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THE FIRST AND SECOND HALLS OF THE  
ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY

M. H. KAUFMAN

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST HALL  
(1775-1852)  
SURGEONS' SQUARE

Towards the end of 1734 a group of six medical students agreed that they should meet in the evening once a fortnight at their respective lodgings, and that a dissertation in English or Latin on some medical subject should be composed and read at each meeting. As these students dispersed, they were replaced by others who were equally keen to maintain the momentum established by their predecessors, and this laid the foundations for the future Royal Medical Society.<sup>1</sup> The society was formally constituted in 1737 as the Medical Society, with ten members, and it appears that early meetings were held in a tavern close to the University.<sup>2</sup> A President was appointed to supervise the business of the meeting – a formal discourse on a medical topic, followed by discussion of a clinical case and questions of current medical interest. Fines were instituted for those who were absent from meetings without due cause; a Treasurer was appointed to collect these dues, together with a Secretary to provide a formal record of the proceedings. The Society has remained primarily a student society ever since, though always with active support from former members and influential figures in the Medical School and Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons.

Soon after 1741, when the Royal Infirmary moved from Robertson's Close to its new building in Infirmary Street, the managers of the hospital gave permission for the Society to hold its meetings in one

of their rooms, and the funds which had previously been spent in hiring rooms in a tavern were now deflected towards the accumulation of a library. With the Society's increasing popularity amongst the students, the accommodation at the Infirmary eventually became too small for their meetings, with the growing library particularly cramped and inconvenient. In 1771 a committee was established to investigate the possibility of building their own Hall, and a subscription list was opened. By 1775 sufficient funds were available to begin building on land granted to the Society by the College of Surgeons on a site close to their own Hall in Surgeons' Square, to the east of the Royal Infirmary.<sup>3</sup> The Society's Hall was on the west side of the square, adjoining the ground occupied by the old High School at the foot of Infirmary Street. The foundation stone, with the inscription 'Sacred to Medicine – Founded April 21st 1775 – by Thos McInnes Mason', was laid by Professor William Cullen, one of the most ardent of the fund-raisers, who was President of the Royal College of Physicians at the time, and an address was given by the Senior President, Gilbert Blane.<sup>4</sup> In June 1853, when the old Hall was eventually demolished, the foundation stone was removed and transferred to the Society's new Hall at Melbourne Place. It is now displayed in the Society's present Hall at Bristo Square.

The first meeting in the new Hall was held on 26 April 1776. It was a handsome building containing three principal rooms, each measuring 30 by 20 feet. One served as a hall for the weekly meeting, another acted as a repository for the Society's valuable library, natural history collection and anatomical preparations

(although a formal museum was not established until 1819, in the attic storey of the building) and the third room was intended to be set up as a chemistry laboratory. The roof terminated in a cupola, originally planned for use as an observatory.<sup>5</sup> The appearance of the Society's Hall and its surroundings is recorded in the well known engraving of the south-west corner of Surgeons' Square in 1830, based on a drawing by Thomas Shepherd (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup>

An important landmark in the Society's history occurred in 1778 when, because of the Society's precarious position in regard to its property, heritable and moveable, the members applied through the Secretary of State for a Royal Charter. This followed an acrimonious dispute with the University, who had

opposed a petition to the Town Council for a charter the previous year. However, a Royal Charter of Incorporation was granted by George III at St James's on 14 December 1778, the King 'being satisfied that the design of the petitioners is laudable, and that they deserve encouragement'.<sup>7</sup> The Charter was sealed at Edinburgh in January 1779, and the Charter and Seal are now displayed in the Society's Hall at Bristo Square. Later that year, the College of Surgeons generously fixed the feu duty at £5 per annum, and the Society could then carry on with its main business, the free discussion of the dissertations and their private business; but the real strength of the Society lay in its laws and traditions, and the essential function it played in the life of the medical student.



Fig. 1. Surgeons' Square, drawn by T. H. Shepherd and engraved by T. Barber, 1830. The Society's first Hall, No. 11 Surgeons' Square, is to the right, next to the balconied building which contained the extra-mural anatomical school of John Barclay and subsequently Robert Knox, at No. 10. The building on the far left is Old Surgeons' Hall, No. 8, and John Gordon's classroom, formerly that of John Thomson, at No. 9, is just seen between the latter and Barclay's house. (From Thomas H. Shepherd, *Modern Athens! or Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century*, London 1829–30.)

In addition to the weekly meetings, some experimental work was undertaken by members of the Society. In 1786 it was announced that several small rooms were available in the Hall for private dissection and chemical experiments, although these had to be undertaken at the expense of the members concerned, and proposed experiments had to be approved by the Society's Experimental Committee. For example, rabbits were used to investigate the effect of heat and cold on the body, and dogs and calves were used in transfusion experiments. Fowl and rabbits were used to study the lethal effect of inhalation of carbon dioxide. An Apparatus Committee was established in 1796 to supervise chemical experiments in the Society's premises.<sup>8</sup>

The proximity of the Society's Hall to the grounds occupied by the High School created difficulties at times, and many complaints were made to the Town Council, as Patrons of the School, demanding payment for the cost of repairing windows broken by the boys, though to little effect. After a particularly difficult period, the Society appealed to the headmaster in 1816, and through the janitor the boys were persuaded to direct their excess energy into other activities.<sup>9</sup>

During 1818-19 the membership rose to 84, and this posed particular problems in the meeting hall, in the library and in the rooms set aside for scientific investigations. The Society was in a difficult position; they could either restrict the membership (as some of the more senior members suggested), alter the building, or consider the possibility of moving to new premises with more accommodation. A request to the Town Council for extra ground for an addition to the Hall was turned down, and a committee was set up to estimate the probable cost of a new building. Dr John Barclay was asked whether he would be prepared to sell his property, which adjoined the Society's Hall, but no agreement could be reached,<sup>10</sup> and when Barclay died in 1826 his premises and classes were

taken over by Dr Robert Knox.<sup>11</sup> Various other options were considered, but none was proceeded with.

The matter was not raised again until 1832, when a committee again reported that they were unable to obtain adjoining land on which to extend their premises. In 1835, Barclay's house did become available, as Knox's classes had become too small for continued viability following the Burke and Hare scandal of 1828. The rooms were, however, unsuitable for various reasons and, in addition, too expensive for the Society. In 1837 the architect Thomas Hamilton was engaged, and numerous plans were drawn up with proposed alterations to the Hall, including the addition of a third storey.<sup>12</sup> No decision was taken, however, and it was not until 1850 that the Society was eventually compelled by the expansion of the Royal Infirmary to take action to find other accommodation.

The Society's income had been derived principally from membership subscriptions (in 1834 first year members paid £4. 10. 0, second year members £3. 5. 0 and third year members £2. 4. 0), supplemented by fines for non-attendance at meetings of the Society and its committees, and sums paid for diplomas.<sup>13</sup> A proportion of this money was set aside to cover maintenance of the building and other essential expenses, including the salaries of the Secretary, Librarian and Assistant Librarian (who lived on the premises and had to be available for 7 hours each day to dispense books). From earliest times the holders of these offices were not usually members of the Society. By 1840, the individual who held the combined office of Secretary and Librarian was paid £100 per annum, although out of this he was expected to pay £40 to the Porter (later known as the Assistant Librarian, though the duties of the post were the same).<sup>14</sup> After 1840, these became honorary posts, and were held by members, some of the other duties being undertaken by the various committees of the Society. An annual sum was set aside for an accumulating fund without

access to which the Society would not have been able to afford the move to new premises. In 1828–29 the Surgeons were offered temporary accommodation when the new Royal College of Surgeons building in Nicolson Street was being erected. Gifts by way of books and later a generous donation were received by the Society for allowing the College the use of their Hall.<sup>15</sup>

In 1851, after much debate, it was agreed to sell the old Hall to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary for £1700, a magnanimous offer by the hospital in order to allow it freedom to expand. The value of the Society's property was not enhanced by the fact that the south gable wall of the Hall had been damaged by the pulling down of the adjacent building (Barclay's house) during 1850 for an extension to the Surgical Hospital.<sup>16</sup> Since the sum received from the Infirmary was insufficient to cover the amount needed to purchase and furnish new premises for the Society, a subscription fund was established, and £600 of the Society's shares were realised. It was clear that it would be too expensive to consider the building of a *new* Hall that would be able to accommodate a meeting hall of adequate size for the considerable membership of the Society, to house its extensive and valuable library, and to provide experimental laboratories, rooms for the officers of the Society and additional sundry committee rooms, and in March 1852 it was decided to purchase an existing tenement house at Melbourne Place on George IV Bridge, and to adapt it for use as the Society's Hall. The Society retained the use of the old Hall to maintain continuity; the last meeting in Surgeons' Square was on 12 November 1852, and the first in the refurbished new Hall took place one week later.<sup>17</sup>

An oil painting showing the old Hall in Surgeons' Square, painted by a Mr Dallas, was presented to the Society by some of its members in March 1855 (fig. 2). The fact that the Hall stands in isolation in the picture



Fig. 2. Painting by Mr Dallas of the Royal Medical Society's Hall in Surgeons' Square as it appeared shortly before demolition in 1853 (now in the Society's meeting hall in Bristo Square). (By courtesy of the Royal Medical Society.)

and that part of Bryce's New Surgical Hospital towers over it on the left suggests that the painting was made some time shortly before the demolition of the Hall, after Barclay's house had already been removed.

THE SOCIETY'S SECOND HALL  
(1852–1966)  
7 MELBOURNE PLACE

The New Hall Committee of the Society strongly recommended the immediate purchase of No. 7 Melbourne Place on George IV Bridge, acting on the advice of Mr Gifford, legal adviser to the Society, after careful consideration of the plan of the City Improvements that affected this area, and it was

agreed at an extraordinary meeting on 8 March 1852 to buy the upper four floors of this tenement. Despite extensive refurbishment of the interior of the building, the work was completed and the Society was handsomely accommodated by the time of its first meeting in the new premises on 17 November 1852.<sup>18</sup> The remodelling of the interior of Melbourne Place was by the architect David Bryce, who was also architect for the extensions to the Royal Infirmary at this time.<sup>19</sup>

The handsome group of buildings along Melbourne Place had been erected in 1835, following



Fig. 3. Frontage to No. 7 Melbourne Place, 1965, showing the main entrance doorway, flanked on either side by shops. The Society's premises embraced the five windows on the first, second and third floors. The eagle, with spread wings, is mounted on the gable on the fourth storey. (*Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, ED/1125.*)

the demolition of Old Bank Close and the sixteenth-century Robert Gourlay's House the previous year.<sup>20</sup> The first occupants of No. 7 were Messrs James and John Gray, in 1837. They were the proprietors and publishers of various weekly and monthly broadsheets, who previously traded from Bank Street. The Society purchased the property directly from Messrs Gray.<sup>21</sup> The George IV Bridge facade of Melbourne Place was particularly impressive, and the Society's property spanned five windows in width. The fourth storey occupied only the central portion of the building, under a steeply sloping roof, and with a gable surmounted by a large golden eagle with outstretched wings in the Imperial Roman or French style (fig. 3).

Unfortunately, no records survive to detail the alterations made by Bryce to the fabric of Melbourne Place, but they were substantial. Of particular note were the changes made to the second and third storeys of the building to produce the double-height meeting hall, the main feature of the new premises, which extended the full width of the property. The intervening floor was removed. The ceiling of the hall was timbered and supported by substantial wooden beams. The windows on the third floor fronting Melbourne Place were kept shuttered, while those on the second floor were always heavily draped to exclude the light. A number of large fittings hanging from the ceiling supplied the majority of the lighting, supplemented by two pairs of small wall fittings, one on either side of the President's chair. This enormous chair, emblazoned with the Society's emblem, was raised on a platform, with its back towards the middle of the eastern wall of the hall. Directly in front was the President's desk. High on the wall above hung a painting on wood depicting the Royal Arms of King George III. The Secretary and two other officers of the Society sat at a table in front of the President to record the minutes of the proceedings. To the right of the

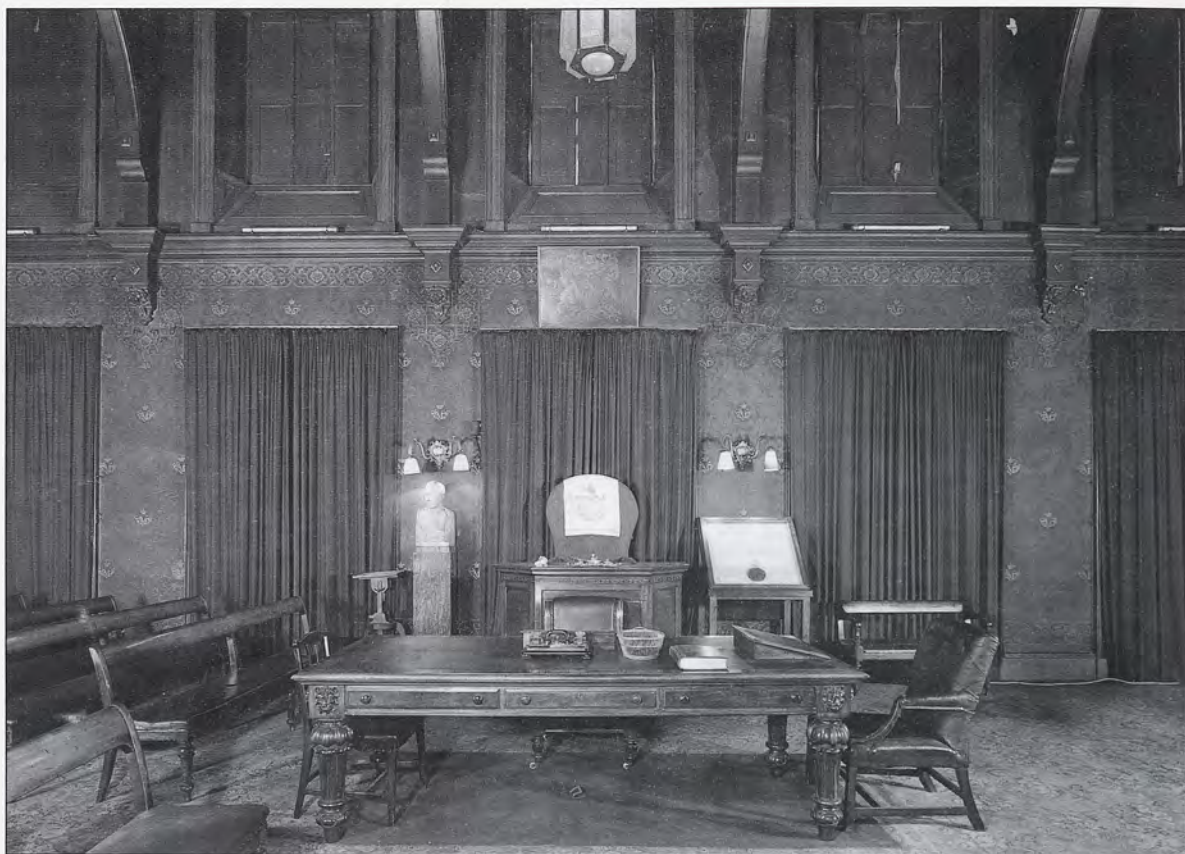


Fig. 4. Eastern side of the meeting hall, 1965, showing the President's chair and desk on a raised platform, in front of which is the Secretary's table. To the right of the President's chair is the Society's Royal Charter, to the left is Gordon's bust, and above the chair is the Coat of Arms of King George III. (RCAHMS, ED/1060.)

chair was the Society's Royal Charter, and to the left on a pedestal was the bust of Dr John Gordon, a great favourite with the members (fig. 4).<sup>22</sup> At the north end of the hall, above a marble mantelpiece, was a painting of Andrew Duncan, Senior, attributed to Sir John Watson Gordon (fig. 5). At the opposite end of the hall was a similar fireplace, and on this wall hung paintings of William Cullen and Joseph Black by David Martin. On either side of the main entrance were two subsidiary doors above which were busts, and on the wall above were memorials to two Presidents who had died in office – Jacob Pattison, who died from natural causes in 1782, and Francis Foulke, who was killed in a duel in 1789. Members of the Society and their

guests sat on wooden benches mostly located towards the northern end of the hall.

The wall coverings, in stucco, were particularly memorable. The background was floral in design, and a drab olive-green in colour, interspersed in a regular pattern with the logo of the Society, the scrolled letters 'RMS' surmounted with a small crown against a plain ground. The borders were about a foot wide, and heavily ornate, particularly on the north and south walls where the vertical borders included medical insignia, with a staff associated with an entwined snake. High up in the centre on each wall was a very ornate Royal Coat of Arms, and on either side exotic shields, one of which announced 'Society Instituted

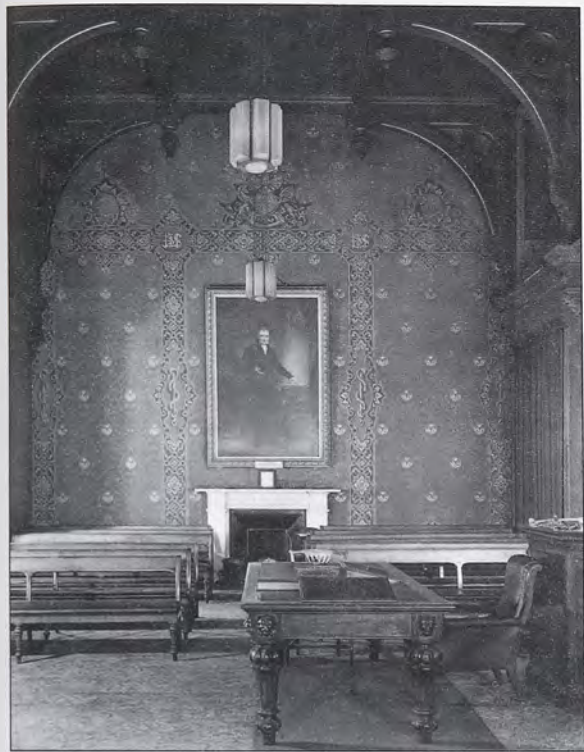


Fig. 5. Southern end of the hall, 1965, including the painting of Andrew Duncan, Senior. Note, in particular, the patterned wall covering with its ornate borders. (RCAHMS, ED/1064.)

A.D. 1737', while the other proclaimed 'Incorporated by Royal Charter A.D. 1778' (see fig. 5).<sup>23</sup> The whole impression was of a very conservative gentlemen's club, which is exactly what it was until the last year of the Society's existence at Melbourne Place, in 1964, when female medical students were first admitted to membership of the Society.<sup>24</sup>

The rest of the building was progressively taken over by the Society's growing library. Above the meeting hall, the fourth storey was originally fitted out as the librarian's house, while two small rooms on the third floor were initially both used as the museum; after 1936, one was furnished as a reading room. On the second floor, two small rooms accommodated some of the Society's older books, but in 1931 one was rearranged to display the original paintings for Sir Byrom Bramwell's *Atlas of Clinical Medicine*,<sup>25</sup>

while the other was adapted in 1938 to house the most valuable books in the collection. On the first floor were the north and south libraries, and secretaries' and librarians' rooms. The main door into the new premises opened into a wide entrance passage, and the foundation stone from the Hall in Surgeons' Square was built into the wall below the staircase facing the entrance door. The ground floor consisted only of the entrance passage, as the two shops on either side of the Society's door were independently owned.

The entire block of properties in Melbourne Place was compulsorily purchased by Edinburgh City Council in 1965, and the Society was given relatively little time to vacate their premises. The block was demolished shortly afterwards, and replaced with Council Offices of debatable architectural merit.<sup>26</sup> Fortunately, the excellent relationship that has always existed between the Society and the Royal College of Surgeons came to the rescue, in that the College offered the Society temporary premises in the ground floor and basement at No. 3 Hill Square, not far from the site of the Society's first Hall in Surgeons' Square. While far smaller than the premises in Melbourne Place, it provided the Society with a breathing space during which a more permanent home could be found. When the Melbourne Place Hall was demolished the original foundation stone of the first Hall and the eagle from the gable of No. 7 were rescued, with one or two other smaller mementos, and these are now displayed in the Society's present premises. Indeed, it was one of the author's first duties as Senior President during the 230th Session of the Society, in October 1966, to accompany the eagle as it flew from Melbourne Place to Hill Square *en route* to its present eyrie at Bristo Square (fig. 6).

When the Society's second Hall at Melbourne Place was demolished, the fate of its enormous and valuable library was one of the greatest causes for concern. From its humble beginnings in the early



1740s, when the Society first started spending money on purchasing books, the Society gradually acquired a collection of reference books which was kept initially in a room in the Royal Infirmary set aside for the purpose by the Managers. By 1771 the collection had increased to about 1000 volumes and now occupied two rooms.<sup>27</sup> In 1834, in the Surgeons' Square Hall, the Society's library housed nearly 11,000 books, and by the time of the move in 1851 this had increased to over 14,000 volumes, a considerable number of which had been donated to the Society by their authors.<sup>28</sup> When the Society came to leave Melbourne Place, because no adequate storage

facilities were available, because of the deteriorating state of the binding of many of the volumes, and because the cost of insurance against loss or damage was beyond the means of the Society, the greater part of the collection was dispersed in a sale organised by Sotheby & Co. spread over six days in 1969. The three volumes of the *Sale Catalogue* are now important historical documents in their own right, as they accurately document the very high quality and range of the books in the Society's library at that time.<sup>29</sup> The sale realised a total of £145,000 – in present day terms, close to £1,330,000.<sup>30</sup> Only the bound copies of the Dissertations, the Society's



Fig. 6. Rescuing the eagle from the ruins of Melbourne Place. On the back of this photograph is written 'The eagle leaving 7 Melbourne Place on 23/10/66 for Hill Square attended by the Senior President, Mr M. H. Kaufman, and Miss F. M. Marr and Mr R. Nixon, Junior Presidents'. (From a photograph in the author's possession.)

Minute Books and a few hundred of the volumes that relate most directly to the early history of the Society and Edinburgh medicine were retained, including some eighty books in the Society's collection not held elsewhere in Edinburgh.<sup>31</sup>

The Society occupied premises in Hill Square for just over ten years, during the last seven of which they negotiated with the University of Edinburgh for space at the new Student Centre at Bristo Square. A considerable proportion of the sums raised by the sale of Melbourne Place and the Society's library, as well as the money raised by a special Appeal Committee chaired by Sir Derrick Dunlop, went to the University to cover the purchase of space at the Student Centre. While the University retains ownership of the premises, the Society was required to cover the proportionate cost of the rooms to be occupied by the Society, the architect's fees, and the

full cost of decoration and furnishing. What funds remained were invested for the future use of the Society and its members.

James Gray's bicentenary *History of the Royal Medical Society 1737–1937* finished with the comment that 'the Society is primarily, but not purely, a student society. There is the senior element, never intrusive, but careful to ensure adherence to sound traditions. With the maintenance of these traditions, the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh will continue to flourish.'<sup>32</sup> The Society successfully weathered the storms of the move from Melbourne Place to Bristo Square in the 1960s and 1970s, and it is to be hoped that these ideals, and the continuity with the past that they embrace, will continue to ensure the vigour and prosperity of the Royal Medical Society into the next century, and the next millennium.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

The author is particularly grateful to Mrs Pat Strong and Dr Jack Cormack for their advice during the preparation of this manuscript, and assistance provided by the staff of Special Collections, Edinburgh University Library (EUL).

- 1 James Gray, *History of the Royal Medical Society 1737–1937* (Edinburgh 1952). This is the most recent study on the history of the RMS, from which much of this account has been drawn, though most of the older records have been revisited. Gray died in 1942, after preparing the first draft of the manuscript of the book, and the definitive version was prepared for publication by Dr Douglas Guthrie.
- 2 J. D. Holmes, 'Early Years of the Medical Society of Edinburgh', *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 23 (1968), pp. 333–340. See also W. Stroud, *History of the Medical Society of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1823). This is the assumed date of publication, as the original title page is missing from the only

copy so far located in Edinburgh, in the possession of the Royal Medical Society. Information in pencil inside the cover suggests that it may have been printed by William Aitken in 1820 rather than Hay, Gall & Co. in 1823, as previously assumed. It is clear from annotations in this volume that either Gray or Guthrie (see note 1) obtained much of the information on the early history of the Society from this source.

- 3 Andrew Duncan, Senior, *An Account of the Scheme for Building a Hall for the Medical Society at Edinburgh* (printed for the Society and circulated in 1771). This 4-page pamphlet explains that it was because 'their books are not in such a situation as could be desired, either with regard to conveniency or preservation', that a subscription was begun for building their own Hall. By 1771 £210 had been raised, which enabled the Society to start preparing plans for the new Hall. For this, and a selection of other relevant pamphlets, see EUL. Special Collections. 1446/2. These pamphlets were republished under

- the general title *A Short Account of the Commencement, Progress, and Present State, of the Buildings Belonging to the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1819).
- 4 Gray, *History of the RMS*, pp. 43–44; G. Blane, *Address to the Medical Society of Students at Edinburgh upon Laying the Foundation Stone of their Hall, April 21st 1775* (Edinburgh 1775), pp. 10, 11. Blane, who was President for only the one year in which he delivered this address, indicated that rooms would be set aside in the Society's new premises for a chemistry laboratory, anatomical and natural history museums, etc.
  - 5 At the pinnacle of the cupola was a gilded metal representation of the symbol of Aesculapius, the rod with entwined serpent, surmounted by a small weather vane. This was removed at the demolition of the old Hall and is known to have survived until 1869, when a request was made to the Society by the then Treasurer, Dr A. J. Macfarlan, to have it regilded; its subsequent fate is, however, unknown (Gray, *History of the RMS*, p. 263). It is of interest to note that in Shepherd's print (fig. 1) the cupola appears to be surmounted by a weather vane, but the entwined serpent is not shown.
  - 6 For the layout of buildings around Surgeons' Square in 1817 and 1852 see Norman E. Butcher, 'James Hutton's House at St John's Hill, Edinburgh', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, New Series 4 (1997), pp. 107–112, figs 2, 5.
  - 7 Gray, *History of the RMS*, p. 55.
  - 8 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
  - 10 John Struthers, *Historical Sketch of the Edinburgh Anatomical School* (Edinburgh 1867), pp. 56–70.
  - 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 80–82. See also H. Lonsdale, *A Sketch of the Life and Writings of Robert Knox the Anatomist* (London 1870).
  - 12 Copies of some of the architect's drawings are displayed in the Society's premises, and others are available for consultation in the library of the National Monuments Record of Scotland. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS).
  - 13 Gray, *History of the RMS*, p. 152.
  - 14 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
  - 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 137–138. Earlier, in 1779, the Society had hosted the Philosophical Society (later to become the Royal Society of Edinburgh) for their monthly meetings when they were without premises.
  - 16 Charles W. Cathcart, *Some of the Older Schools of Anatomy connected with the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1882); reprinted from *Edinburgh Medical Journal* for March 1882. The Managers of the Royal Infirmary had purchased the adjoining building for £600, and it was estimated that the actual value of the Society's Hall to anyone other than the hospital was no more than £400 (Gray, *History of the RMS*, p. 199).
  - 17 *Ibid.*, chapter 12, pp. 189–208.
  - 18 *Ibid.*
  - 19 Valerie Fiddes and Alistair Rowan, *David Bryce, 1803–1876* (Edinburgh 1976), pp. 98, 99.
  - 20 The architect of 1–12 Melbourne Place was George Smith, using the Old Flemish Style specified in the Improvement Act for the George IV Bridge scheme in 1827 (Howard Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600–1840*, New Haven and London 1995, p. 892). For Gourlay's House, see Daniel Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1848), I, pp. 172–174.
  - 21 The suggestion that the property had at one time been the Prussian Consulate does not appear in Gray's *History of the RMS*, and appears to have been a folk legend associated with the eagle (personal communication, J. J. C. Cormack).
  - 22 Struthers, *Historical Sketch* (note 10), pp. 70–73. See also D. Ellis, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of John Gordon, M.D., F.R.S.E., late Lecturer on Anatomy and Physiology in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1823).
  - 23 A comprehensive set of photographs of the meeting hall at Melbourne Place shortly before it was demolished is held in the library of the RCAHMS. These, and a collection of photographs showing other rooms in Melbourne Place, are available for consultation in the Society's premises. See also James Wallace, 'The Story of Two Portraits: William Cullen – Joseph Black', *Royal Scottish Society of Arts Bulletin*, No. 8 (June 1959), pp. 1–8.
  - 24 Margaret Ross, 'The Royal Medical Society and Medical Women', *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 26 (1996), pp. 629–644.
  - 25 Byrom Bramwell, *Atlas of Clinical Medicine*, 3 vols (Edinburgh 1892–96).
  - 26 The new building was designed by Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners, 1968. A plaque on the wall near the main entrance to the Council Offices on George IV Bridge indicates the site formerly occupied by the Royal Medical Society. To the left of the plaque is the Society's circular emblem, the head of Hippocrates surrounded by an inscription. To the right appears the text 'Site of 7 Melbourne Place: Hall of the Royal Medical Society 1852–1966: Where many Edinburgh medical men delivered their first scientific dissertation'.

- 27 Andrew Duncan, Senior, *Introductory Address to the Medical Society of Students at Edinburgh – Read 2d of November 1771* (Edinburgh 1772). See p. 9: 'From the present state of your funds, you are able to purchase every new medical production which deserves a place in any well chosen collection. Some of your absent members have not been unmindful to add to your library, by sending presents of their own publications, not only from every quarter of Europe, but even from the continent of America.'
- 28 J. J. C. Cormack, 'The Society's Library', *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 48 (1960), pp. 125–141.
- 29 Sotheby & Co., *Catalogue of an Important Collection of Medical Books – Comprising the Property of the Royal Medical Society*, in 3 portions (London 1969). The sales took place on 10–11 February, 14–15 July and 27–28 October, with a total of 1636 lots. According to the *Catalogue*, this was 'the largest collection of early medical books to be offered for public sale in recent times'.
- 30 Information supplied by the Bank of England.
- 31 As the future of the Society had yet to be determined, an Appeal Committee (chaired by Sir Derrick Dunlop) was established and, with the Council of the Society, prepared a circular addressed 'To all Life Members and Fellows: Background to the Sale of the Library', from R. H. Smith and R. D. Hunter, Senior Presidents 1967–68 and 1968–69, respectively, dated January 1969. This recommended amongst other things that 'a major part of the historical collection of books be sold. It was, however, accepted that the Society should keep as the foundations of a continuing library its unique collection of Dissertations by members, complete from 1759, together with a selection of books of particular relevance to the Society and to Edinburgh medicine. In addition, the Society would operate ... a consultation press of current medical textbooks and journals for the use of the active undergraduate members'.
- 32 Gray, *History of the RMS*, p. 314.