

## OLD BONDS RENEWED

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In 1941, during World War I, Edinburgh forged a unique link with Poland through the creation of the Polish School of Medicine within the University of Edinburgh. This immensely practical and humanitarian arrangement during the subsequent war years produced 227 Polish medical graduates with MBChB; 18 of these graduates completed doctorate thesis leading to MD.

Dr Jacek Piatkiewicz, former Deputy Minister of Health and Social Welfare of Poland, visited the College in August on the invitation of Dr David Macfadyen. This visit served to renew some of these old bonds with the College and included a visit to the Paderewski Hospital site at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh. The official coat of arms for the Polish School of Medicine had been placed there. This original plaque was lost for many years until it was found and restored by Dr Martin Eastwood in 1979. During the recent renovation of the outpatient building, it was misplaced once again, but has now been retrieved and hopefully will be restored. The coat of arms was authorised in 1942 and consists of the Polish eagle in the centre, a white cross on a blue field, medical symbols of rod and snake, the thistle in the upper field and a castle on rock in the lower field (see photograph).

At a meeting between Professor Colin Bird, Dean of Faculty of Medicine, University of Edinburgh and Dr Piatkiewicz, accompanied by Sir Sandy Macara, the links between the University and Polish medicine were reiterated and a permanent plaque in the New Medical Quadrangle in Teviot Place, commemorating the completion of the school in 1949, provided a poignant reminder of the setting up of the first medical school on foreign university grounds. Mrs Wanda Livingstone of the University Library then showed Dr Piatkiewicz the Polish room at the Erskine Medical Library; this commemorates the Polish Medical School in its extensive collection of paintings, medals and memorabilia.

## POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION IN POLAND

In a meeting at the College chaired by Sir Sandy Macara, Dr Piatkiewicz presented details of current postgraduate medical education in Poland. Poland is largely urbanised, with a population density of 124 per sq km; the number of physicians per 10,000 is 23.6 which is higher than in UK (but less than Germany or France). Undergraduate medical education lasts six years and there are 12 active medical faculties. Postgraduate medical education begins with an internship for 18 months during which the trainees rotate through internal medicine, psychiatry and family medicine. This allows the possibility of specialisation in 30 basic



Dr Jacek Piatkiewicz and Sir Sandy Macara in front of the Paderewski Hospital, with the official coat of arms for the Polish School of Medicine.

specialties, entrance to which being through a competitive examination. Completion of training in one of the basic specialties may lead to further training in a secondary specialty (such as cardiology). Passing an exit state-run examination is necessary before certification as a specialist can be acquired. Though the basic specialties are broadly similar to UK specialties, there are some unique features such as the specialties of transport medicine and medical rehabilitation. Public health medicine is a discipline separate from hygiene and epidemiology. A strong German influence can be identified in the Polish system of health care and medical training.

## JOINT SYMPOSIUM IN EDINBURGH OF THE MID-CENTRAL

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO BE HOSTED BY THE COLLEGE In a meeting chaired by Dr Roland Clark and attended by Dr Piatkiewicz, it was decided to host a symposium on postgraduate medical education and issues related to medical training in the year 2001. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia would be invited to participate, and meetings between the representatives of the medical associations of these four countries and the College would be arranged to finalise the format of this symposium. Dr Piatkiewicz confirmed the participation of Poland in such a symposium hosted by the College. This symposium would highlight the increasing interest shown by the College in European medical education and anticipates the eventual joining of EU by these four countries.

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