The Lancaster Medical Museum

Valerie Anderson, retired associate specialist in medicine

HISTORY

When John Carne (general practitioner, Lancaster) took over Dr Wilkie's practice in Dallas Road in 1964 he discovered old medical equipment in the cellar and decided to start a collection. John Dyer (public health consultant, Lancaster) also started collecting at Slyne Road and, at a later date, I started collecting cardiac equipment with the help of Peter Nelson (chief electronic technician). I was particularly concerned about preserving one of the first three 2D cardiac ultrasound machines to come on to the market; one of only three in the world (USA, UK and Russia). Miles Rucklidge (consultant anaesthetist, Royal Lancaster Infirmary (RLI)) had also been amassing a good anaesthetic collection.

Lancaster being a small place, news travels, and over the years various donors have contacted the collectors. This was amplified when there was a series of closures of hospitals and their departments in the area. One of the first was the Nurse Training School in Carnforth. Sister Rowe (tutor) contacted John Dyer with some donations. The local museum started to borrow objects from us in 1987.

The next stage came at the Medical Unit Christmas Party in 1989, when the general manager of the Lancaster Health Authority, Paul Whitfield, met John Carne and myself and declared his interest in forming a Lancaster medical museum (LMM). In January 1990 he decided to formally set up the first meeting of the museum committee (see figure 1). This took place in committee room B at the Lancaster Moor Hospital on 19 February, at 6.30pm.

In June of that year Beaumont Hospital closed and with the help of the administration we combed through the 'remains' for medical artefacts.

Sue Ashworth, the curator at the Lancaster City Museum, joined the committee and gave us advice on storage, ownership, budgets, security and public access, lending us a booklet called 'Setting up a New Museum'. Meantime some of the artefacts were being stored in the old side of the Moor Hospital site. It was, however, known that there were many interesting artefacts at the Lancaster Moor Hospital and at the Royal Albert Hospital on Ashton Road.

In 1992, Westmorland County Hospital and Kendal Green closed and the present site opened. John Dyer and I spent a sad time wandering through the old buildings, picking out suitable artefacts from the obsolete equipment.

Paul Whitfield

In 1993, Slyne Road Community Offices, Lancaster Moor and the Royal Albert closed. Mr Brooks, administrator at the Moor, agreed to us visiting the church in the grounds of the Moor to see the artefacts stored there, which included the leather and metal restraints that used to be used on the patients. Sadly, the equipment stored at the old site had been burgled and urgently needed to be moved. The Royal Albert had a similar store in their tower and it included Diogenes' barrel. ('Diogenes' was a 12-year-old boy admitted to the Royal Albert in the early 1900s. He had spent his life living in this barrel and as a result had deformities. He would only agree to admission if the barrel came as well.) The building had to be emptied by March 1994 so it was imperative to find a new home as soon as possible.

John Carne was moving home in 1993 and contacted John Blundell, head of the Lancashire Museums Services (LMS) in Stanley Street, Preston. Stephen Sartin, curator at the Judges Lodgings, Lancaster, visited John Carne and arranged to move the objects to the Lodgings. Meanwhile, Paul Whitfield also contacted John Blundell and later all the collections were moved to the LMS at Preston, where they still remain. It was agreed that in the future we could have access to the artefacts as required (see figure 2). Paper records from RLI and Slyne Road were taken to Preston Record Office, but some records and books remain in the Stanley Street store.

TIMELINE From arsenic to mephedrone: the control of 'harmful' substances, Christopher J Livesy, MRPharmS, clinical pharmacist (governance)

1805: morphine isolated Serturmer, a German pharmacist, named the white crystalline substance after Morpheus, the classical god of sleep and dreams.	1821: Thomas De Quincey 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater' published.	1851: Arsenic Act Until 1851, the supply of medicines, which ranged from harmless coloured waters or syrups to toxic chemicals (eg Fowler's Solution: a potassium arsenite solution prescribed as a general tonic), was totally unregulated.
1839-1842: first opium war between Britain and China		

Trafalgar 1805	US Navy issues lemon juice for sailors 1808	Anatomy Act 1832	Liston uses ether 1846
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From then on there was a succession of staff changes. Bill Forgham, the first chairman, died in 1998. Geoffrey Thompson (chairman of the Trust) took over followed by Richard Dendy (consultant maxillo-facial surgeon). He retired in 2002 and Miles Rucklidge stepped into his place. The staff at the LMS also changed. John Blundell retired and Edmund Southworth replaced him, but left in 2009. His full-time post is temporarily vacant. Peter Fielding (social history curator) was replaced by Chris Rice for a short time and then Carolyn Dalton took over. In 2000, John McGoldrick replaced her and now Micahla Hill is in place. John and Micahla have, in particular, been very helpful and supportive to me over the last nine years. On retirement in 2001, I started the process of archiving the artefacts under their directions, putting up displays and doing some conservation work. They, plus the conservationists and the design staff, have welcomed me into the museum headquarters and unstintingly given their advice and time. The committee are endlessly grateful to them.

We now know that we have well over 2,000 objects. The smaller items are stored in 120 acid-free boxes and the larger ones are left loose. Each object has to be examined for damage, such as caused by fungus and insects, and treated

accordingly. It is measured, described and the requisite form completed. It is given an acquisition number, which is written on the object in a way that is not easily removed and doesn't damage it. There are six files of these records plus two card indexes for easy retrieval. We are aiming to have these computerised. A website is being set up with the help of Nigel Ingham and Chris Livesey (hospital pharmacist).

DISPLAYS AND USES

Since 1988 there have been a number of exhibitions:

1988 'Your very good health' (see figure 3). The 40th Anniversary of the NHS. Curated by Sue Ashworth in the Lancaster City Museum. Sue was assisted by John Davies (consultant anaesthetist) and it was arranged that she saw an operation to enable her to put up and explain the display. John Carne, Dr Dyer's staff, the School of Nursing, Arthur James (Royal Albert) and Elizabeth Roberts (Lancaster University) also assisted her.

1994 The County Museum, Preston, set up an exhibition called 'Medical Mixtures' in conjunction with Manchester University Medical School. LMM loaned objects.

Figure 1 The first letter sent by Paul Whitfield suggesting the setting up of a medical museum

Figure 2 The letter sent by Paul Whitfield arranging the first meeting of the committee

No records were kept. Regulation provided a means to restrict the practice of medicine and the supply of medicinal substances.

In 1849, the Pharmaceutical Society, recently established in 1841, together with the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association (which became the BMA in 1855), put forward

proposals that formed the basis of the Arsenic Act 1851. Records of every sale of poisons had to be kept and arsenic had to be mixed with soot or indigo to colour it. Famous people who may have died from arsenic poisoning include Napoleon Bonaparte, Simon Bolivar and George III.

1856-1880: second opium war

The final Chinese surrender issued in the Treaty of Tientsin legalised the opium trade.

1868: Pharmacy and Poisons Act

This Act extended controls to about 20 substances, including opium, which could be sold only by 'pharmaceutical chemists'.

Figure 3 The flyer designed by Sue Ashworth and her staff for the 40th Anniversary of the NHS exhibition

1998 The 50th Anniversary of the NHS. This was again curated by Sue Ashworth and the exhibits were on display in a vacant shop in St Nicholas Arcades, Lancaster, and in Morecambe. This was a wide-ranging exhibition covering establishment of the NHS, maternity services, general practice, public health developments and of course major changes in hospital care (the dispensaries to the present hospitals, Royal Albert, Moor Hospital, Queen Victoria and Beaumont hospitals and the Marsh Sanatorium, most of which have disappeared).

2003 We acquired two display cabinets and four small 'windows' in the Education Centre, RLI. The first display was a general one and the curators were myself, John Davies and Adam Feldman (consultant orthopaedic surgeon). It covered a brief history of anaesthesia, development of prosthetic hips and a variety of small objects, including the glove manacles from the Moor collection.

2006 History of Blood Pressure Recording.

2007 The next display included pacemakers (use and development) and Cure All.

(I was the curator for the latter three. The History of Anaesthesia moved to the waiting area of the Pharmacy Department, where a new display case had been provided.)

2008 The 60th Anniversary of the NHS, and Local History and Community Month. Over 150 objects were requested by the Lancashire County Library Service. They were sent to the Harris (Preston), Chorley, Accrington, Great Harwood, Fleetwood, Freckleton, Lancaster and Skemmersdale libraries. The objects had to be found, cleaned, boxed up, loan agreements drawn up and signed, and of course when they returned the system was reversed. A major logistics exercise taking some months.

Pupils of Dallas Road Primary School, Lancaster, visited the Children's Library in Lancaster, where they encountered Tudor medicine, including amputation! We were assured they enjoyed it. They produced a large quantity of artwork, a selection of which, with the permission of the head teacher, was displayed in the Education Centre, RLI, together with the amputation saws and bloody bandages.

During the above years there were three temporary displays in Lancaster City Museum, Lancaster Library and the Museum of Lancashire in Stanley Street, Preston.

Three times a year, I provide photos of objects and information about them for the 'Quid est hoc?' section of the *Morecambe Bay Medical Journal*. They have been presented either as a quiz with a prize, for interest or requesting information for identification. John Carne has used some of his collection for quiz/lectures.

Chris Till and Sandy Kilpatrick (consultant anaesthetists) have used equipment for teaching and lecturing.

Sue Ashworth (left) and Valerie Anderson (right) discussing the Dyer collection in Slyne Road before its move to Preston

1870: 'On the Abuse of Hypodermic Injections of Morphia' Published in 'The Practitioner' by Sir Clifford Allbutt, it expressed doubts about subcutaneous morphine – the first serious study showing the potentially addictive nature of the drug.

1890: 'The Sign of Four' by Arthur Conan Doyle
He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had opened. 'It is cocaine,' he said, 'a seven-per-cent solution. Would you care to try it?'

1902: Coca-Cola
Caffeine replaced cocaine in the composition.

1908: Pharmacy Act

This gave pharmacists further responsibilities. It insisted that the purchaser of opiates should be known to the seller; and that an entry be made in the Poisons Register. It placed no control over the possession of narcotics: opium and cocaine were still freely available without prescription.

Hansen identifies leprosy bacillus
1873

Röntgen discovers X-rays
1895

Second Boer War
1899–1902

John Carne in conjunction with the North West Sound Archives, has recorded 15 members of staff with a view to obtaining first hand how medicine and the NHS have changed in their working lives.

An object for York Railway Museum was identified – a portable urinal. Very important in railway history, as their curator put it.

THE FUTURE?

However, the Museum Service is very similar to the NHS and is subject to cuts and downsizing and we have to look for a new home in the next 20 months.

It has always been our intention to have a base to display objects in Lancaster and district, and hopefully to be involved in the new medical school and the teaching of students of

any discipline. There is a history of medicine module in the subjects of 'special interest' and we could play a part in this. It would be good if we could have a public museum as it is part of the local heritage.

With the help of Peter Dyer (Medical Director of the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust) we have been slotted into the new Knowledge, Education and Learning Division (KELD). Kate Casey (divisional manager) is now working with us, Peter Dyer and Professor Anne Garden, medical director of the medical school.

If there is anyone, of any aspect of the NHS, who wishes to join us we would be pleased to welcome them. Please contact Judith Read, Charity Office, Medical Unit 1, RLI. Telephone: 01524 516066.

Lancaster's early history of medical provision

House of Recovery/Fever Hospital

This was opened in 1815, in Plumb Court (off Sulyard Street – now demolished).

Dispensary

Established by Dr David Campbell for 'outpatient' care and paid for by subscriptions from wealthier townsfolk. Poor/ill people wanting to use the dispensaries had to gain a letter of introduction from a subscriber. I've never found how people knew who to approach for these.

The Dispensary has been on three sites:

- 1781 – where the Storey Institute's 1902 extension now stands on Castle Hill
- 1785-1832 – Castle Hill. This has since been a restaurant, a solicitor's office and, I think, an estate agents
- 1832 – Thurnham Street. Joining of the House of Recovery with the Dispensary

In July 1881, the Dispensary was renamed Lancaster Infirmary and Dispensary.

Hospital for Infectious Diseases, on the Marsh

This hospital was opened in 1881 after a smallpox epidemic, following problems with infections at the Dispensary.

Royal Infirmary

In 1893, the foundation stone of the new infirmary was laid by James Williamson Jnr (later Lord Ashton), who donated the first £5,000 to the fundraising campaign and rounded up the remaining funds needed to complete the scheme. Lancaster Royal Infirmary was designed by Austin and Paley and officially opened by the Duke and Duchess of York in 1896.

Sue Ashworth
Curator at Lancaster City Museum

First dispensary 1781-1785, originally Dr David Campbell's house. Transferred to 19 Castle Hill in 1785 (north side of Castle Road)

Doctors traps wait outside the newly opened Royal Lancaster Infirmary c. 1897. The entrance in view is that of the outpatients department – the single-storey building serving as the waiting hall.

1909: International Opium Commission (Shanghai)

Dr Hamilton-Wright and Bishop Henry Brent, both committed prohibitionists, attempted to convince delegates of other nations of the dire physical and moral consequences of opium use.

1912: MDMA

Bayer held a patent for hydrastrinine, a haemostatic; Merck attempted to produce a competitor resulting in 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine, commonly known as ecstasy. Its interesting pharmacological properties were not discovered for many years.

1912: First International Opium Conference (The Hague)

Twelve nations pledged to curb the production and consumption of opium, morphine, heroin and cocaine, and to restrict its to 'legitimate medical purposes'.

1913: Second Opium Conference

Only weeks before the outbreak of war in Europe a

M Curie wins second Nobel Prize
1911

Balkans wars
1912-13

First moving assembly line (Ford)
1913