

# **The Development of Dermatology in Manchester**

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Coming to Manchester for the first time in the 1960's was fortuitous: it was a good town for the medical newcomer - and an excellent town to be ill in! It had produced a President of each of the medical and surgical Royal Colleges - namely Sir Robert Platt (P.R.C.P.), Sir Harry Platt (P.R.C.S.), and Sir William Fletcher Shaw, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. A medical newcomer did not feel he was in a "medical backwater".

## ***Joseph Jordan***

Dermatology did not begin in Manchester, but Robert Willan was born not far away, in Sedbergh in Yorkshire in 1757. Perhaps some of the light which shone from him fell on Manchester. However nothing dermatological happened until the coming of Joseph Jordan. He was born in Manchester in 1787 and was apprenticed to a surgeon - Mr. John Bill. However his mother noticed that he was always washing out medicine bottles and making up potions, with very little time to study. She therefore took him away and sent him to Edinburgh to finish his studies.

He returned to Manchester, where he practised as a surgeon, and in 1812 started a school of anatomy and surgery in a house in Bridge Street. He had to obtain bodies by the "Burke and Hare" method of stealing them from graveyards in order to teach. He was fined by the magistrates and his resurrectionist was sent to prison. The magistrate said he was reluctant to punish Mr. Jordan, for he understood the need for students of surgery to learn their trade on cadavers.

In 1817 his lectures on anatomy and surgery were recognized by the Royal Society of Apothecaries in London. This meant that his students could be examined and given their certificates in Manchester, without having to present themselves in London. This founded the school of medicine in Manchester and, in 1826, Jordan amalgamated his school with another one in Pine Street. Petty jealousies kept him out of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, but he was elected to their staff in 1833.

He was very worried by the absence of facilities for women with dreadful diseases like syphilis, who were left to die on the streets. They were often made more repulsive by the salivation from mercurial treatment, which added to their pock-marked appearance. Mr. Jordan founded the Lock Hospital for Women. This was not so much a prison - more a closed hospital where patients could be treated, shielded from the eyes of the public. He set his heart against treatment with mercurials, and used potassium iodide instead.

### ***The Lock Hospital***

The treatment of skin diseases was of special interest to Walter Whitehead, a surgeon. Daniel Leech also saw the need to study skin diseases and they set up a clinic at the Manchester and Salford Lock Hospital. Leech also performed a clinic at the Manchester Royal Infirmary where he became Professor of Therapeutics. These activities were mainly with outpatients.

Joseph Jordan did not treat skin diseases as we know them today, but facilitated their management in his Lock hospital, from which sprang the "Skin Hospital". The original Lock hospital was a small house in Cumberland Street and opened in 1819. It was staffed by Dr. Hull and Mr. Jordan, and by Messrs Simmons, Brigham and Stewart. There was no immediate charitable response from the people of Manchester, and a good deal of opposition from sections of the community. In spite of this, the hospital was a success and soon acquired larger premises. In 1884, four years later, the institution was divided into the Manchester and Salford Lock Hospital, and the Manchester and Salford Skin Hospital. Mr. Jordan retired from the hospital in 1835.

## ***The Skin Hospital***

The first autonomous skin hospital in Manchester commenced in Dale Street in 1884; and a second house was added in 1890. In 1895, the hospital transferred to Quay Street. During the whole of this period an increasing number of patients were being seen while building took place. At much the same time, other specialised hospitals were opening for women and children, and for patients with eye and ear diseases - all specialties that were then being catered for. The fact that we were dealing with two cities, and could say Manchester and Salford in one breath, helped these institutions to be born. The heavy cost was shared by two town councils, which moved as one in these charitable ventures.

The Skin Hospital in Quay Street was destined to serve for nearly 100 years. In 1900 the number of attendances was 26,817. In 1901 it was 33,356 and in the first eight months of 1902 it was already 36,385. This meant that over 333 patients were treated at the hospital every day! Patients came not only from Manchester and Salford, but from the whole of Lancashire, parts of Yorkshire and Cheshire. The *raison d'être* of the hospital was, first of all, the devoted staff of Dr. Dreschfeld, Mr. Whitehead as well as Dr. Henry Brooke, Dr. R B Wild, Dr. Lancashire and Dr. Savatard. In the early 1900s they strove to provide a service from which no-one was ever turned away - ever!

The other great attraction of the Skin Hospital was the Radiotherapy and Light Department, which boasted a Finsen Lamp. The use of specially generated ultraviolet light in the treatment of tuberculous skin disease was dramatic. It was often painless and most effective. It was in great demand and patients would travel long distances to be treated. Unfortunately, when the Skin Hospital installed its Finsen Lamp in the early 1900s, Finsen of Denmark was too ill to come, but sent his apologies and good wishes.

## ***Henry Brooke***

The Skin Hospital in Quay Street continued to function for almost a century. In the early days Henry Brooke was the guiding star and was so famous in the North of England that he was called "Brooke of Manchester." He died in 1919. Brooke has been celebrated in print elsewhere (see reference below). With Sir Malcolm Morris, he edited the origins of the British Journal of Dermatology.

### ***Other dermatologists***

John Currie, Ben Portnoy and James Coburn joined the Skin hospital after their war service in the Second World War. Geoffrey Auckland who was a life long diabetic (and a supporter of Bolton Wanderers) was not required to serve in the forces, and he and Dr. Savatard kept the hospital going throughout the war. Percy Mumford (1931-1961) was the first "properly trained" dermatologist to be appointed to the Manchester Royal Infirmary, and he served in the Artillery during the war. This accounted for the severe deafness from which he suffered - despite which he was kindness itself.

The flood of tuberculosis cases for Finsen Light, and of neoplasms for radiotherapy, gradually eased and the hospital developed a more familiar appointment system. This brought about a great fall in attendances but was associated with the later provision of outpatient skin services in Bury, Blackburn, Bolton, Chester, Sale and Altrincham and Rochdale.

### ***Modern times***

And so we come to more modern times: the Skin Hospital closed in Quay Street in 1985 and services were then provided in Salford Royal Hospital. This department also closed when Professor Christopher Griffiths set up a professorial unit in Hope Hospital, which is now the headquarters of dermatological activity in the region. Robert Chalmers has developed an excellent department at the Manchester Royal Infirmary.

The future of dermatology is bright. A patient with skin disease in Manchester can look forward to kind handling and a fighting chance of cure!

## **Reference**

Bhusan M and Griffiths CEM. Brooke of Manchester. British Journal of Dermatology 2002; 143:26-9.