

GD3/ MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

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Introduction

The Society was founded in 1821 with the aim of receiving: ‘...communications on Medicine and Surgery, and subjects connected therewith; to converse on medical topics...; to publish such of the papers submitted to the Society as shall be judged worthy of public notice; and to promote professional improvement by any other means...’

In essence these remained the Society’s aims and these papers reflect the Society’s activities.

1 Laws of Society and Lists of Members, 1821-1968

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|----|-----------|--|---|---|
| 1 | 1821-1865 | Volume containing: | | |
| | | a | Laws of Society, 1821 | |
| | | b | List of signatures of Ordinary Members, with the date of their joining the Society, 1821-1865 | |
| | | c | Signatures of visitors to the Society's meetings, 1824-1828 | |
| 2 | 1888 | Laws of Society, printed | 5 copies | |
| 3 | 1896 | Laws of Society, printed | 5 copies | |
| 4 | 1901 | Laws of Society, printed | 5 copies | |
| 5 | 1920 | Laws of Society, printed | 5 copies | |
| 6 | 1920 | Laws of Society, printed | 5 copies | Secretary's bound copy. Includes ms revisions and annotations; a copy of the Laws of the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society, and copies of latter's agenda papers, Dec 1955, Jan 1956. |
| 7 | 1933 | Laws of Society, printed | 2 copies | |
| 8 | 1933 | Laws of Society, printed | Includes draft revisions | |
| 9 | 1933 | Laws of Society | Typed, with ms revisions and draft amendments. 4 copies. Also: | |
| | | a | Typed copy of laws, n.d. | |
| | | b | Typed translation of the Society's Diploma given to Honorary members, n.d. | |
| 10 | 1956 | Laws of Society, printed | | |
| 11 | 1830-1921 | Lists of members and office bearers of the Society. Includes lists of honorary and corresponding members, with notes of the towns in which they practised, 1830-1858, 1896-1897, 1899-1900. c1921. Printed. (30 items) | | |
| 12 | 1968 | History and Laws of the Society, printed, with list of Presidents 1821-1968 | | |

2 Council Minute Books, 1821-1954

Minutes of the meetings of the Council of the Society were at first concerned with setting up the Society and drawing up procedure for its meetings, and with the admission of members. The latter function continued, along with the other day-to-day business of the Society. Two volumes also contain some correspondence with the Society and some administrative papers.

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| 1 | 1821-1853 | |
| 2 | wanting | |
| 3 | 1882-1909 | |
| 4 | 1909-1934 | Includes, pasted in, or loose leaf: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) letter of C B Bell, CA, Clerk and Treasurer of the Royal Victoria Hospital for Consumption, Edinburgh, concerning the hiring of a hall by the Society from the Hospital for their meetings, 15 Oct 1913; b) syllabuses of the 1920-1926, 1930-1931, 1932-1933 sessions; c) carbon copy of a circular letter to members concerning the continuation of printing the Society's <i>Transactions</i>, c1921; d) letter of Alexander Miles on the same question, 12 Jul 1921; e) a letter from the printers of the <i>Transactions</i>, Oliver & Boyd, 4 Oct 1921. f) press cutting concerning the Society's Centenary Dinner, 1921; g) a list of corresponding members overseas, c1922 h) a copy letter of the Society on the Milk Supply of the Country in relation to Health, May 1925 i) two letters of the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society and one of the Royal Society of Medicine on the Society's centenary, 1921. |
| 5 | 1935-1954 | Includes, pasted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) letter of the National Birth Control Association, 19 Feb 1937; b) syllabuses for sessions 1937-1939, 1945-1948; c) lists of office bearers; d) a letter of Dr Rae Gilchrist concerning the setting up of a Scottish Medical Journal, 25 Nov 1954 |

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3 Society Minute Books, 1821-1959

The Minutes of the Society's meetings record the presentation of clinical cases by members of the Society, and the proposal and admission of new members.

- 1 1821-1841 The first minute lists the Society's founder members.
- 2 1841-1850 Includes, interleaved, an abstract of the Society's accounts for 1849-1850
- 3 1850-1866 Includes, pasted in:
 - a) lists of office bearers, 1861, 1863, and agendas, 1860.
 - b) a printed form for the return of statistics of epidemic and acute diseases, 1862
 - c) an abstract of revenue and expenditure of the Society for 1863-1864.
- 4 1866-1879 Includes, pasted in:
 - a) Treasurer's statement for 1866
 - b) balance sheets of the Society at 31 Dec 1868, 1871-1874
 - c) a press cutting reporting a paper read to the Society by Dr Andrew Fergus on *The Sewage Question*.
- 5 1879-1902 Includes, pasted in:
 - a) balance sheets for the Society, 1882-1900
 - b) type-written report by a committee of the Society on a paper concerning scarlet fever
 - c) report of the Hall Committee, 1891
 - d) a letter of Lord Lister thanking the Society members for their congratulations on his elevation to the peerage, 1 Mar 1897
 - e) a letter of the Scottish Office on the death of Queen Victoria, 30 Mar 1901
 - f) a ms draft submission to the Town Council of Edinburgh on the notification of cases of measles.

3 Society Minute Books, 1821-1959

- 6 1902-1927 Includes, interleaved or pasted in:
- a) two printed agendas for a meeting of the Society on 2 Feb 1921
 - b) a letter of Sir William Turner, thanking the members of the Society for their congratulations on his appointment as Principal of Edinburgh University, 22 Jan 1903
 - c) a letter of W C Röntgen, 12 Jun 1905
 - d) a letter of the Secretary of the Royal College of Surgeons thanking the members for their congratulations on the College's 4th centenary, 29 Jul 1905
 - e) notes on the presentation of cases at each meeting
 - f) a letter of Dr William Craig thanking the Society for the extract of its minutes, and a presentation made to him in appreciation of his services as editor of its *Transactions*, 4 Dec 1909
 - g) a letter of Dr Frederick C Shattuck, Boston, USA, acknowledging his election as a Corresponding Member of the Society, 3 Jun 1912
 - h) menu of the Society's Centenary Dinner, 28 Oct 1921
 - i) a list of members who attended, and a press cutting concerning, the Dinner
 - j) letter of Mrs Jean Caird acknowledging the Society's condolences on the death of her husband, Professor Francis M Caird, 30 Nov 1926
 - k) letter of William Strathie Caw, Treasurer & Clerk of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh concerning the examination or treatment by radiologists of patients unable to pay private fees, 18 Apr 1927

3 Society Minute Books, 1821-1959

7 1927-1959 Includes:

- a) a letter of Mrs Mermina Taylor acknowledging the Society's condolences on the death of her husband, Dr William Macrae Taylor, Treasurer of the Society for the past 10 years, 11 Feb 1930
- b) a letter of E C Pennefather, Secretary of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, thanking the Society for its donation to the former's Centenary Fund, 15 Jun 1936
- c) letter of the South Eastern Association of the Medical Women's Federation, inviting members of the Society to an open meeting
- d) a memorandum on the proposal to produce a Scottish Medical Journal incorporating the 'Edinburgh Medical Journal' and the 'Glasgow Medical Journal', Jun 1955
- e) two copies of the Laws of the Society, as revised in 1956
- f) copy Annual Report of the 'Scottish Medical Journal' for 1958

4 Transactions of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, 1881-1936

Each volume lists the office-bearers and members of the Society, after which follows a record of the work done during the previous session. This includes: ‘...the communication of Original Papers; the exhibition of Patients, illustrating rare and interesting forms of disease; and the exhibition of Pathological and other specimens so essential to the proper understanding of the morbid changes which take place in the human body’.

Each volume is indexed by the contributor’s name and subject matter. There is also a separate index to volumes I–XX.

1	1881-1882	volume I	
2	1882-1883	volume II	Contains, loose leaf, two sheets of writing paper with notes on hereditary syphilis, and part of a case record of hereditary syphilis.
3	1883-1884	volume III	
4	1884-1885	volume IV	
5	1885-1886	volume V	
6	1886-1887	volume VI	
7	1887-1888	volume VII	
8	1888-1889	volume VIII	
9	1889-1890	volume IX	
10	1890-1891	volume X	
11	1891-1892	volume XI	
12	1892-1893	volume XII	
13	wanting		
14	1894-1895	volume XIV	
15	1895-1896	volume XV	
16	1896-1897	volume XVI	
17	1897-1898	volume XVII	

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4 Transactions of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, 1881-1936

18	1898-1899	volume XVIII
19	1899-1900	volume XIX
20	1900-1901	volume XX
21	wanting	
22	1902-1903	volume XXII
23	1903-1904	volume XXIII
24	1904-1905	volume XXIV
25	1905-1906	volume XXV
26	1906-1907	volume XXVI
27	1902	Index to volumes I – XX
28-48	wanting	
49	1928-1929	Partial reprint containing list of members, accounts and contents
50-51	wanting	
52	1931-1932	Partial reprint containing list of members, accounts and contents
53	1932-1933	Partial reprint containing list of members, accounts and contents
54-56	wanting	
57	1936-1937	Partial reprint containing list of members, accounts and contents
58	1936	Galley proof of minute of a discussion by the Society of a report by a Committee on Scottish Health Services.

5 Administrative Papers, 1821-1946

These loose papers include agendas of meetings for election of office bearers and ordinary business; (blank) copies of invitations to meetings; proposals to membership; and other notices to members.

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| 1 | 1821-1841, n.d. | Three lists of books owned by the Society, with dates of their acquisition. |
| 2 | 1830-1880 | Agendas for election of office-bearers, containing lists of present office-bearers and members. Sessions IX – LX, incomplete. |
| 3 | 1846-1849,
1887-1888 | Abstracts of the Society's accounts, showing its income and expenditure under broad headings. Ms & printed. |
| 4 | 1853-1865 | Agendas for clinical meetings of the Society, Sessions XXXII – CLX, incomplete. |
| 5 | 1855-1869 | Agendas for clinical meetings of the Society, Sessions XXXV – XLVIII, bound volume. |
| 6 | 1893-1902 | Agendas for clinical meetings of the Society, Sessions LXXII –LXXXI incomplete. |
| 7 | n.d.,
1851-1877 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Blank pro forma invitations to the Society's Council meetings, 5 copies. b) Blank pro forma proposals for membership of the Society, 22 copies c) Pro forma application forms for membership of the Society, one blank, one partially completed, n.d. d) Blank pro forma notice of election as an ordinary member of the Society. e) Blank pro forma notice to contributors to the Society's Proceedings. f) Syllabus of Society meetings, 1851-1852 g) Syllabus of Society meetings, 1876-1877 |

5 Administrative Papers, 1821-1946

- 8 1893 Notifications of agreement from members of the Society to buy shares in a new Hall proposed to be built for the Society, 1893.
- 9 1946
- a) 'The Evolution, Function and Scope of the Medical Society', a paper read by Emeritus Professor Edwin Bramwell to the Society at its inaugural meeting, 6 Nov 1946.
 - b) Copy minute of the above meeting containing members' discussion of the paper and the Society's future, 6 Nov 1946.
 - c) Copy of Professor Bramwell's written reply to the discussion, n.d.

6 John Lizars' Correspondence with the Society, 1832

These papers concern a dispute between the Society and one of its members, Professor John Lizars, about a paper read by him to the Society on the subject of Cholera Asphyxia. The dispute eventually led to Professor Lizars' resignation from the Society, after several meetings with a committee of the Society to defend his behaviour.

- 1 Letters of Professor John Lizars concerning a dispute with the Society on the subject of a paper read by him to the Society on Cholera Asphyxia, 3 Apr-16 Apr [1832]. Includes copy letters in support of Lizars from other members. (9 items)
- 2 Draft letters of Dr J C Gregory, mainly to Lizars and to the Central Board of Health on the same subject, 5 Apr-17 Apr 1832. Also draft letter of Professor John W Turner to Lizars, 7 Apr 1832. (8 items)
- 3 Letter of the Secretary of the Central Board of Health, Whitehall, to Dr Gregory, acknowledging a copy resolution of the Society, 13 Apr 1832. Letter of Lord Melbourne's secretary on the same subject, 16 Apr 1832. (4 items)
- 4 Copy minutes of extraordinary meeting of the Society and of the committee of the Society appointed to consider the dispute with Lizars, 4-17 Apr 1832, n.d.
- 5 'Substance of the Investigations regarding Cholera Asphyxia...to which are added, observations on the Disease in Edinburgh...by John Lizars, Professor of Surgery, printed pamphlet, 1832.

7 Correspondence, 1844-1967

The bulk of the correspondence consists of letters sent to the Society's office-bearers on various topics, such as the hiring of a hall for the Society's regular meetings, or the general administration of the Society. One section comprises letters protesting against the Society's ban on homeopathic practitioners as members. There are also some copy or draft letters of the office-bearers in reply.

There is only one letter book, containing copy letters concerning the publication of the Society's *Transactions*.

- 1 Correspondence between the Society and others concerning the hiring of a hall for its meetings. Correspondents include the Royal College of Physicians, the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Edinburgh Association for the university Education of Women. 1844-1890. (21 items)
- 2 Miscellaneous letters to office-bearers of the Society on administrative matters, including two from Dr Grace Cadell, asking for an application form for membership (1892-1893) 1845-1967, n.d. (18 items)
- 3 Letters of British and foreign medical and other learned societies, requesting exchange agreements for publications with the Society, 1845-1886. (7 items)
- 4 Letters of Andrew Gray Cuthbertson concerning a paper read to the Society on Black Phthisis which appeared to contain adverse comment on his collieries, 13 Jul & 15 Aug 1846. Draft reply by Douglas Maclagan to the first of Cuthbertson's letters, 13 Aug 1846. (3 items)
- 5 Letters from members of the Society protesting against its ban on membership 'of all those who publicly profess Homeopathy', Nov 1851, n.d.
- 6 Letters of Dr W T Gairdner concerning a paper of his published in the Society's Journal, from which several paragraphs had been excised by the Editor, Dr William Robertson, 2 & 4 Jul 1853. Memorandum by Gairdner of a conversation with James Young Simpson (President of the Society) on the same topic, 7 Jul 1853. Replies to Gairdner's letters by Dr Wm Robertson, 4 & 5 Jul 1853. (6 items)

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7 Correspondence, 1844-1967

- 7 Letters of Messrs Oliver & Boyd to the Society concerning the printing of its *Proceedings*, 28 Mar-17 Apr 1882. (3 items)
- 8 Letters of Messrs Neill & Co, Oliver & Boyd and Frank Murray concerning the printing of the billets for the Society's meetings, Aug 1886-Jan 1889. Delivery note of Messrs A & D Padon in respect of a minute book rebound by them, Dec 1896. (11 items)
- 9 Honorary Secretary's letter book containing copy letters of Charles Cathcart and James Ritchie concerning the printing of the Society's *Transactions* and hiring a hall for meetings; also general administrative correspondence. Mar 1888-Nov 1889
- 10 Estimates and letters of Messrs Oliver & Boyd and Messrs Neill & Co concerning the printing of the Society's *Transactions*, Feb-Oct 1889. (8 items)
- 11 Letters of Messrs Oliver and Boyd concerning the publication of the Society's *Transactions*, and also those of the Obstetrical Society, May 1921-Jul 1922. Includes printed circulars concerning the new arrangements for printing the *Transactions*. Letter of W Taylor on the same subject, Nov 1921. (13 items)

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8 Medical Papers, 1838-c1892

- 1 Two letters of Dr S Scott Alison, Tranent to Professor Alison concerning a paper for publication by the Society, 17 & 27 Jan 1838. "Notes on a case of Ascites" by the above, 12 Jan 1838, with two drawings. (5 items)
- 2 Tables of statistics concerning the children of twins, compiled by Dr [James Young] Simpson, 1843. (10 items)
- 3 'Transfusion of Human Blood in the treatment of Pernicious Anaemia' by D J Brakenridge, MD. Reprint of a paper published in volume XI of the Society's *Transactions*. (GD3/4/11)

9 Public Health, 1832-1914

In addition to its usual role of disseminating clinical knowledge amongst Edinburgh's medical practitioners, the Society saw itself as having a larger function in the community. Accordingly it advised local and central government on appropriate public health measures, such as requesting the establishment by Edinburgh Town Council of bacteriological laboratories to enable cases of cholera to be more effectively diagnosed and managed (a request which was refused).

- 1 Correspondence and other papers on various aspects of public health, 1832-1893, n.d. Includes printed forms for the collection of statistics on the prevalence of epidemic and acute diseases, 1862; a draft interim report by a committee of the Society on a paper in the *British Medical Journal* on Scarlet Fever, 1887; correspondence about the setting up of bacteriological laboratories in Edinburgh, 1893; and a petition to Edinburgh Town Council requesting the continuation of the notification of measles, n.d. (8 items)
- 2 Correspondence and other papers concerning bovine tuberculosis, 1887-1888. Includes correspondence with the Scottish Office, Agricultural Department and Edinburgh Town Council about the nomination of two members of the Society to give evidence to a Government Committee of enquiry on the subject, 1888. (19 items)
- 3 'Report by the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh on Isolation and other Matters in Connection with the more common Infectious Diseases'. A report circulated to all medical practitioners in Midlothian, 1914. (8 copies)

10 Correspondence with Honorary Members, 1843-1966

The Society honoured eminent members of the medical profession at home and abroad by electing them corresponding or honorary members. These are their letters of acknowledgement.

- 1 1843-1908 (25 items)
- 2 1921-1924 (31 items)
- 3 1934-1937 (10 items)
- 4 1965-1966 (10 items) Includes a copy of an address on the conferral of honorary membership of the Society on Dr William Alistair Alexander, 1966.
- 5 Photographs of a letter of Joseph, Baron Lister of Lyme Regis [1893] and of T Pavlov [1908] acknowledging their acceptance of honorary membership of the Society. (Originals in GD3/20/2)

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11 Newspapers, 1832-1851

Theses are associated with other papers in this collection. Nos 1 & 2 refer to the Lizars affair (GD3/6/1-5); No 3 refers to the Society's ban on homeopathic practitioners as members (GD3/7/5).

1 *The New North Britain*, 31 Mar 1832

2 *The Caledonian Mercury*, 9 Apr 1832

3 *The Scotsman*, 10 Jan 1851

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12 Miscellaneous, 1924-1971

- 1 Printed address from the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Bologna, 1924, and two copies of the Edinburgh Society's reply address. (6 items)
- 2 'The Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society of Glasgow' by Archibald B Kerr, BSc, MB, FRFPSG, FRCSEd, General Secretary of the Society, 1938, photostat, faded.
- 3 'Then and Now: A Symposium on Changes in Medical Practice, 1821-1971', held to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Society. Programme of events, 1971.
- 4 Unused Diploma seal of the Society, n.d.