



LAWS

of the

Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical
Society

2004

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HISTORICAL NOTE

On the 14th December 1789, the Aberdeen Medical Society was founded by a group of medical students, of which James McGrigor and James Robertson were the leaders. There had existed previously in Aberdeen two medical student societies, one in 1768, and the other in 1786 but both had withered and died, a fate which did not befall the 1789 foundation.

Over the years this Society gradually established itself and was strengthened by the addition of medical practitioners and honorary members. The name of the Society was changed to the 'Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society' in 1811.

From the earliest days it had been the desire of members that the Society should have its own meeting place. A subscription list was opened in 1812 with the object of acquiring sufficient money to enable the Society to build a Medical Hall. The building in King Street was completed in 1820 to the plans of Archibald Simpson, the distinguished Aberdeen architect at a cost of more than £3,000.

The Library of the Society instituted in 1791 grew rapidly and contained many rare and valuable books. In 1967 the major

portion of the library's old and rare medical books was sold, and later the Hall in King Street was sold. The proceeds enabled the Society to build its new Hall on the Foresterhill site, to which the Society moved in 1973.

Over the years the Society has played an important and influential role in the medical life of Aberdeen. It gave advice to the citizens through the Town Council on combating cholera and typhus; it instituted the training and certification of midwives in the city in 1827; it urged in 1867 the necessity of providing a fever hospital; it commented on medical education on many occasions. In 1920 the Society held a special meeting to discuss the question of hospital accommodation for Aberdeen and district. At this meeting Professor Matthew Hay outlined his scheme for coordinating the Aberdeen Hospitals and clinical University Departments on a common site. This resulted in the modern hospital and medical school complex at Foresterhill.

In 1989 the Society celebrated its Bicentenary with the publication of a book 'The Bicentennial History' edited by the late Dr. G. P. Milne, an exhibition in the Aberdeen Art Gallery, a Scientific Meeting and a Banquet.

To coincide with the 250th Anniversary of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, the Society commissioned a definitive history entitled 'Aberdeen Royal Infirmary The People's Hospital of the North-East' edited by Dr I D Levack and Professor H A F Dudley which was published in 1992.

1. NAME

The name of the Society shall be the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society.

2. OBJECTS

- (a) To provide a forum for discussion and interchange of views amongst members of the Society in relation to medical, surgical and other scientific subjects.
- (b) To encourage research in medical, surgical and allied sciences and to sponsor the presentation of results by means of meetings, lectures, publications and other methods.
- (c) To participate fully through its members in the education of the public by means of lectures, symposia, radio, television and to take every opportunity to present opinion on medical matters and current topics.
- (d) To ensure that the Society shall, through its representative on the local Medical Education Committee, and by other means, constantly keep in mind the need to participate fully in the continuing postgraduate education of doctors in the region.
- (e) To make available, at the discretion of the Council, the facilities of the Society's premises on the Foresterhill site to groups of doctors and to recognised medical graduate societies for medical, scientific or committee meetings.

3. MEMBERSHIP

(1) **Ordinary Members** of the Society shall consist of members of the medical profession with Grampian connections, or science graduates who are members of the College of Life Sciences and Medicine of Aberdeen University. All members will have the same rights and privileges but the Council may at its discretion vary the annual subscription for members who:

- (a) Are doctors occupying a training post within Grampian.
- (b) Are doctors in a career post other than consultant or general practice principal.
- (c) Are doctors in part time employment.
- (d) Have reached the age of 70 years.
- (e) Reside outside Grampian.

(2) **Honorary Members** shall consist of such distinguished members of the medical profession or others considered by the Society to be of outstanding merit.

(3) **Admission:**

- (a) Any member of the medical profession who resides or is employed in the area served by

NHS Grampian may apply to become a member of the Society.

(b) Any graduate who is a member of the College of Life Sciences and Medicine of Aberdeen University may apply to become a member of the Society. The President and/or Honorary Secretary of the Society shall review the application to confirm eligibility.

(c) Any member of the Society may, at any time, bring to the notice of Council the name of any person whom he or she considers worthy of honorary membership. The admission of persons nominated by Council will be decided by open vote at the next ordinary meeting of the Society, held not less than one month after the date of nomination, and a three-fourths majority of those present shall admit. Persons so admitted, having intimated acceptance of the proffered honour, shall have the right to attend the meetings of the Society and take part in the scientific work.

(4) **Notification of Election** - On the admission of a new member, the Secretary shall notify acceptance to the application, furnishing him/her with a copy of the Laws of the Society and requesting him/her to pay the subscription; no new members shall enjoy any of the privileges of the Society until they have paid the same. If the subscription has not been paid

within three months of notification, he/she shall be considered as having declined to become a member, and their name shall be excluded from the list of members.

- (5) **Annual Subscription** - The Annual subscription shall be paid by Direct Debit in advance each October. If the subscription of a member is unpaid by the 31st December, the Treasurer shall be entitled to declare that the defaulter has ceased to be a member of the Society.
- (6) **Resignation of Members** - Any member wishing to withdraw from the Society shall notify their intention to the Secretary in writing.
- (7) **Expulsion of Members** - The Council of the Society may remove the name of any member from the list at its discretion. The Council shall forthwith give notice of removal of such a person, who shall thereafter have the right of appeal to the Society, against the action of Council, provided the notice of such appeal be lodged with the Secretary within fourteen days from the date of Council's action. The appeal shall be considered at a special meeting of the Society held for the purpose. The appeal shall be held as sustained, unless there be a majority of two-thirds of the meeting in favour of the action of Council, in which case the applicant shall cease to belong to the Society. In the event of no such appeal being lodged with the Secretary within the above-

mentioned period, the person shall be held to have forfeited his/her privileges, shall have no claim against the Society for any yearly subscription which they have already paid.

- (8) **Privileges of Members** - Members shall have the privilege of admitting a guest (or guests) to the ordinary meetings and to the library.

4. OFFICE BEARERS

(1) THE COUNCIL

- (a) The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a standing committee to be called the Council, which shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall consist of the President, the Vice-President, the immediate past President, the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, the Treasurer, the Librarian, the Social Secretary, the Buildings and Furnishings Officer and of eight elected members; six shall constitute a quorum. The eight elected members shall serve for two years. Four shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election.
- (b) The Council shall cause their proceedings to be duly entered in the minute book, and shall report all matters of importance to the next ordinary meeting of the Society. It shall examine the Treasurer's accounts, and shall present a full

report of these and of all matters under their charge to the Annual Meeting.

- (c) The Council shall have general charge of the Medico-Chirurgical Hall and its possessions, including furniture and fittings, the library and its contents.
- (d) The Council shall observe all matters connected with the provision of medical services in the area served by NHS Grampian and the University of Aberdeen which may affect the interests of medical graduates in the area; and whenever it is considered by the Council to be desirable, to bring such information to the notice of the Society.

(2) **THE PRESIDENT**

- (a) **Election** - On the instruction of Council, a senior member shall be approached by the Secretary with the view to serving on the Council as Vice-President for one year before assuming the office of President.
- (b) **Duties** - The President, on the advice and instruction of Council, shall be responsible to members for the overall conduct of the affairs of the Society. He/she shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of Council and shall deliver an address on the first Thursday of June. In the

absence of the President, the Vice-President shall take the chair, and in their absence, the meeting shall elect its Chairman.

- (3) **THE SECRETARY** - The Secretary shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the Society and shall, at the discretion of Council, in normal circumstances, continue in office for a period not exceeding five years. The Secretary shall keep regular minutes of the proceedings of the Society and of Council and its committees. He/she shall submit the minutes of the Society for approval at the next ordinary meeting of the Society, and shall enter them in the minute book, and procure the same to be signed by the President. He/she shall keep a correct copy of the Laws, a list of the Members and shall carefully preserve all records and papers belonging to the Society. He/she shall keep the Seal of the Society and shall affix the same to all documents when directed to do so. The Secretary shall send to all the Members an intimation of every meeting, stating the business to be transacted, at least 48 hours before such meeting. The Secretary shall keep abstracts of all papers and communications read to the Society and shall see that these are duly recorded in the minutes.

The Assistant Secretary shall give such help to the Secretary as he/she may require.

(4) **THE TREASURER** - The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society and shall, at the discretion of Council, in normal circumstances, continue in office for a period not exceeding five years. In addition, if Council so wishes, a Treasurer Elect shall be appointed and co-opted as a Member of Council. The Treasurer shall take charge of all monies belonging to the Society, and shall cause the annual subscription to be duly collected in the month of October. The Treasurer shall collect the income accruing on the Society's investments, and shall make all necessary payments for which normally Council's approval must be obtained. The Treasurer shall prepare a yearly statement showing the financial position of the Society at April 5th of each year, together with an account of the income and expenditure of the Society for the year ending on that date.

(5) **THE LIBRARIAN** - The Librarian shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society and shall, at the discretion of Council, in normal circumstances, continue in office for a period not exceeding five years. The Librarian shall be responsible for the books and other contents of the Society's library. He/she shall examine the state of the library at least once a year, and shall report thereon to Council. It shall be his/her responsibility to receive and catalogue donations to, and acquisitions by, the Society.

(6) **BUILDINGS AND FURNISHINGS OFFICER** - The Buildings and Furnishings officer shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting of the Society, and shall, at the discretion of Council, in normal circumstances, continue in office for a period not exceeding five years. He/She shall be responsible to Council for maintaining the property and its contents in good repair, within the terms of the Lease with the University. The University shall instruct and supervise the carrying out of any necessary work.

5. MEETINGS

The statutory meetings of the Society for the transaction of scientific business and the admission of Members shall be held on the first Thursday of each month from October to May inclusive, except the January meeting, which shall be held on the second Thursday. Public Meetings (i.e. meetings open to Members of the Public) shall be arranged from time to time at the discretion of Council.

A special meeting to be called the Annual Business Meeting shall be held in June, at which the Reports and the Treasurer's Accounts shall be submitted, and the Office Bearers for the year elected.

The Council may at any time call a Special Meeting, the date and purpose of which shall be intimated as in the case of Ordinary Meetings.

The President shall be bound to call a Special Meeting on a requisition presented to him by six Ordinary Members under the same conditions as in the case of Ordinary Meetings. At Special Meetings no subjects shall be taken up but those for which they have been convened, and of which intimation has been given.

Ten Members in all cases, where it is not otherwise specified, shall constitute a quorum.

6. MOTIONS

A motion submitted to the Society shall be in writing, shall be signed by the mover and seconder, delivered to the Secretary and shall be incorporated in the notice of the following Meeting, but this rule shall not apply to motions submitted on behalf of the Council.

A copy of any Motion tending to alter any of the existing Rules and regulations, or to introduce a new Law, shall lie one month on the table, shall be sent to each Ordinary Member at least three days before the Meeting at which it is to be decided upon; and such Motion shall require the consent of two-thirds of those Members present at the Meeting before being agreed to.

Voting, if required by any Member, shall be by ballot, the President making the scrutiny. In cases of equality, the President shall have a casting vote in addition to his deliberative vote.

7. FINANCE

The management of the Funds and property of the Society shall be in the hands of the Council, with the exception of such funds as may be vested in Trustees.

The Treasurer shall make no extraordinary expenditure except in cases of urgency, without the sanction of a meeting of the Society. A motion for any such change shall require the consent of three-fourths of those members present at the meeting at which such a change is considered.

A Fund shall be open for the receipt of annual contributions, donations or legacies, with the view of providing means for objects which the Society may consider worthy of support.

8. NAUGHTON DUNN MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

Henry Stephen Shorthouse died on 12th May 1969 and in his will he directed that the residue of his estate should constitute a fund to be called the 'H S Shorthouse Naughton Dunn Appreciation Trust' to be administered by a committee of the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society in accordance with rules which are laid down in the Will. The original conditions were clarified in the Court of Session in 1977 and the following schedule drawn up.

- (a) The Fund shall be known as ' The Naughton Dunn Memorial Trust'.
- (b) The Fund shall be administered by the Society through a committee consisting of the members for the time being of the Benevolent Committee of the Society of whom five shall form a quorum.
- (c) The Society shall hold the Fund for the purposes of paying grants of money out of the income thereof to such sick, disabled, aged or retired doctors who are graduates of Aberdeen University or, in exceptional circumstances, graduates of other British Universities and on their deaths their widows as the Benevolent Committee may in their discretion from time to time select.
- (d) Priority shall be given in the selection of beneficiaries to doctors and the widows of doctors practising or who have practised in the City or County of Aberdeen, or in the districts of Welford-on-Haven, Warwickshire or Bedminster, Bristol.
- (e) Doctors who are graduates of British Universities other than Aberdeen and their widows shall only be admitted to benefit by the unanimous vote of the Benevolent Committee.
- (f) The said grants of money shall be in supplement of, and not in substitution for, any service which it is

the statutory duty of any public authority or department to provide.

- (g) The Society shall not be bound to distribute the whole of the income of the Fund arising in each year, but may carry the same forward to be distributed as income in future years as they may think fit.
- (h) In the administration and management of the Fund, the Society shall have all the powers, privileges and immunities conferred on gratuitous Trustees under statute and at common law, including without prejudice to the foregoing generality power to invest the Fund in any manner specified in the Trustee Investments Act 1961.

Members who become aware of potential beneficiaries should write to the President, Secretary or Treasure