

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons



The Fourth  
Cowlshaw Symposium

26 October 2002



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Cowlshaw Symposium

PROGRAMME

26 October 2002

The Cowlshaw Symposium,  
inaugurated in 1996,  
celebrates the contributions of

ROBERT GORDON CRAIG  
JOHN LAIDLEY  
KENNETH FITZPATRICK RUSSELL  
and  
LESLIE COWLISHAW

to the fellowship that is the

ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This symposium relies for its success on the generous support of a large number of people.

It is proper to mention especially

- the speakers:

The Kenneth Russell Memorial Lecturer,  
A.J. Thurston;  
The Curator of the Cowlshaw Collection,  
Marius Fahrer;  
D.A. Simpson;  
Gabriel Kune;  
Philip Sharp;  
S.A. Mellick;  
John A.L. Hart;  
Reginald Magee;

- the President of the College, K.W. Faulkner;

- members of the staff of the College, notably  
David Scott;  
Daliah Moss;  
Rory P. Forker;  
Roxanne McGregor;  
Geoffrey Down;  
Ian Burke.

Such generosity makes the task of an absentee convenor relatively straightforward.

A.W. Beasley  
Reader to the Gordon Craig Library.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This fourth Cowlshaw Symposium takes place in what is undoubtedly the 21st century. The debate over whether the century began at the beginning of 2000 or of 2001 rather fizzled out when Y2K doomsayers found themselves silenced by a non-event; but there were still those, in May 2000 when the third symposium was held, who held to the view that we were already in a new century and a new millennium.

Events since then would suggest that the new century leaves room for improvement. In a world which seems to have lost even more of its innocence, and a College which has appeared to be at risk of losing its corporate memory, it is a relief to be able to dive back into the past for a day. Moreover it is an interesting past that promises to be exposed to view in today's meeting.

As has become customary, the programme begins with the Kenneth F. Russell Memorial Lecture, which commemorates the man who did much to secure Leslie Cowlshaw's collection of historical books for the College, then devoted himself to its care and cataloguing. On this occasion the lecture will be given by Prof Alan Thurston who, as a hand surgeon of



distinction, is well equipped to disentangle the roles of Astley Cooper and Guillaume Dupuytren in elucidating the condition to which 'the brigand of the Hôtel-Dieu' has succeeded in attaching his name.

He is followed by Marius Fahrer, the Curator of the Cowlshaw collection, who resumes his investigation of the pioneering work of Bartolomeus Eustachius, of whom Russell wrote

He was a very careful anatomist and the plates which he prepared although less attractive are more accurate than those of Vesalius.

We may regret, as we learn more of Eustachius' originality, that he allowed rancour to stand in the way of publication, for the delay before his works were published robbed his findings of much of their influence.

Two professorial newcomers to the band of speakers at this symposium, Gabriel Kune and John Hart, have considered 20th-century figures: Sir Anthony Eden and Sir Colin MacKenzie. The other two, Philip Sharp and Reg Magee, look further back, as do two Cowlshaw veterans, Donald Simpson and Sam Mellick, to the period of consolidation between the first and second Renaissance.

Sam Mellick's subject, Sir Thomas Browne,

wrote *Religio Medici* as 'a doctor's confession of faith' (according to Kenneth Russell) and, in one way or another, all three papers in the early afternoon session have some theological element: for Philip Sharp's study of Sir Charles Bell leads him to the relationship between science, religion and society, and in correspondence with John Hart I found myself drawn into a doctrinal analogy. Your presentation, I wrote to him,

will help me to apply the doctrine of St Athanasius to the three Colin MacKenzies of my previous acquaintance (in the name of Healesville on tourist maps, in Orm Smith's reminiscences as the man who nearly got the College a Canberra site, and in Sir Arthur Keith's book); to find that this Trinity is really one would gladden a theologian!

Later in the afternoon Daniel Turner, who found quacks offensive, provides the basis of Reg Magee's presentation. What more topical subject, in a society of frantic boasts, could there be?

And finally Johannes Scultetus serves as the starting point of an attempt to demonstrate, *inter alia*, that 'there is no new thing under the sun'. If the study of old books can lead to such a conclusion, then there is, perhaps, some hope for the 21st century.

# P R O G R A M M E

SATURDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2002

- 9.30 am Registration
- 10 Opening by the President, Prof K.W. Faulkner
- SESSION 1 Chairman: Prof K.W. Faulkner PRACS
- 10.05 *The sixth Kenneth F. Russell Memorial Lecture*  
Prof A.J. Thurston (Wellington, NZ)  
DUPUYTREN'S DISEASE OR COOPER'S  
CONTRACTURE?  
(*Dislocations and fractures of the joints*, Cooper 1822;  
*Leçons orales de Clinique chirurgicale*, Dupuytren  
1832)
- 10.45 Mr Marius Fahrer (Melbourne)  
THE THIRD MAN REVISITED  
(*Tabulae anatomicae*, Eustachius, ed. Albinus 1744)
- 11.20 Morning coffee
- SESSION 2 Chairman: Mr S.A. Mellick
- 11.50 Prof D.A. Simpson (Adelaide)  
PIERRE DIONIS AND THE FRANCO-BRITISH  
DIALOGUE IN SURGERY  
(*A course of chirurgical operations*, Dionis 1710)
- 12.25pm Prof Gabriel Kune (Melbourne)  
ANTHONY EDEN'S BILE DUCT: PORTRAIT  
OF AN AILING LEADER  
(*Vesalius, De humani corporis fabrica* 1568)
- 1 Lunch

SESSION 3 Chairman: Prof A.W. Beasley

- 2.15 TRIPLE TIE:  
SCIENCE, RELIGION AND SOCIETY  
Mr Philip Sharp (Sydney)  
(*The hand, its mechanisms and vital endowments*,  
Bell 1833)
- 2.50 Mr S.A. Mellick (Brisbane)  
SIR THOMAS BROWNE - PHYSICIAN 1605-1682  
(*Religio medici*, Browne 1642)
- 3.25 Prof John A.L. Hart (Melbourne)  
SIR COLIN MACKENZIE: A REMARKABLE LEGACY  
(*Journal of a voyage to New South Wales*,  
White 1790; *Menders of the Maimed*, Keith 1919)
- 4 Afternoon tea
- SESSION 4 Chairman: Prof D.A. Simpson
- 4.20 Prof Reginald Magee (Brisbane)  
DANIEL TURNER AND HIS VIEWS ON  
THE PRACTICE OF SURGERY  
(*Apologia chyrgica; The drop and pill of Mr Ward*  
*consider'd*, Turner 1695; 1735)
- 4.55 Prof A.W. Beasley (Wellington, NZ)  
SNIPPETS FROM SCULTETUS  
(*Armamentarium chirurgicum*, Scultetus 1655)
- 5.30 Closing remarks
- 5.45 - 7 Cocktail function



# ABSTRACTS

## AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### DUPUYTREN'S DISEASE OR COOPER'S CONTRACTURE?

THE KENNETH F. RUSSELL MEMORIAL LECTURE

Dupuytren, G. (1832) *Leçons orales de Clinique chirurgicale, faites a l'Hôtel-Dieu de Paris*. London: Baillière. Cooper, A.P. (1822) *A treatise on dislocations and on fractures of the joints*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orm & Brown.

Although he was a pupil of the great John Hunter, the young Astley Cooper possessed social graces and the gift of oratory to a degree that his teacher lacked. After his apprenticeship with Henry Cline snr, Cooper came to share the podium at Guy's and St Thomas's hospitals, and the two dominated surgical teaching in London for some 22 years, until Cline's retirement in 1811. It was Cline who first recognised the true nature of the condition now known as Dupuytren's disease, and lectured on it in 1808. In 1822 Cooper wrote a detailed description of the palmar aponeurosis and recommended fasciotomy as curative.

On the other side of the English Channel, M le Baron Dupuytren repeatedly misquoted Cooper and stated that the disease was incurable. In his famous lecture to the staff of the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris on 5 December 1831 he admitted to having seen 30 or 40 cases over 20 years of practice. It seems likely that he was not aware of the true causes of the condition before 1831 when he treated his first case. This lecture is recorded, along with others, in his *Leçons orales de clinique chirurgicale*, a copy of which is held in the Cowlshaw collection. Sir Astley Cooper's *Treatise on dislocations*

and on fractures of the joints which contains his description of Dupuytren's contracture is also in the collection.

Alan Thurston was born in 1947 and educated in Feilding, NZ. He entered the University of Otago on a Manawatu Co-operative Society scholarship in 1966, graduating in 1972 with distinction in anatomy and the David Whyte prize in clinical surgery. He trained in orthopaedic surgery with an interest in hand surgery in Wellington and was admitted FRACS in 1980.

He took up a Research Fellowship at the Oxford Orthopaedic Engineering Centre, graduating MSc (bioengineering) in 1982, and returned to a post as Senior Lecturer in Orthopaedic Surgery at the Wellington School of Medicine. He was promoted associate professor in 1996.

He was awarded the Broadfoot Memorial Essay Prize in 1985, an ABC Travelling Fellowship in 1986 and the Douglas Iverach Postgraduate Fellowship in 1991.

Commissioned into the RNZAMC in 1971, he commanded 2 NZ Field Hospital 1986-90 and was awarded the Efficiency Decoration in 1987. He is presently ADMS, Army General Staff in the rank of colonel, and Honorary Surgeon to HE the Governor-General of New Zealand.

### THE THIRD MAN REVISITED: Bartholomei Eustachii Tabulae Anatomicae and the Anatomy of the Hand

Eustachius, B. (ed. Albinus, B.S. 1744) *Explicatio tabularum anatomicarum Bartholomaei Eustachii. Leidae Batavorum: Langarek & Verbeek.*

The anatomy of the nerves, vessels and small muscles of the hand was almost unknown to the pre-Vesalian authors. In stark contrast with Charles Estienne (Stephanus) of Paris and with Vesalius himself, Eustachius carried out precise dissections that show

details of the palmar aponeurosis, the thenar branch of the median nerve and the superficial palmar arch. However, before Eustachius but unknown to professional anatomists, Leonardo da Vinci had performed superbly accurate dissections of the hand. The text of Albinus underlines some of Eustachius's findings.

Marius Fahrer is one of the boat people who did not destroy his papers when landing in Australia in 1963. According to these papers, he hails from Count Dracula country where he qualified as an orthopaedic surgeon. A nine-month stopover in Paris yielded a diploma in the surgery of the hand. Faced with these qualifications, the Medical Board of New South Wales had no difficulty in recognising him as an unqualified labourer.

From Sydney he went to Brisbane where he was offered on the same day a tutorship in French and a temporary lectureship in the department of Anatomy. He chose the latter.

He has subsequently combined his love of anatomy with his involvement as a limbfitting surgeon.

#### PIERRE DIONIS AND THE FRANCO-BRITISH DIALOGUE IN SURGERY

Dionis, P. (1710) *A course of chirurgial operations demonstrated in the Royal Garden at Paris*. London: Jacob Tonson.

Pierre Dionis (?1643-1718) though not himself a very innovative surgeon, has been acclaimed as the author of a surgical textbook that opened a new era in which French surgical teaching dominated Europe. This dominance is reflected in the Gordon Craig Library, which contains four copies of the book by Dionis in English translation, as well as a number of other books by influential French eighteenth-century surgical

writers, notably Henri François le Dran and François Quesnay. It is significant that many of these writers benefited from government patronage in various forms. Dionis himself began his career as demonstrator in anatomy and surgery in the Jardin du Roi, in his time the premier teaching institution in those sciences; he later became a court surgeon.

During the course of the eighteenth century French surgery gained ascendancy both over traditional French medicine and also on the international stage, though English surgery likewise made great progress. There was a very productive dialogue between medical scientists and teachers in both countries, assisted by textbooks in translation.

The French Revolution demolished the medical and surgical institutions established under the old régime, but French surgery emerged from the rubble to play a great part in the birth of modern clinical medicine.

Born in Adelaide in 1927, Donald Simpson graduated in medicine in 1949. He specialised in neurosurgery, and underwent postgraduate training in the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, under J.B. Pennybacker, and later in the Royal Adelaide Hospital under T.A.R. Dinning. He was director of neurosurgery in the Adelaide Children's Hospital 1970-85; he is now emeritus neurosurgeon in that hospital and in the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and clinical professor in the University of Adelaide.

As a paediatric neurosurgeon he assisted in the development of craniofacial surgery in Adelaide by David J. David, and was a foundation member of the Australian Craniofacial Unit. He has collaborated with David in several books and papers dealing with craniofacial and neurosurgical issues, and also in historical studies.

He is a founder of the Section of Surgical History of the Australasian College, and a member of the Australian Society of the History of Medicine, and also of the Centre for British



Studies, University of Adelaide. He is an honorary member of the Society of Neurosurgery of Vietnam. He is a member of the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia and curator of its museum of surgical instruments. His historical interests centre on neurosurgery and medical education (the subject of his MD thesis). In studying these subjects in the French literature, he contends, he has not allowed himself to be deterred by his profound ignorance of the French language.

He is a Member of the Order of Australia.

### ANTHONY EDEN'S BILE DUCT: PORTRAIT OF AN AILING LEADER

Vesalius, A. (1568) *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*. Venetiis: Apud Franciscum Franciscium Senensem & Joannum Creigher Germanum.

Three distinct issues will be explored in relation to the bile duct injury of Sir Anthony Eden, sustained during the course of what should have been an uneventful cholecystectomy.

The first question is whether the injury could have been avoided. The key to the prevention of bile duct injury during cholecystectomy is meticulous anatomical dissection. The evidence which will be discussed suggests that Eden's injury may have been preventable.

Having sustained a bile duct injury, the second question is whether his subsequent management was appropriate. Was there procrastination for further surgery, given the fame and status of the patient and the potential for stigmatisation of the surgeons involved in the original operation? Hearsay evidence, to be discussed, suggests that there was delay in performing bile duct reconstruction. The extent of subsequent operations may also have been tempered by the patient's status.

The last issue discussed is whether post-repair

illness, in particular intermittent bouts of cholangitis, had an important influence on those major decisions, with global implications, that Eden had to make whilst Prime Minister. The available evidence, to be described, suggests (though not conclusively) that the systemic effects of intermittent cholangitis *did* influence Eden's major decisions, such as those made during the 'Suez crisis'. Further, ill-health was an important factor in the premature retirement from office of this ailing leader.

An ethnic Hungarian, born in 1933 in Slovakia, Gabriel Kune settled in Australia in 1948. He graduated in 1957 from the University of Melbourne, and received surgical training at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, St Mary's and Guy's Hospitals in London, and at the Lahey Clinic in Boston.

He was surgeon at the Royal Melbourne Hospital 1967-77, professor of surgery in the University of Melbourne 1977-88, and emeritus professor since 1989. He was Arris and Gale lecturer at the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 1970 and Hunterian Professor in 1976. He received his MD from the University of Melbourne in 1988.

He is the author of six books: two on biliary surgery (one of them translated into Italian and Japanese), three on the causes, prevention and early detection of cancer, and the other a biography of the prominent Australian, John Saunders. He has contributed chapters to 24 books and has over 200 other publications.

### TRIPLE TIE: the relationship between science, religion and society.

Bell, C. (1833) *The Hand, its mechanism and vital endowments, as evincing design*. London: Bridgewater Trustees.

Sir Charles Bell (1774-1842) was an eminent anatomist,

who wrote *The Hand* as part of the Bridgewater Treatises. The controversy as to whether Plato or Aristotle was right - whether Man is spirit or machine - also occupied the mind of Sir Charles.

A brief look at the history of Natural Theology will help set the stage for an interpretation of his book on *The Hand*. Natural Theology at the time of Bell was a concept that emphasised evidences in nature of contrivances and design ordered by an Intelligent Being for a purpose. In the 18th and early 19th century Natural Theology was cultivated with zeal, coming to a climax in the Bridgewater Treatises.

In his book Bell uses comparative anatomy to show evidence of perfection of structure. He wrote:

the hand represents the last and best proof in the order of creation of that principle of Adaptation which evinces Design.

The anatomy of the panda's thumb will be examined in light of this statement.

The paper will seek to show that there is a relationship between science, religion and society existing before and during Bell's life, and continuing to the present. This may help to explain why Bell wrote *The Hand*.

Philip Sharp is a general surgeon in Sydney. He graduated in medicine from the University of Sydney in 1972, and obtained his Fellowship in 1980. He has recently been awarded a Fellowship of the Australian College of Biomedical Scientists.

He is secretary of the RACS Section of Surgical History, and has enjoyed presenting several surgical history papers at Annual Scientific Congresses. His paper on surgical footballers was especially well received.

He is on the committee of the NSW Society of the History of Medicine.

But his real interests, he insists, are rugby, rowing, jazz and red wine!

## SIR THOMAS BROWNE - PHYSICIAN 1605-1682 AND THE *RELIGIO MEDICI*

Browne, T. (1883) *Religio medici*. Facsimile of the first edition published in 1642 with an introduction by W.A. Greenhill. London: Elliot Stock.

The 17th century physician, Thomas Browne, has 17 of his published works represented in the Cowlshaw collection, including a facsimile of the first edition in 1642 of his *Religio Medici*, written near Halifax apparently without the use of any library, such was his scholarship. The period 1623-29 in Oxford gained him an MA. His prime interest turned to medicine and he travelled abroad for three years; in 1631 he studied at Montpellier, the oldest continuous medical school in the world. There he learned the theories of vitalism, the concept that an organic soul animated all body tissues. Then to Padua which matriculated over a thousand students in a normal year, where he studied anatomy, physiology and surgery under Rinaldo Colombo who stated that 'the dissection of a dog would be more valuable than all the work of Galen'. The following year he spent at the University of Leyden where he gained an MD before returning to England in 1633. He became MRCP in 1635, the year in which he both wrote the *Religio* and became Doctor of Physic in Oxford. He was knighted by Charles II in 1671. His other works include *Christian Morals*, many essays on Urn Burials and a collection of letters.

In Browne's time surgery was becoming more adventurous and operating time needed to be as brief as possible. Gross topographical anatomy was the basis of 17th century surgery, and it remains important today. Continued reduction of anatomy teaching, even in some postgraduate schools, is therefore of growing concern to Colleges and Academies charged with



training surgeons, and additional postgraduate anatomy teaching will therefore be required.

Sam Mellick was born in North Queensland and qualified MB BS with First Class Honours at the University of Queensland in 1948. He gained his English Fellowship in 1953, returning to the new Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, whose department of vascular surgery he founded in 1961 and headed until 1985. He became FRACS in 1960, and has since been chairman of the Board of Examiners, Censor-in-chief and senior vice-president. His FACS dates from 1967, and he served two terms as a Governor of the American College. He became Hon FRCSI in 1989 and was the first Australian to be president of the International Society for Cardiovascular Surgery. He was made CBE in 1987.

#### SIR COLIN MACKENZIE: A REMARKABLE LEGACY

White, J. (1790) *Journal of a voyage to New South Wales*. London: Debrett. Keith, A. (1919) *Menders of the Maimed*. London: Henry Frowde Hodder & Stoughton.

William Colin MacKenzie was born in 1877 in Kilmore, and educated at Scotch College and Melbourne University where he graduated in 1898. He worked at the Melbourne Hospital and the Melbourne Children's Hospital before travelling overseas to visit Vulpus and Robert Jones.

He made three major contributions:

1. he revolutionised the treatment of poliomyelitis, introducing an active exercise programme;
2. he produced an outstanding collection of marsupials which became the basis of the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra, the first building on the site of ANU;
3. he established the Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary which was later to be named after him.

He served as president of both the Royal Zoological Society and the Royal Society of Australia, and was knighted in 1929. He was made the first honorary member of the Australian Orthopaedic Association at its inaugural meeting in 1937.

Sir Robert Jones in his treatise on muscle rehabilitation referred only briefly to MacKenzie's work; but Sir Arthur Keith in *Menders of the Maimed* gave full recognition to MacKenzie's contribution to the treatment of poliomyelitis.

Born in 1937, John Hart was educated at Melbourne High School and the University of Melbourne, graduating MB BS in 1961. He became FRACS in 1969, and has served on both the Court of Examiners and as a member of the Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. He was the LO Betts Memorial Gold medallist of the Australian Orthopaedic Association in 1997 and its president 1998-99.

He is senior orthopaedic surgeon at the Alfred Hospital, and a clinical associate professor of surgery at Monash University.

#### THE WRITINGS OF DANIEL TURNER AND HIS VIEWS ON THE PRACTICE OF SURGERY

Turner, D. (1695) *Apologia chyrgica*. London: Whitlock.

*ibid.* (1735) *The drop and pill of Mr Ward consider'd... in an epistle to Dr James Jurin*. London: Clarke.

In the Cowlshaw collection are these two publications by David Turner (1667-1740), who qualified first as a surgeon, and later practised as a physician. He was a successful author and it has been said that 'his cases are not stated in the most delicate terms, nor was politeness among his excellencies'.

Both of these publications were very critical of the

various pretenders who engaged in medical practice at that time. A review of these works has been carried out, and consideration of the type of practice in which these people were engaged.

Reginald Magee became FRCSEng in 1960, FRACS in 1965; he retired in 1999, having been senior visiting vascular surgeon at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, and a clinical associate professor in the department of surgery of the University of Queensland. His present interests include medical and surgical history, music and antique firearms. He is the chairman of the College's Section of Surgical History.

### SNIPPETS FROM SCULTETUS

Scultetus, J (1655) *Armamentarium chirurgicum*.  
Ulm: Ruhnen.

This paper examines the *Armamentarium chirurgicum* of Scultetus (Johann Schultz of Ulm) and from three of the plates in that work it proceeds to consider three items of surgical history: the orthopaedic elements in an Egyptian tomb painting, the punishment of the *Batavia* mutineers, and the neglected inspiration of Lorenz Heister.

Wyn Beasley is a former orthopaedic surgeon with a special interest in the care of amputees, and a past vice-president of the RACS. His history of the College, *The Mantle of Surgery*, was published this year to coincide with the College's 75th jubilee celebrations. He is a former Colonel Commandant of the Royal New Zealand Army Medical Corps and a past chairman of the College section of Surgical History; and over years past he has delivered the Hamilton Russell, Herbert Moran, Kenneth Russell and Rupert Downes lectures. He is a Hunterian professor for 2002. As Reader to the Gordon Craig Library he is the originator and convenor of these Cowlshaw symposia.