Dermatology in Nottingham

By Dr. B.R. Allen

Although the study and treatment of disease may have been a part of human endeavour from pre-historic times, co-ordination of care was slow to develop. In this country, up to the eighteenth century, almost the only institutions looking after the sick were those which had developed from religious orders such as St Bartholomew's and St Thomas' hospitals in London. Nottingham had its equivalent, the Hospital of St John, which was mostly used by the corporation as a workhouse or 'house of correction'. By the late eighteenth century things had started to change. This is when most large provincial towns opened their first dedicated hospitals and Nottingham was no exception. Awakening social conscience, together with the rise of a wealthy middle class resulted in much philanthropic giving.

Nottingham General Hospital

Nottingham General Hospital (Fig.1) was built on a hill close to Nottingham Castle at the spot where Charles1 had raised his standard in the civil war. It admitted its first patients on 28th September 1782. The project was initiated by a legacy of £500 from John Key, a rich banker, and the total cost was £4,879 with donations coming from, inter alia, Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor of the spinning frame, Sir Henry Cavendish, the discoverer of hydrogen, and Peter Nightingale, great uncle of Florence.

When the hospital opened, the medical staff comprised three physicians, led by Dr John Storer, and four surgeons, led by John Attenburrow, with the surgeons answering to the physicians. They gave their services free when they could spare the time from fee-paying patients, and the day to day running of the hospital was in the hands of the resident apothecary who was also pharmacist, dispenser and hospital secretary. Since only 404 operations were carried out in the first 50 years after the hospital opened, it is fair to surmise that much of the surgeons' (and the apothecary's) time would be spent in wound care and possibly other skin problems. We do know that irritating ointments were applied to the

skin of some patients in order to cause blisters which were kept open in order to drain out foul humours.

In the first half of the 20th Century, Nottingham was an increasingly prosperous town and the hospital had two major benefactors, Sir Charles Seely, whose Gedling mine provided coal for the Royal family, and WG Player, the cigarette manufacturer. With the aid of donations of £350,000 the hospital was enlarged from 114 to 477 beds and a wide range of specialist departments was established. Owing to the consequences of the Great War, venereology was one of the first. An act of Parliament in 1916 required free and confidential consultations in special clinics and in 1918 Dr J.C. Buckley was appointed to run it.

The era before a dermatology service was established

In the years preceding the establishment of a formal dermatology service the care of patients with skin disease would have been provided by interested clinicians, either physicians or surgeons, and there is no formal record of who these were. The move from the old General Hospital (see below), however, gave a chance insight. Amongst the vast quantity of rubbish, which was steadily being disposed of, were some ancient books containing photographs and pictures of patients being treated for a number of conditions (Fig. 6), mostly lupus and BCC's, with x-rays, carbolic acid and Finsen's light. These dated from 1906-8 and reported the consultants mostly involved as being R.G. Hogarth, senior surgeon and F.H. Jacob, a greatly respected physician who wrote a definitive history of the General Hospital.

The first dermatology department

The first formal development in dermatology came in 1930 when Dr H. Smith Wallace (1920 - 1951) (Fig. 2) was appointed to run one large weekly clinic at the General Hospital and another at the entirely separate Children's Hospital. At around the same time a dedicated clinic was opened in an old Turkish baths near

the city centre and this was run by Dr AD Frazer (1930 - 1959). In the early years of the Second World War this was converted into a scabies treatment centre and later became a dermatology outpatient centre.

The Children's Hospital

In 1869 the daughter of T.C. Hine, a famous local architect, bought a house at 3 Postern Street, immediately adjacent to the General Hospital, and donated it as a hospital for sick children (Fig. 3). When the Children's Hospital moved to bigger premises in 1900 the building was used for other purposes including housing the pathology department, and in 1959 it became the home of the dermatology department. The clinic at the Turkish baths closed on a Friday after 'business as usual' and the new clinic opened to patients the following Monday; quite a logistical feat. Inpatient beds were four miles away on the City Hospital campus.

Dr Smith Wallace retired in 1951 and Dr D.I. McCallum (Fig. 4) was appointed to cover the General Hospital commitment and to provide services in Newark. On the death of Dr Frazer he was joined in 1959 by Dr E.N.M. Johnson who also covered Mansfield and later by Dr P.E. Kilby who had sessions in Derby, where Dr P.D.C. Kinmont had, until then, been single handed. Both Patrick Kinmont (Fig. 5) and Ian McCallum had distinguished war records for which they had received the MBE and MC respectively.

The new Medical School and the Queen's Medical Centre

These were dynamic times for medicine in Nottingham. In 1965, in response to a report by Sir George Pickering, the government decided to open three new Medical Schools - the first being in Nottingham. Consequently there was an influx of new blood on the medical scene. The first Dean of the Medical School was the charismatic Prof David Greenfield; the foundation professor of surgery was Jack Hardcastle; and the professor of medicine was the hugely-dynamic Tony Mitchell whose mentor was Sir Douglas (later Lord) Black. All were appointed well ahead of the admission of students. It was also clear that a completely new hospital would be required and the site chosen was an old builder's yard just

adjacent to the University campus. This proved to be an inspired choice since it put the hospital and medical school on one site and the complex was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 28th July 1977 and named ‘Queen’s Medical Centre’.

The new Skin Department

In 1974 the dermatology department received its first medical students and Patrick Kinmont was appointed as an additional full time consultant to help with the teaching. At the same time Ian McCallum, who had suffered from a squamous cell of the tongue, decided that it would be prudent to move to a quieter post and returned to his beloved Scotland when a post became available in Inverness. He was replaced by Dr B.R. Allen who, after qualifying in Bristol, had trained in Sheffield and Edinburgh.

The department thrived at that time. Ian McCallum had been a consummate politician and highly influential in planning the services to be provided by the new University Hospital, which was rising rapidly from the rubble of the builders’ yard. As a result dermatology was at the centre and it was with a clinic held by Roger Allen on Tuesday the 15th of August, 1978, that the hospital first opened its doors to outpatients. Also Patrick Kinmont had been appointed President of the B.A.D. and the Annual Meeting was held in Nottingham in July 1978, just prior to the opening of the department and using its facilities. In those days the whole meeting was arranged locally with the local secretary (Roger Allen) performing all the duties now carried out by the conference manager.

Later appointments

When Dr Kinmont retired he was replaced by Dr L.G. Millard and Dr Johnson by Dr E.M. Saihan. Other appointments are shown in Table 1. The first University appointment was when Hywel Williams joined the department as Senior Lecturer, the post later being converted to a Chair of Dermato-epidemiology.

The City Hospital

The other large hospital in Nottingham is the City Hospital, which started life as the City Isolation Hospital and Sanatorium in 1891. It expanded rapidly with the opening of the Medical School and in 1985 the consolidation of the skin department was completed when the inpatient beds were moved from the old infectious diseases unit, known as Heathfield Hospital, on the City Hospital campus, to the University Hospital. This was not a popular move from the patients' point of view since they had greatly appreciated the space provided by the isolated unit and the gardens in which, during summer, they used to supplement their UV therapy.

Recent developments

Over the years the integration of dermatology inpatient and outpatient facilities within the heart of the major teaching hospital has greatly facilitated the department's ability to provide not only the highest standard of patient care but also the training of nurses, teaching at the undergraduate and post graduate levels, and research. With most major clinical and preclinical departments on site a multidisciplinary approach to all problems was made possible. It is sad that the future may not be so healthy with all these gains, hard won over a forty year period, being dissipated by the political decision to disperse dermatology into the community: a highly retrograde step.

Table 1.
Consultants with responsibility for dermatology patients

AR Anderson	1889 - 1923
FH Jacob	1906 - 1933
RG Hogarth	1907 - 1933
JC Buckley	1918 - 1935
DH Smith Wallace	1920 - 1951

AD Frazer	1930 - 1959
DI McCallum	1951 - 1974
ENM Johnson	1959 - 1985
PE Kilby	1965 - 1989
PDC Kinmont	1973 - 1979
BR Allen	1974 - 2004
MJ Cheesbrough	1979 - 1980
LG Millard	1980 - 2005
EM Saihan	1980 -
KL Dalziel	1989 - 2002
JSC English	1996 - 2006
HC Williams	1996 -
W Perkins	1995 -
S Varma	2002 -
SM Littlewood	2002 -
J Bong	2004 -
J Ravenscroft	2004 -
R Murphy	2006 -

Reference

Nottingham General Hospital; Personal Reflections. Bittiner J. & Lowe D., 1990 Special Trustees for Nottingham University Hospitals

Figures

Fig 1	An early drawing of Nottingham General Hospital
Fig 2	Dr H S Wallace, M.B., Ch.B
Fig 3	The Children's Hospital, 3 Postern Street, circa 1870. In 1959 the building became the Dermatology Department
Fig 4	Dr DI McCallum, MD FRCP MC
Fig 5	Dr PDC Kinmont MD FRCP MBE
Fig 6	Patient record - 1908

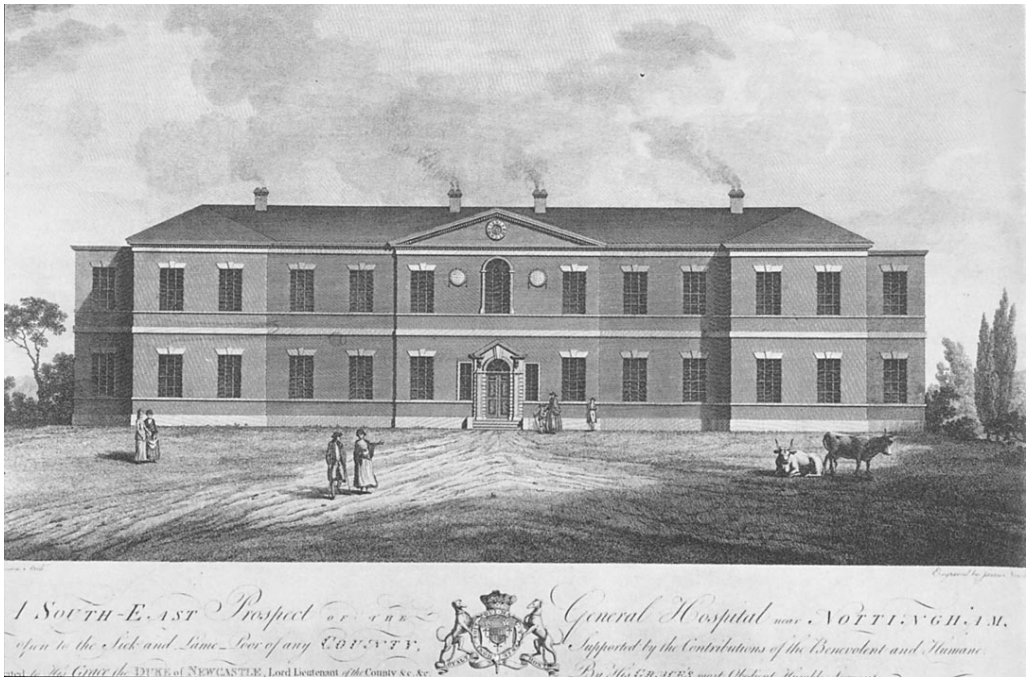
A South-East Prospect of the General Hospital near Nottingham.
open to the Sick and Lame Poor of any County.
Supported by the Contributions of the Benevolent and Humane

Figure 1

H. Smith Wallace, M.B., Ch.B.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

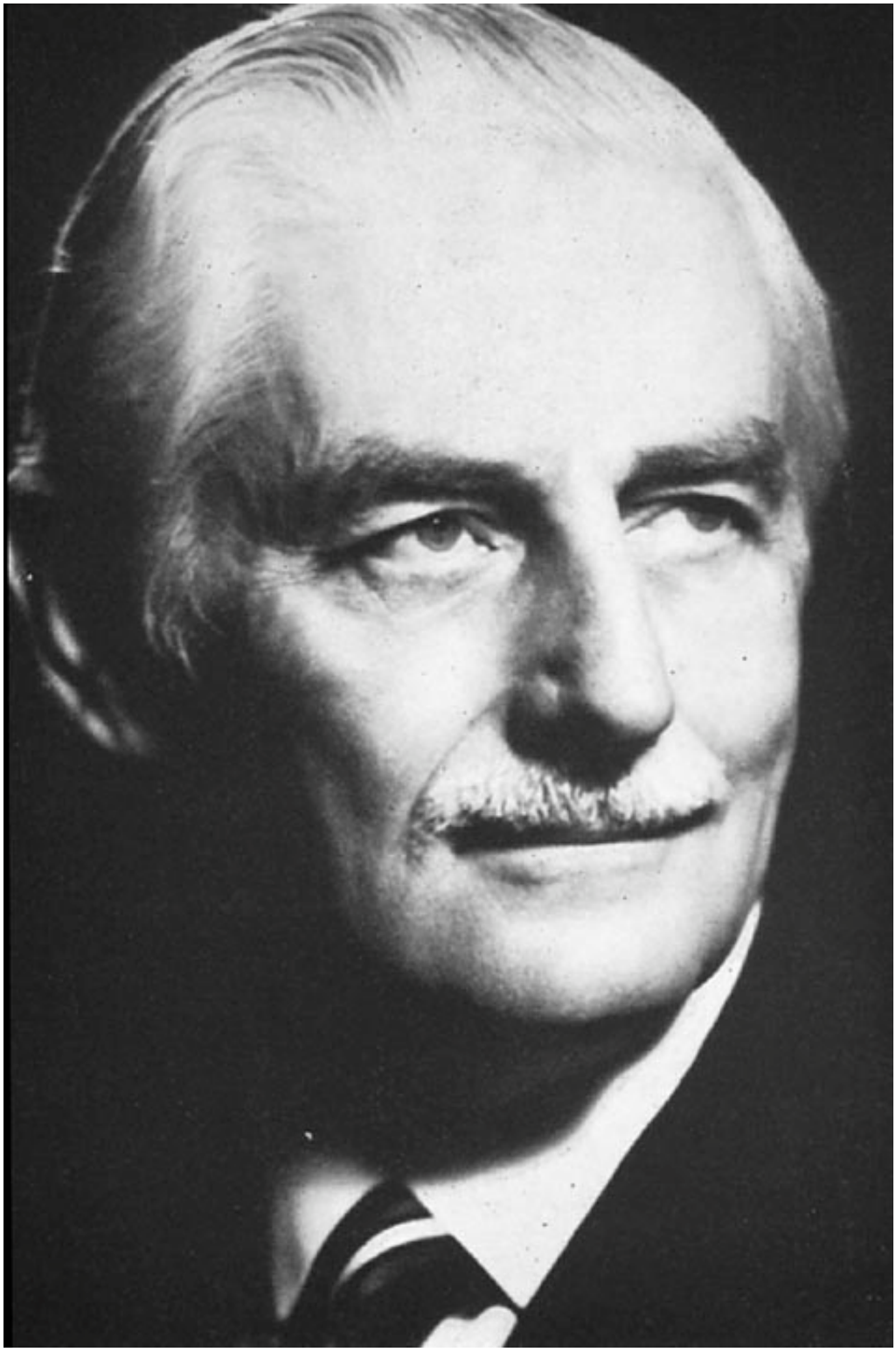

Figure 5

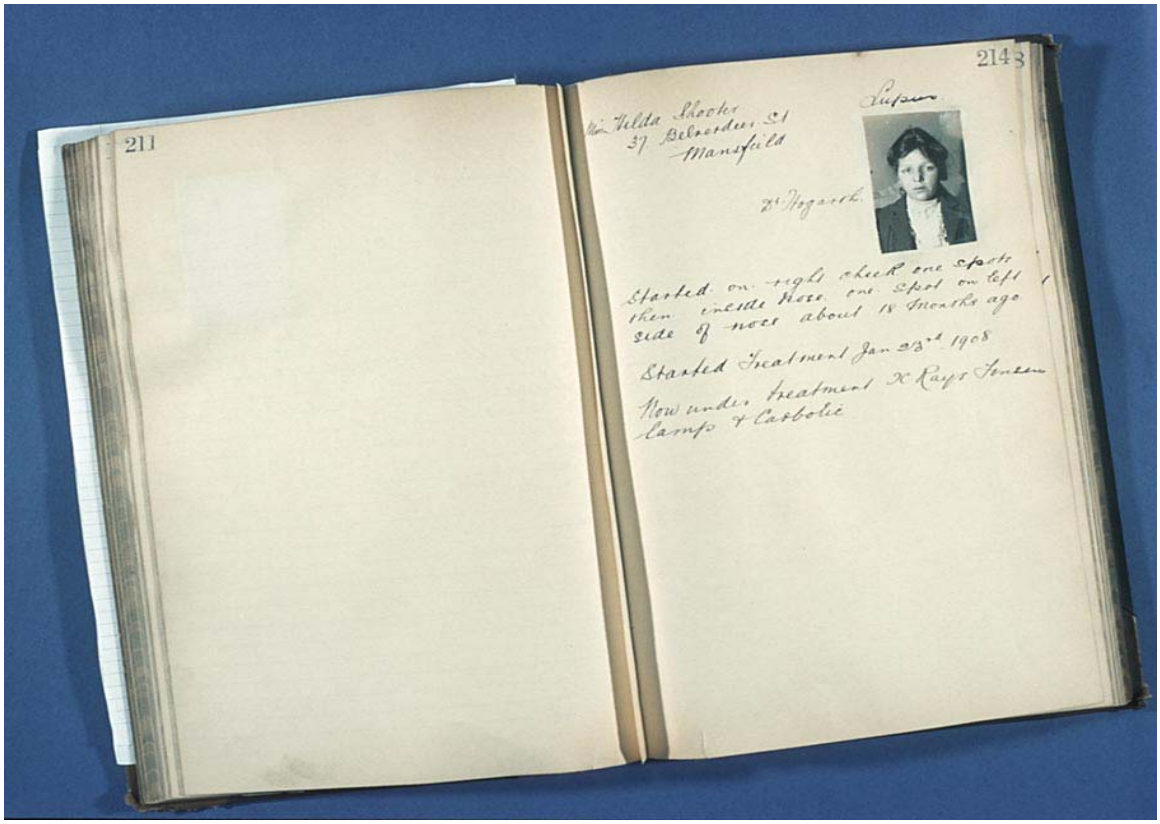
211
2143
Mrs Hilda Shooter
37 Belvedere St
Mansfield
Lupus
Mr Nugent
Started on right cheek one spot
then on left side of nose one spot
about 18 months ago
Started Treatment Jan 23rd 1908
Now under treatment X Rays Finsen
Lamps & Carbolic

Figure 6