chairman of a merchant bank was so invigorated that he took the microphone from a young lady singer and gave his own version of the song. Despite the applause she recovered the microphone and sang the melody which includes the words 'Won't you go back where you

belong.' To prolonged cheering he returned to his seat.

We had a three day holiday in Penang and returned to Edinburgh where I was just in time to accompany five other Fellows of our College to the International Festival service in St. Giles' Cathedral. In the College I had won my battle with the architects who had designed a splendid new building but wanted to have large ducts in the foyer roof to be uncovered but painted like those on the outside of the Pompidou Centre in Paris which I had seen but not admired. I agreed that I was not 'with it' in architectural terms but the members of the project team backed me up so the piping was covered at an additional cost.

Four weeks later we set off again, this time for the meeting in Vancouver of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and of course there were both scientific meetings and social functions. I had always fondly imagined that Vancouver Island was but a stone's throw from Vancouver but the crossing took 1 hour 40 minutes, the distance being greater than that from Dover to Calais. We stayed at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Myre Sim, great benefactors of our College, and I realized that we had been on the same programme at the meeting in Bulawayo in 1972. The medical community is a truly international one! We were driven around the island which is 280 miles in length, thus being longer than Scotland. The city of Victoria at the southern end of the island is the second largest city in British Columbia and it has a genteel atmosphere. I have seen many museums in the course of our travels but was much impressed by the exciting way in which the exhibits were laid out in the Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology. When we returned to the mainland we learned that 13 cases of botulism had been traced to a central restaurant but we had not eaten in it and I decided that my visual problems which had developed were due to migraine. Although I had difficulty in seeing through the viewfinder as a result I photographed the site of Expo 86 which was to be the great event of the following year. We went on a conducted tour of the city and it became very clear that much of the property was being bought up by the inhabitants of Hong Kong, and then we flew off to London, arriving late because of a computer fault at the control centre. I had a busy two weeks in Edinburgh before attending meetings in London, Guilford and Stockton-on-Tees, dashing from this last to reach London in time for my next flight.

At long last the three Colleges of Physicians in Great Britain had agreed to hold the MRCP examination in its entirety in Hong Kong, something that I had been pressing for over a period of several years, and I had agreed to be one of the examiners. We arrived without

incident and had a busy week, needless to say being entertained to dinner every evening. The examination of patients was across the harbour at the Prince of Wales' Hospital at Shatin, New Territories, and everything was organised most efficiently. I remember finding a mass in the abdomen of one of the patients and realised that I was feeling a transplanted kidney. When I asked the patient about this she told me that the operation had been done privately in mainland China for £1500 and that the kidney had come from a man who had been executed. I immediately thought of our problems with Burke and Hare.

My first visit to Hong Kong in 1985 had been in January in the Chinese Year of the Rat, but now in the Chinese calendar it was the Year of the Ox. My book of horoscopes said of this year 'Frivolities are out' and 'No success can be achieved without conscientious efforts'. I think that the Hong Kong candidates must have taken this to heart because they did extremely well and on Thursday, 17th October I was able to congratulate the successful candidates as Hurricane Dot made its way towards us from Manila. I was back in Edinburgh just in time to participate in the MRCP examinations there and on Thursday 24th October once again was congratulating successful candidates. During the next three weeks I had to dash around the country from meeting to meeting but what we were really anticipating was the first usage of the completed Conference Centre and lecture theatre, an event which occurred on 5th December. The acoustics were truly splendid and the seats were comfortable; above all the efforts of our Appeals Committee had been successful and we could pay all the bills. It is customary for the retiring President to make a significant gift to the College when he demits office and after much thought I had a suitable large table constructed to adorn the platform of the lecture theatre. The group of Fellows who had visited mainland China very generously provided the College with sufficient funds to have a matching one made, thus completing the furnishing of the hall.

The term of Presidency was over and I could now devote most of my time to other charitable affairs, particularly the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Association of which I was Chairman.

scope

say being entertained to
patients was across the
Shatin, New Territories,
ly. I remember finding a
s and realised that I was
the patient about this she
ivately in mainland China
ɔm a man who had been
ems with Burke and Hare.
l been in January in the
inese calendar it was the
ɔf this year 'Frivolities are
it conscientious efforts'. I
have taken this to heart
sday, 17th October I was
s as Hurricane Dot made
in Edinburgh just in time
re and on Thursday 24th
essful candidates. During
country from meeting to
was the first usage of the
theatre, an event which
re truly splendid and the
f our Appeals Committee
bills. It is customary for
ft to the College when he
id a suitable large table
ire theatre. The group of
generously provided the
atching one made, thus

d now devote most of my
e Scottish National Blood
nan.

CHAPTER 23

Australia Celebrates

It was in 1788 that the First Fleet under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip reached Australia. In April 1988 in the year of the bicentenary celebrations of this event the Royal Australasian College of Physicians was having its Golden Jubilee celebrations in Sydney and when I had still been President of the Edinburgh College I had commenced negotiations for a group from Edinburgh to participate in the scientific programme; in addition there was to have been an Edinburgh College meeting somewhere in Australia similar to the one we had enjoyed in Hong Kong. When I ceased to be President I had no further involvement in such matters and the new Council did not procede with the proposal but I felt duty bound and also very pleased to return to Sydney and other parts of the continent where we felt so much at home, so arranged for my wife and me to attend the Australasian College celebrations as did one or two other Edinburgh Fellows. We flew to Brisbane not even knowing that it was the eve of the inauguration of Expo 88 which was about to be opened by Her Majesty the Queen. It seems that Expos do not have good publicity arrangements because I have never heard of such major exhibitions unless I have been visiting the country involved. Once again we had come from the snows of Scotland but this time what we had heard about was the terrible weather in Australia. In Brisbane the deluges had been the worst for 150 years, the equivalent of five years of rain falling in twelve days. However we seemed to have brought good weather to Australia because we got off the plane, checked into our hotel, went out into the warm sunshine of a splendid morning and encountered no bad weather in the three weeks of our stay. Our hotel was near to the site of the exhibition and we went to see the last desperate attempts to get it completed and can report that against the odds everything was ready in time. On our journey from the airport we had told the disbelieving taxi driver that the ship that was at anchor in the river was the Royal yacht *Britannia* as indeed it was.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were fulfilling a number of engagements elsewhere in Australia and then came on to Brisbane but at the time of the opening of Expo 88 we were at the airport boarding a

flight for one of our favourite holiday places, Cairns, up in Queensland. After a most pleasant week there we flew south to Sydney where I thoroughly enjoyed the scientific programme and we all had a wonderful time at the social events including a visit to the races where I concentrated on taking photographs while the ladies of the party managed to back four winners. One major problem was that the Conference Centre for our meeting had not been completed in time but the organizers still managed the complexity of a programme of simultaneous scientific papers without a hitch despite the fact that instead of having 1,500 registered for the meetings as expected at the time of planning the number was 4000, a record for Australia. All the city's halls and hotels had been pressed into service. The sun shone, the speakers delivered their papers, the microphones worked, the projectionists were most competent, the ladies without medical interests went on their outings and everybody was happy.

Finally we went onwards to Melbourne and returned to the sheep station which we were coming to know so well. In the state of Victoria it was made clear to me that this was the 200th anniversary of New South Wales, not of Australia, and certainly I have postcards dated 1907 from Melbourne which bear the stamps of Victoria, not of Australia. Convict ships were never accepted in Victoria and in 1851 the state separated from New South Wales. I saw a certificate which stated that on 27th July 1899 the proposal for an Australasian Federal Constitution was submitted to the electors of Victoria and the figures demonstrate that they were by then overwhelmingly in favour of the merger.

In this 200th anniversary year I bought a document which listed all those who sailed with the first fleet and it includes what is thought to be a complete table of all that was carried on board. The fleet sailed from Portsmouth on 13th May 1787 in eleven ships carrying 1400 people of whom 780 were convicts. Most were Londoners and some of their offences had been trivial. Thus a seventy year old woman was transported for seven years for having stolen 12 lb of cheese and an eleven year old boy had taken ten yards of ribbon and a pair of silk stockings. The oldest was a woman of 82 but she committed suicide by hanging herself at Sydney Cove in 1789. Thirty-nine of those on board the vessels are shown as having died during the voyage, mostly on the *Alexander*, but there were a number of deaths from typhus before the ships sailed. The number of deaths would have been much greater had scurvy, a well recognized hazard of long distance voyages, been a serious problem. A Dr David MacBride had persuaded the Admiralty

in 1767 that if malt was taken to sea and brewed into wort, this might prevent scurvy and the Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty instructed Captain Cook to do this on his voyages between 1768 and 1771. However in 1753 James Lind, an Edinburgh graduate, had shown that the taking of citrus fruits would prevent the dreaded disease and, fortunately, another Edinburgh medical graduate, John Fothergill, who practised in London, managed to arrange for orange and lemon juice to be carried by Cook. Also available to him were pickled cabbage and vegetables.

It is not clear how much of this was known to the eight ship's surgeons who sailed under Captain Phillip's command but certainly there were carried sources of vitamin C in apples, pears, strawberries and quinces. It was not until 1795, after 15 years of trying, that Sir Gilbert Blane persuaded the Admiralty to adopt officially the recommendations of James Lind made in 1753. Fortunately, fruits and vegetables were obtained by Captain Phillip at Teneriffe, Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town. Deaths from scurvy did occur but this was after the convicts and others had landed and it arose because there were no edible green plants and, to make matters much worse, the seeds which had been brought did not grow. Famine became very serious and the largest ship, the *Sirius* was sent to Cape Town to obtain supplies and on its return in a desperate effort to obtain food it was despatched with about a third of the convicts and sufficent guards to Norfolk Island which was known to be fertile. From this island in the Pacific, a thousand miles east of Sydney, it was to have sailed to Canton for provisions but the vessel was wrecked at Norfolk Island, something that the famine victims of New South Wales learned about because her tender, the brig-rigged sloop *Supply* also had gone to the island and returned alone.

The survivors of the voyage to the convict settlement had reached Botany Bay on 18th January 1788 but it was not a suitable place and within a matter of days the fleet had sailed a few miles north to Port Jackson, later to be known as Sydney Harbour in honour of Lord Sydney, the Home and Colonial Secretary. With them they had taken 10,000 bricks but there were 40 tents for women convicts and a portable canvas house for Governor Phillip while Surgeon Worgan took a piano. The ladies were reasonably well provided for with 327 pairs of stockings, 305 pairs of shoes, 589 petticoats, 606 jackets, 381 shifts and 250 handkerchiefs. There are also listed 5440 drawers and perhaps those were ladies' garments too. Only one chest of books seems to have been taken and hopefully it included medical texts.

Transportation to New South Wales ceased in 1840, but convict ships sailed to Van Diemen's Land until 1853 and the last of transportation was to Western Australia in 1868. Fortunately all the sad events of the past are now forgotten and Australia is a pleasant land of opportunity. In January the Prince of Wales had opened the 200th anniversary celebrations with an address in which he said 'People from anywhere feel at home in Australia – it's that sort of place.' This is a sentiment to which my wife and I fully subscribe.

hoscope

ased in 1840, but convict
til 1853 and the last of
868. Fortunately all the sad
ıstralia is a pleasant land of
ıles had opened the 200th
which he said 'People from
ıat sort of place.' This is a
:ribe.

CHAPTER 24

Perestroika

In March 1990 we set off to see something of a very different country when we joined a group from the British Society for the History of Medicine which was about to visit Leningrad and Moscow at a particularly interesting time in the history of Russia. I had always been interested in this country which my grandfather and his brother had both visited as consultant engineers early in the century. St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd in 1914 and Leningrad in 1924 but I had been brought up on tales of St. Petersburg, Moscow and Nijni-Novgorod.

I had been born at the time of the Russian revolution just four days after Czar Nicholas II had abdicated in favour of his brother, the Grand Duke Michael who, however, refused to take the throne. (The Russian calendar at the time differed by a few days from that in common use in Europe). The Czar was returning too late from military headquarters at Mogilev to be able to influence events in Petrograd where the revolution had already broken out. He had ruled out his own son Alexis as ruler because he had the bleeding disease haemophilia for which at the time there was no effective treatment. This is believed to have developed in the Russian and Spanish royal families because of a mutation in Queen Victoria's genetic make up so that she became a carrier of the defective gene which was next carried by two of her daughters – Princess Alice who passed it to *her* daughter Alix (who married Nicholas II of Russia), and Princess Beatrice who passed it to *her* daughter Victoria Eugénie (who married Alfonso XIII of Spain); the gene is carried by females and becomes manifest in some sons but they do not in turn pass it to *their* sons. Unfortunately the carrier's daughters may also be carriers. In Queen Victoria's case there was no previous family history. The strong influnce which Rasputin held over the Czaritsa of Russia was due to her firm belief that he could control her son's bleeding attacks and it has been argued that the Revolution was in part inspired by hatred of his actions by the suffering people of Russia.

Grigori Efimovich Rasputin was a peasant from Pokrovskoe in western Siberia about whose early activities there are differing reports but he is said to have been a novice in the heretical Khylsty creed who

was told by a local holy man to leave his wife and three children and to go forth and wander, and that he had been divinely chosen to do so since great things lay before him. He appeared in St. Petersburg in 1903 and soon was introduced to the Czaritsa by two Grand Duchesses who regarded him as an inspired mystic. Rough spoken and illkempt though he was he became a friend of the Royal children, having a special side entrance for access to the palace at Tsarskoe Selo to the south of St. Petersburg. The Czaritsa came to believe that he could even control the forces of nature and steadily his influence grew despite his drunken debauchery.

The Czaritsa had always been withdrawn and is believed to have refused to appear in public or to perform the duties expected of an Empress. At first the family had lived a self-contained life in the Winter Place in St. Petersburg but after the uprising of 1905 followed a pattern of travelling around their various palaces, particularly favouring the one at Tsarskoe Selo, or cruising on the Royal yacht. Disastrously, contact with the people of Russia was not being maintained. Nevertheless after the outbreak of the First World War the Czaritsa devoted herself to the care of the wounded, but Rasputin's influence grew. In September 1915 the Czaritsa and Rasputin persuaded the Czar to dismiss Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich as supreme commander of the armed forces and to take command himself, a major error since he did not have the experience and laid himself open to personal blame when things went wrong as they did both militarily and on the domestic front. Transportation fell apart and many cities were almost without food while in other parts of the country it was plentiful. The Imperial family attempted to persuade the Czar that Rasputin's influence had to be terminated but to no avail. The personal and political activities of this dangerous monk who interfered in the filling of important government posts were causing public concern. Prince Felix Yusupov and two fellow conspirators decided that in the interests of Russia this man with his disastrous influence must be assassinated and attempted to poison him with cyanide but for some reason which is not clear the attempt failed; certainly the odour is very characteristic as I know from having kept a jar of potassium cyanide for research purposes in a safe and being able to recognize the characteristic smell in the safe some years after it had been removed. It is possible that he recognized and avoided taking it. Having failed in his assassination attempt, Yusupov them shot Rasputin and with his two accomplices threw the body into a tributary of the River Neva. We recalled this story in Leningrad when our guide pointed out the Yusupov Palace

where the events took place.

Unfortunately the Czar and Czaritsa did not then bring in responsible advisers and, despite warnings and knowledge of previous uprisings did not accept that a revolution was almost certain to take place as both military and domestic affairs went from bad to worse.

When the revolution came it was not a planned affair. It started on the Women's Day holiday which was on 8th March by our calendar and that year it was a particularly cold day with the river frozen across; most of the workers in Petrograd were on strike and joined the queues of women who had waited in the subzero temperatures overnight as they queued for bread or any other food they could obtain. Large areas of the city were soon in the hands of a steadily growing mob, some of whom entered the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, (another building which we looked at with interest on our visit), releasing the prisoners who were held there. Daily the numbers of rioters increased and many of the troops who were called to restore order joined them; four regiments of the Petrograd garrison mutinied. The Czar did not return at once and his government collapsed: the garrison guarding the Empress joined the mutineers. The Czar, at last attempting to return to Petrograd, was stopped by railway workers and, on the arrival of two emissaries from the capital, signed the act of abdication.

Since this was not a planned uprising there was no master plan about what to do next and no agreed alternative government. Food distribution did not improve and the armed forces were soon out of control with deserters roaming the land. A Provisional Government was formed but there was also an unorganized rival Soviet hoping to seize power.

On the day of my birth on 19th March 1917 there was a meeting in Switzerland of revolutionary exiles with Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries and others seeking a way to return to Russia with the help of Germany if necessary. Amongst those who planned a return was Lenin who that day had written a letter to Karpinsky, a Bolshevik in Geneva, suggesting that Lenin might wear a wig and make his way in the guise of Karpinsky through England and Holland to Russia, a proposal which came to nothing. However the Germans were anxious to use Bolshevik disruption of the Russian army to help their own forces and arranged the return of Lenin, eighteen other Bolsheviks and various dissidents who successfully travelled home by way of Germany, Sweden and Finland. A group of exiles including Stalin came from Siberia and Trotsky returned from New York.

The power struggle continued and, in July, Alexander Kerensky

took over from Prince Lvov as Prime Minister, making it clear that the disorganized Russia would continue the fight against Germany. On 23rd October Lenin's Bolshevik Central Committee decided on an armed uprising against the Kerensky government and did not hide their intentions. On November 7th while the government was meeting in the Winter Palace, blank shots were fired by the cruiser *Aurora* which was nearby in the Neva river and some shells were fired from the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. Red Guards broke into the vast palace of over a thousand rooms and there was something skirmishing with officer-cadets but, without much violence, the Bolsheviks took control. Kerensky who was with the army at the time escaped from Russia with help from the British agent Bruce Lockhart. In Moscow the fighting was fiercer but the Bolsheviks gained control of the country.

In the course of our short visit to Leningrad we were shown the small room in the Winter Palace where the government had been meeting when this second revolution occurred and also saw the *Aurora* which is now moored in the Neva as a floating museum. Naturally we saw what we could in a short visit to this immense Palace which suffered major damage from fire in 1837. Amongst the largest and richest art collections in the world is the Hermitage, a collection spread through 400 rooms of the Winter Palace and in two adjoining buildings. To look at the collection properly would take weeks; we had but two hours.

This is not intended to be a treatise on Russian history so mention will not be made of much that we saw of historical interest in Leningrad and Moscow. However the influence of Scottish doctors on the Russian Imperial families deserves mention and was repeatedly brought to our attention by our Russian colleagues. As a party of twenty-three British visitors we went to the Museum of Military Medicine and the Military Medical Academy where a Major-General showed us round and stressed the importance of Sir James Wylie in the development of the Military Academy. There had been a forerunner of the Academy in the days of Peter the Great who founded St. Petersburg in 1703 but much of the credit for its development was given to Wylie (called Veelya by Russians) who came from Kincardine-on-Forth. Earlier, James Mounsey from Dumfriesshire served in the Naval Hospital in St. Petersburg and became First Royal Physician to the Empress Elizabeth, then to the Emperor Peter III (who was assasinated after six months) and next to the latter's widow, Catherine II. Perhaps he was unnerved by the rapid turnover of monarchs or perhaps her

reputation was already sullied but he returned to Scotland to be succeeded by Dr. John Rogerson, an Edinburgh graduate who became Physician to Catherine and then to her son Paul who in turn was murdered.

Next came James Wylie, who was given a medical degree by King's College, Aberdeen after he first went to Russia in 1790. He had studied medicine in Edinburgh but had not taken a degree. He and Rogerson were quickly on the scene when Paul was murdered and Wylie was one of three Scots doctors who examined the body. Paul was succeeded as Emperor by Alexander I and Wylie became his Surgeon and Physician. He became Head of the Academy of Military Medicine in St. Petersburg, the organization which we were now visiting, and was in charge of the Russian army surgeons in the war with Napoleon in 1812 (when three quarters of Moscow was burned down) and in 1813 (the Battle of Leipzig). He was said to have performed over 200 surgical operations in the field after the Battle of Borodino in 1812 and in 1814 he accompanied Czar Alexander I to London and there was created a Baronet. He accompanied the Czar on his travels in Europe and when his master died in 1825 he enjoyed the confidence of Czar Nicholas I. We were told that Wylie would have been married but his beloved wanted to return to Scotland and he preferred to remain in Russia where on his death in 1854 funds were provided from his estate for the building of a hospital. The sun shone brightly as we were taken into the grounds of the Academy and shown the statue that has been erected to the memory of this notable Scotsman.

We had but two days in Leningrad and as light was fading on the Monday we were taken to the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery where there are buried in mass graves many of those who were victims of the German attacks which lasted from mid-August 1941 until January 1944. Hitler was determined to raze Leningrad to the ground and announced this in a policy statement on August 16th, 1941. He nearly succeeded and about 470,000 of the war dead are buried in this cemetery, many having died of starvation rather than from direct enemy attack. Hitler had been more determined to annihalate Leningrad than he had been to destroy Moscow and it has been said that a million of its citizens perished, equalling the combined total for the United Kingdom and the United States.

From Leningrad we went by night sleeper to Moscow, four of us sharing a carriage; the journey was straightforward and comfortable, tea being provided before we went to sleep and again in the morning. Much of Moscow, like much of Leningrad is very dreary, particularly

in winter, but the workers' flats at least provided acceptable accommodation, the main problem apparently being the length of the waiting list, which might involve a delay of from ten to twenty years. Rents and costs for heating and telephones were low when the accommodation was eventually secured. There were co-operative schemes involving a down payment of a third of the value of the flat and this shortened the waiting time but running costs then were higher; money could be borrowed from the state at a low rate of interest for the monthly payments of the remaining cost of the flat. If the owner wanted to sell again it had to be remembered that the whole block of flats was a co-operative and the others had to indicate approval of the purchaser. The guides who told us about all this were grateful to Krushchev for his building programme which made this accommodation available.

In the course of five days we saw a great deal of interest but to list the various splendid buildings would make tedious reading. Red Square was something of a surprise as I had expected it to be the continuation of a main thoroughfare but it was laid out some five hundred years ago as a market place and is now a pedestrian precinct with the Kremlin on one side and the Government Department (GUM) store on the other. Official limousines can pass through it to the Kremlin, but otherwise it is likely to be thronged with pedestrians, many queuing up to enter Lenin's mausoleum. It is not named 'Red' for any political reason; the buildings around the square are nearly all of a red colour. I have seen Tian An Men Square in Beijing and Zocalo, (the Plaza de la Costitucion) in Mexico City, but to me the Red Square was the most impressive with St. Basil's Cathedral at one end and the History Museum at the other. The walls and the towers of the Kremlin buildings are on the left as one enters the square from the street beside the cathedral which, with its onion-shaped domes, is a familiar sight to anyone who has seen pictures advertising the virtues of a visit to Moscow; the word Kremlin merely means a citadel. Particularly in the snow the outlines of the buildings within were most imposing as we entered the walls through the Borovitskaya Gate. Built as a place of resistance against the Mongol-Tatar hordes its central point is Cathedral Square with the Cathedral of the Annunciation where the Czars were christened and married, the Cathedral of the Assumption in which they were crowned and the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael in which they were buried. There are five churches in the Square and they, together with Ivan the Great's Bell Tower, have been preserved in a splendid way although admittedly they are at present museums rather

than functioning churches. It is regrettable that so many of our churches and historical monuments in the United Kingdom have not had as much care as this lavished on them. On the day of our visit to the Kremlin the sun was shining brightly on the golden cupolas which show the cross triumphantly rising above a recumbent crescent. Outside the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet we saw diplomatic cars parked at a time when there was considerable concern in the administration about the possible decision of Lithuania to secede from the Soviet Union. It was very reminiscent of the day in July 1968 when at Prague Castle we had seen the gathering of diplomatic cars because of the likelihood of a Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, but clearly now, in the Soviet Union of Mikhail Gorbachev, the outlook was very different, but the problems being faced on both sides were considerable. So far as outward appearance is concerned, the less said the better about the modern 6000-seated Palace of Congresses where such weighty problems are discussed and in which so often on television the Soviet leaders are seen making speeches. Most of it is below ground to avoid spoiling the splendid skyline.

Reference had already been made to the events on Women's Day on 8th March, 1917 at the beginning of the revolution; those who organized our visit did not realize that we would be in Moscow on 8th March, 1990 and that this was still the date of Women's Day and a major holiday, which lasted in fact for two days. This played havoc with the arrangements. In our hotel on the outskirts of the city we were told that we could not have breakfast and our tour organizers had informed us on the previous day that they could not arrange dinner anywhere. We could not have tickets for the Bolshoi Ballet as they were not performing but we could go to a 'pop' concert, something which we all refused to contemplate. So far as breakfast was concerned we successfully insisted on having it served to us and each of us put half in a paper wrapping to eat when we returned in the evening. At a restaurant the previous evening I had persuaded a somewhat reluctant guide to ask the management to sell us unopened bottles of Georgian wine and this we all kept for the evening of Women's Day. In the afternoon another guide explained that we had been misinformed and that the concert was really one of modern Russian music; we belonged to the section of the party which remained unimpressed and we made our way back to the hotel in driving snow by Metro and then by bus to enjoy our do-it-yourself meals in our rooms, thankful that for once we were not being entertained; every effort was made throughout our stay to ensure that we saw as much as possible both as regards our interest

in medical history and in our alternative role as tourists so from morning to night each day something was arranged to occupy us during every waking moment. We ate the remains of our breakfast and drank our bottle of Georgian wine while watching ballet on a black and white television set in our bedroom, which like all the rooms in hotels and restaurants was very warm. For those who were lonely, Mrs. Blair, one of our group, kindly arranged a 'room party'. So far as the Women's Day concert was concerned we were justified in our pessimism. Youthful though they were, the local guides had never seen anything like it since apparently it was a riotous affair with the audience getting out of control and invading the stage; those from our party were taken to the safety of box seats and our guides could not understand why the police did not interfere. Perestroika has disadvantages as well as many good features.

We saw the outside of Moscow University which is attended by students from 150 countries but learned that after the Revolution the medical schools had become vocational institutes so it is not a University qualification that is given. This may change since the Director of the 1st Medical Institutre which we visited for a discussion of matters of mutual interest was pressing for a return to having University status. This Institute was one of five in Moscow where civilian doctors are trained.

On the military side we were very well received by the Major-General in charge of the main Military Clincal Hospital which, unlike the one in Leningrad, trains post-graduates but not undergraduates. It was built in December, 1707 (the year of the Union of Scotland with England), the initiator being a Dutch doctor named Nicholas Bidlow who qualified in Leyden. We were shown the snow-covered area of the original herb garden and invited to visit any part of the hospital we cared to choose; not many hospital administrators would take the chance of issuing such an open invitation and we were most impressed by what we saw and by the fact that were permitted to photograph anything we wanted. When it was first opened the hospital had 50 beds but by the time of Napoleon's invasion the total had reached the surprising figure of 10,000. I thought that this figure must have been an error in translation but was told that it was correct; the number is now much smaller. When the French reached Moscow the hospital was evacuated a distance of 120 km; no patients were left behind and Napoleon's troops chose to stable horses in the building. This reminded me of the reverse process at Goodwood House in 1942 during the war when I slept in the officers' quarters in the stables. In the

Second World War the Moscow Military Hospital had to be evacuated again and clearly it has been a major medical centre of considerable importance during many periods of conflict, and is the main establishment of its kind in the country. The administrative arrangements and steps that are being taken to keep up to date with modern developments are most commendable, but even the officer in charge had to admit that the cost of modern medical investigation and treatment is becoming almost too heavy.

There was now the beginning of private enterprise in Moscow and in the pleasant pedestrianised Arbat Street we bought a small water colour from an artist on Women's Day and, two days later, just before we departed for home, our party was first taken to the Intourist bureau to change money and then to a more distant sales pitch recently established by artists. This was an open air area in a birch wood where, despite the pouring rain and a howling gale, artists were selling the products of their talents. With our last roubles we bought an oil painting, hoping that it would not be too adversely affected by the weather and that, once dried, it would fit into the bottom of our suitcases as indeed it only just did.

What is likely to be of most interest in this eventful time in the history of the USSR are the impressions we gained of this vast country which most of us had not visited previously. I have been in a number of countries with repressive regimes and am accustomed to 'bugged' rooms but Russia in 1990 was not at all like that and we were able to talk freely although we did not think it polite to initiate political discussions. The Russians who could speak English had no inhibitions and freely criticised local politicians although not by name. Indeed when we first arrived in Leningrad local elections were taking place but most people did not trouble to vote since, as they told us, they had no faith in their councillors. After we returned home I read that there had been a second round of elections in Leningrad and Moscow and that the Communists had been replaced by reformers. The roads were pot-holed and the people of the city blamed the local politicians. The tap water in Leningrad was like diluted oxtail soup and the people there again blamed the politicians, this time for having attempted to build a dam in the Gulf of Finland to prevent flooding, thereby, we were told, turning the source of Leningrad's water into a cesspool. There were constant complaints in both cities about the food shortages, the amount of time wasted in queueing, and the prices. Tomatoes cost about 10 roubles a kilo (£10 at the normal rate of exchange) and the income might be 140 roubles a month. Romania, now a democracy, was no

longer exporting meat to Russia and it had been a significant source of supply. As in 1917 it was necessary to queue even for bread, and those who wanted to buy wine had a long time to wait.

Of much interest to us were the enormous numbers of people lined three or four abreast around Pushkin Square in Moscow. This, we were informed, was of people eager to sample McDonald's hamburgers from the outlet which had been open for about six weeks. The Canadian company concerned had spent several years negotiating the setting up of this private enterprise initiative and now they were serving about 50,000 people a day, the average waiting time in the line being two hours. When they advertised for staff they had about 25,000 applications and those selected were trained in the Canadian way of serving customers, looking each customer in both eyes and completing the transaction within 60 seconds. The members of staff were instructed to be friendly, greeting each customer with the Russian equivalent of 'Hi' or 'Good morning' and 'Have a nice day.' Permission to import the specially prepared food from North America was not given and so the company established a huge factory in Russia for the purpose. Numerous other McDonald outlets were planned.

The visitor is struck by the old fashioned practices which are being continued. We had known in advance that, as in China, we could not be informed about our hotel arrangements until we arrived, but even when we were leaving Leningrad we did not know the name of the hotel to which we were going in Moscow and unfortunately on arrival at the railway station there we found that our accommodation was about an hour's journey in our bus from the city centre. The next problem was that, since we were so far out from the centre, all our meals had to be taken in restaurants and, as has been the custom in Russia, it is not possible to book for dinner even a day in advance so our guides must have had a difficult time arranging meals for us during each day of our visit. On one occasion the official of our company who was supposed to pay for our lunches forgot to come and we learned later that a young lady who was one of our guides had been held as a hostage until the bill was paid some hours later. The toilets in the restaurants were primitive to say the least, sometimes with just one water closet that had to be used by both sexes.

We had been told to take even basic essentials such as soap, toothpaste, bath plugs, and medical supplies and that we should not change much money into roubles as there was so little to buy. What we did not know was that the tourist rouble had been revalued about six months before our visit and when we changed our hard currency at the

Intourist bureau we received ten roubles to the £ sterling rather than the previous one rouble. The rate given in our newspapers (the older rate) was for commercial transactions and the new traveller's rate was something nearer to what had previously offered in the black market. However there was so little to buy that we had to change only £25 in nine days, using that to pay our contribution towards the wine at the evening meals and for the two pictures which we bought. There were the 'Beriozka' shops for foreigners in the hotels, screened from the Russians who might become even more discontented were they to see the goods which were on show and not available to them. Here dollars or sterling notes were accepted (not Bank of Scotland notes), the rate being about one rouble to the £ sterling. This was of little use to us in Moscow since our bus left for the centre of the city before the shop opened and returned after it had closed and we were kept so fully occupied that we did not have time to seek out a Beriozka shop in another hotel. Cars were few on the roads as the citizens could not afford them and although there were dachas (the Russian equivalent of a cottage) on the outskirts of the cities, owned as private property and saleable or passed on to heirs, many years of saving would be required to purchase one. On one occasion when we dismounted from our buses near the Kremlin a group of very young children, the youngest being less than three years of age, descended on us begging for money or for anything we could give them. Some were quite fiercely clinging to our clothes and it was difficult to dislodge them while the giving of money or sweets merely caused them to become more and more aggressive. They were even more persistent but better nourished than the beggars of India and we were told that they were gypsies; this may or may not have been correct. I photographed one little girl then gave her twenty kopeks. Had I given a larger sum I would have been engulfed by the mob of children but even so it was difficult to escape.

The Russian people were frustrated and anxious for change. They pointed out that although a lot of building was going on it was being done by Finnish and Turkish companies and when I asked why this was necessary the answer was that Russian building was of such poor quality that foreign companies were employed. I had been particularly anxious to see the Hotel Metropole in Moscow as my grandfather had stayed in it in 1909 and sent a postcard of it to my grandmother. By good luck I was able to take a photograph through the bus window from exactly the same angle and the exterior seems unchanged but the hotel was being extensively restored within, this being done by a Finnish company. On our return home I read that Europe's largest

hotel, the Izmailova, was about to be built in Moscow by a Scottish consortium.

Serfdom was not abolished in Russia until 1861 and for most of their history the people of the country have had one tyrannical ruler after another. Some Czars were cruel and some mad; Nicholas II was well-meaning but irresolute. To the people whom we met, however, they were but figures in history, whereas the days of the ruthless Soviet rulers were remembered. It has been said that 8,000,000 or more people were murdered during the Stalinist regime. Now, for the first time in their history, the citizens of the Soviet Union had democratic rule, were not quite sure what to do about it and were disappointed to find that changes that might improve things for them personally were not occurring overnight. They could enjoy the arts but this had always been so, transportation in Moscow by Metro was cheap and efficient, but, as in 1917, there were bread queues and the shortages were serious, administration being inefficient at the citizen's level. However two very major improvements were that there was freedom of speech and tolerance of religious belief. We were told that until recently the priests were supposed to report anyone who attended church services, but now the visitor had the impression that more and more of the churches which have been so well preserved as museums might come into use again. As it was the church services that were available were crowded, but it appeared that there were problems about the ownership of churches that were being returned for worship, there being disputes between certain branches of Christianity.

It was said that Gorbachev was not in a position to put things right rapidly but that at least he was honest. It was encouraging to hear after we had returned home that on 13th April the Soviet government at last officially admitted that the massacre of 15,000 Polish officers, doctors and academics at Katyn near Smolensk had been carried out in April 1940 by the Russian secret police (NKVD), the names of the intended victims being dictated by Moscow. They had been captured in 1939 and murdered with their hands bound and a bullet fired at the base of the skull. The Russians had erected a monument in the Katyn forest stating that the poles were murdered by Germans in 1941 but my Polish colleagues had never believed this and now the truth was being made public by Moscow, welcome evidence of the fact that there was now open admission of the excesses of the Stalinist period.

Visitors in hotels and restaurants were protected from most of the problems of the citizens and indeed it was an embarrassment to have so much food served at the table in all the restaurants and to be able to

enter immediately while the Russians queued outside. There was no evidence of resentment and we all found the people of Leningrad and Moscow to be most pleasant and friendly and anxious to ensure that we enjoyed our visit. We had been advised to take small gifts such as cosmetics, tights or tablets of soap and those were very welcome, but equally the Russians to whom we spoke at concerts or in restaurants were keen to press small gifts upon us. We did not discuss politics but felt that in the few parts of the country which we visited the people rejected Communism and would be glad to join us as fellow Europeans. Interest in most of the states which wanted to break away from the Soviet Union did not appear to be great and a group from Uzbekistan visiting the Kremlin were as much an object of interest to the Russians as to us.

I had been in Hitler's Germany in 1937 and it was clear then that I was in a belligerent country whose leaders were intent on expansion by military means if necessary. In Russia in 1990 the impression was that warfare, whether civil or otherwise, was the last thing that anybody wanted; there was no sign of military might anywhere we went. The officers in the military training schools and hospitals could not have been more peaceful and friendly. However we read later in the *Times* that nine days before we reached Moscow 5000 troops on the outskirts of the city had been given arms in a show of strength to put pressure on the President, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was thought by Service military leaders to be reducing the armed forces too fast and not taking a tough enough line in international negotiations. On the other hand, the politician, Boris Yeltsin, who later became President of the Russian Federation, the country's largest republic, wanted more radical changes than did Gorbachev and appeared to have much popular support.

Indeed the President was faced with insuperable problems. At the level of the ordinary citizen there was a desire for what they regarded as simple reforms in the shape of the abolition of bread queues and the provision of simple materials such as soap but the mechanism for organizing this was wanting. Private enterprise was returning but radical solutions were required. On the national scene there was the major headache that the removal of repression had resulted in various ethnic groups seeking self determination. At the time of our visit the problem for the Kremlin was that of Lithuania, but there were more headaches for central administration as a result of the desires for self determination by many of the people of Estonia, Latvia, Azerbaidjan, Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Armenia, the Ukraine and Georgia. Even if the states where the majority desired independence were to be granted it

there would be problems on the one hand for some of the states themselves and the Soviet economy could be ruined if the Russian Federation itself withdrew completely while on the other hand the Federation would undoubtedly have problems too and those might be related to the general economy, defence and the supply of energy and foodstuffs.

There seemed to be no easy answer and it was clear that Gorbachev did not want another battle like the one that occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1968. We did not of course know the views of senior military figures. So far as satisfying the desires of the citizens whom we met was concerned it seemed to me that there was a need for a group of experienced administrators centrally, possibly including some recruited from other countries, and hopefully it would be possible to have skilful local administrators who would be willing and able to co-operate with the centre to ensure that the supplies of the country were evenly distributed and the natural resources exploited for the benefit of all, but to this had to be added the problems of export and import. Unfortunately it seemed that it would take years to make a major impression on the problems of inefficiency and old-fashioned methods of working. So far as the desire of various states to secede from the union is concerned I am certainly not sufficiently versed in economics or military strategy to comment.

In this land which was attempting to solve so many problems we were unable to be carefree tourists having a relaxed holiday, but it was a most interesting time to be visiting the friendly people of Leningrad and Moscow who in many ways were so like us and we hoped that somehow they would have a happy future.

To speed us on our way it had been arranged that our last night in Moscow would be spent in a fashionable restaurant where we found that the main hall was full of dancing couples. We were allocated a small and unbearably hot private room and the service was even slower than usual; the toasts went on until after midnight so that, having returned to our hotel, we finished packing at 2am and set our clocks for a 5.30am wakening. Tempers were frayed and we all decided afterwards that it is not a good idea for a husband and wife to share the same suitcase. One pair told us that at 1am the husband had said 'If you wish this marriage to end in divorce, so be it'. They had recovered their equanimity by the time they returned to London and their union of more than forty years was not in danger.

This account of the travels abroad of a physican during fifty-three years, with visits to fifty countries, has covered a period of major

changes in most areas of the globe and of tremendous and unforeseeable developments in science and in medicine. In the earlier years before this personal travel began there was the felt the pain of the aftermath of the first World War when there was much sadness in the land and poverty was commonplace. It was strange that it was to Germany that two of us should choose to go as the first choice of an overseas destination in our student days but as a result, having seen a nation that clearly was heading for military conflict, we realized that we would be involved and that the future direction of the medical careers of all our group of students was uncertain. As the years went by after the second World War the split between east and west in Europe increased as Communist regimes became progressively more repressive: little did I think when I was in Cairo in 1943 that the conference there was sowing the first seeds of this unfortunate division between the nations. However in 1989 and 1990 the world was delighted when everything changed and democracy returned to most European countries including several that my wife and I had visited. When we went to China in 1985 we thought that the days of the Cultural Revolution with its horrors being over, the Chinese people were coming under a liberal regime but the massacres in Tian An Men Square in May and June 1989 put an end for the time being to any such progress. Wars and revolutions took place in many countries after I had visited them but usually it has been possible for members of the medical profession to keep in touch with each other, to maintain friendships and in most instances to interchange knowledge freely despite political changes. To make modern medical developmetns universally available is a much more difficult matter and some methods of investigation or treatment are so expensive that it is frankly impossible.

During the period under consideration medical and surgical treatment has made tremendous advances, almost all potent medical agents having been discovered after my student days had ceased. The first breakthrough however was before I qualified when sulphonamides were introduced for the treatment of infection in 1936. Smallpox has disappeared from the world and no longer is it necessary to regard with great pity those in a developed country who are found to have the once dreaded tuberculosis, now usually readily treatable. In many countries of the Third World however the outlook for the treatment of infections has not improved significantly and the attention of those in the wealthier countries must turn increasingly to the prevention of malnutrition and control of disease in those lands where there is so much suffering. I continue to think of Bangladesh with its medical and

nutritional problems that are worsened each year because of natural disasters and of the need for augmented resources to alleviate some of the deficiencies that I witnessed in West Africa and other areas of the world.

When we visited Russia in 1990 attempts were being made to introduce a mixed economy into a country where, like everything else, medicinal agents were scarce. We could only hope that the people of the USSR, whether civilians or military leaders, would allow time for essential reforms to take place and that, throughout Europe, in countries where the traditions of democracy had been almost forgotten or had never existed, the people would know how to handle freedom now that it had come to them. Meantime the West had to be willing to do something to provide help to countries like Romania where medical care had sunk to an unacceptably low level and the doctors and nurses, having been deprived of modern books, journals and medical supplies for several years, required assistance as they sought education about modern methods of diagnosis and treatment.

POSTSCRIPT

The Gulf War

It was intended that the visit to the Soviet Union would form the last chapter of this account of travels over a period of many years and, although it was obvious that great difficulties lay ahead for the people and leaders of the Soviet republics, it was thought undesirable to aim to aim to make up-to-date last minute references to developments which might occur, although in fact the problems escalated so much throughout 1990 that the Union was almost rent asunder.

What was not foreseen, however, was that in January 1991, after this volume was considered to have been finally prepared for printing, a major conflict would break out in the Gulf area following the invasion of Kuwait five months earlier at the behest of the President of Iraq who declared that Kuwait had ceased to exist as an independent country. It is therefore perhaps appropriate to give some observations which are related to this tragic interruption to what had seemed to be the beginning of an era of almost global peace.

When I visisted Iraq in January 1977 I was merely participating in arrangements for co-operation between two medical schools but had to have a baptismal certificate or a letter from my church to show that I was not Jewish and on arrival was given a copy of the magazine *Iraq Today* which reflected the fierce antagonism against Zionism and the United States of America. In it there were photographs of the Iraqi President. Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (who was also Secretary of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party) and someone of whom I had not previously heard, described in the caption as Mr Saddam Hussein, Deputy Secretary of the Party and Vice Chairman of the Revolution Command Council. The medical colleagues whom I met did not appear to have any great interest in politics but it was made clear to me that Saddam Hussein was a man with great power and influence. The local English language newspaper, the *Baghdad Observer*, gave a reasonable account of world news but the hatred of Israel was clearly expressed. On the other hand a lengthy extract was given from the New Year peace message of Pope Paul VI. New Year messages of greetings were despatched by Saddam Hussein to the Prime Ministers of East Germany, North Korea and Yugoslavia. Iraq was stated to be the main

force backing the revolution in Eritrea. There were reports from Kuwait but no criticism of that country or its leaders. So far as relationships with other Arab countries were concerned I was told by Iraqis that the bomb which had blown up part of the departure lounge at the airport just before I arrived was put there by the Syrians, but had no way of knowing whether this was true.

Later, after I had returned to Edinburgh, I was invited to meet the Iraqi ambassador who had come from London to visit students from his country who were studying in our city. Official photographs were taken including one of me with the ambassador but I was told later that it was one that had not come out. I thought at the time that he might be keeping a low profile because of fear of assassination attempts, and indeed a grenade exploded under the ambassador's car in London in September 1978; a former prime minister was shot in the head in London in July 1978.

When I revisited Iraq in May, 1977 for the meeting to celebrate fifty years of the Baghdad medical school we were taken on various excursions and passed a camp where firing practice was taking place; the Iraqis said that this was the PLO in training. During this visit I took two rolls of photographs but when they went to be processed on my return the films were found to be completely unexposed although both had gone normally through the camera which was still working perfectly, the only time this has ever happened. I did not have a lens cap and it seemed likely that substitute films had been put in my luggage in the hotel room although to my knowledge I did not photograph any sensitive area.

On the occasion of that visit I see from the *Baghdad Observer* which I kept that the participants in our symposium sent an appreciative telegram to President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, expressing thanks for the continuous sponsorship offered to science and scientists by the Party and Revolution, also pointing out that the wise directives given in this field resulted in huge leaps forward in medical science; perhaps significantly a similar message was sent to Mr Saddam Hussein whom I saw as a dominant figure at a dinner and who was emerging more and more as the real power in the land. I did not sign any message, and was not asked to do so. The same newspaper reported without comment that Kuwait had acquired American Skyhawk bombers and French Mirage fighter-bombers. There was criticism of Israel, the USA, Syria and Ethiopia but a sympathetic article about the Patriarch of the Christian Church of the East.

In 1979 Saddam Hussein took over as President, Commander-in-

Chief and Chairman of the Revolution Command Council, and soon after that a number of senior members of the Ba'ath party were accused of conspiracy and were executed. In September 1980 war was launched against Iran, and when the conflict finished eight years later Iraq and its President were stronger than ever despite the huge loss of life on both sides. On August 2nd 1990 he invaded Kuwait and refused to accept a United Nations Security Council mandate to withdraw. Just before midnight on Wednesday 16th January the people of Britain heard that hostilities had begun with massive air attacks by the Allies on Baghdad and Kuwait.

The first page of this volume refers to a week in 1917 when a world war was at a critical stage, the Russian revolution had begun and the United States was about to enter the international conflict. In that week, too, British troops had just captured Baghdad from the Turks who had held it continuously from 1638.

On this, the last page, sadly, hopes of ending this account on a hopeful note have gone. A major ground offensive has begun in the Gulf, the bombing of military installations has caused massive destruction in Baghdad and elsewhere, the oilfields of Kuwait are ablaze, the Gulf waters are polluted and mined, and there is discontent throughout the Soviet Union.

Perhaps the weapons of destruction are now so fearsome that this will be the last era of conflict, and peace will finally be accepted throughout the world. Members of the medical profession of all countries will have to unite to assist governments in an effort to prevent famine, malnutrition, disease and pollution.

Index