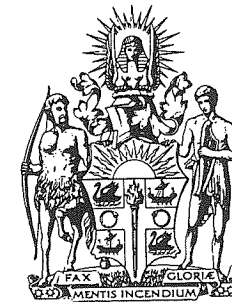


The Third  
Cowlshaw Symposium

6 May 2000

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons



The Third Cowlshaw Symposium

**P R O G R A M M E**

**6 May 2000**

The Cowlshaw Symposium  
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

Thanks are due to many people who have helped in the planning and presentation of this Symposium:

- to the Speakers:  
D.A. Simpson, the Kenneth F. Russell Memorial Lecturer;  
R.L. Zacharin;  
Marius Fahrer;  
A.J. Thurston;  
A.J. Newson;  
Spencer Beasley;  
S.A. Mellick;  
Donald L. Murphy;
- to the other participants:  
B.H. Barraclough PRACS;  
I.E. McInnes;  
J.P. Royle;
- to members of the staff of a number of departments of the College, and notably the Development Office;  
the Archives;  
the Library;  
who have supported the project in various ways;
- and to the President and Council, who have endorsed the inclusion of the Cowlshaw Symposium in the College calendar.

A.W. Beasley  
Reader to the Gordon Craig Library

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

In 1996, in my introduction to the programme for the first Cowlshaw Symposium, I wrote that the meeting 'is designed to make the College's collection of historical volumes better known, both to Fellows of the College and to the wider bibliophile community'.

The success of that symposium, and of the second meeting two years later, has suggested two things: that the College's historical collection is indeed valued by Fellows and others, and that regular celebration of this treasure is an appropriate recognition of the debt we owe to our far-sighted predecessors.

This year the event moves from its October place in the College calendar, to take place in proximity to the Annual Scientific Congress. This avoids the challenge of persuading those who attend to pay two visits to Melbourne in one year; on this occasion it also provides the opportunity of gathering in the anaesthetists, since their College is holding its own main meeting in the same city, and at about the same time, as the meeting of the parent College.

For, in the days when the anaesthetists formed a faculty within the College of Surgeons, they were respectful of the importance of the collection to such an extent that they provided the very bookcases in which it is housed. That gesture was important at the time, and Dr Newson's presence among the

contributors confirms how greatly the friendship of surgeons and anaesthetists is still valued today.

Another innovation in this third symposium is the inclusion of a gynaecologist in the list of speakers. In its formative years, the College of Surgeons included 'gynaecology and operative obstetrics' among the disciplines in which it examined, and although the obstetricians and gynaecologists now have their own College, the spirit of co-operation that exists between the two colleges is such that a shared programme is entirely proper. Mr Zacharin's qualifications in both Colleges emphasise this further link.

Once again the programme includes the Kenneth Russell memorial lecture, given this year by Professor Donald Simpson who was instrumental in bringing about the establishment of what is now a flourishing Section of Surgical History within the College. No one could be better qualified to pay tribute to the man who played such a major part in bringing Leslie Cowlshaw's collection to the College, and in caring for it over the rest of his life.

It is proper, of course, to acknowledge not only the contribution of Russell and Cowlshaw to the treasure we enjoy today. For John Laidley (who was the first holder of the Gordon Craig fellowship in urology) and Gordon Craig himself played their parts - Craig by the bequest that gave the College the library that bears his name, Laidley by alerting the College to the possibility of acquiring Cowlshaw's collection in 1943.

John Hunter, though not providing the theme for a particular paper, represented a unifying influence in the papers read at the first symposium. In the second, two papers dealt with the subject of 'revolution' and several with practical surgeons - men who were connected with the English College and its precedent Company.

This time Hunter does provide a theme for one paper; and many others show how much our ancestors addressed subjects that remain topical today: Robert Boyle and his laws of gases, Liston and obstetric fistula, Black and the deluge of scientific papers, Larrey and the rapid evacuation of casualties. We commemorate the pioneers: James Young Simpson, White and Flinders, Eustachius and his anatomical insights, the men who laid the foundations of medical education in our two countries.

In doing so, we acknowledge that the Cowlshaw collection and its accretions are not simply a set of bookcases full of old books: they are the basis on which our practice at the threshold of a new millennium needs to be founded, if it is to be built upon rock rather than shifting sand.

# PROGRAMME

SATURDAY, 6 MAY 2000

- 9.30 am Registration
- 10 Opening by the President, Mr B.H. Barraclough
- SESSION 1* Chairman: Mr B.H. Barraclough PRACS
- 10.05 *The fifth Kenneth F. Russell Memorial Lecture*  
Prof D.A. Simpson  
THE ENGLISH ROOTS OF MEDICAL EDUCATION  
IN AUSTRALASIA  
(*Records of Harvey, Paget 1846*)
- 10.45 Mr R.L. Zacharin  
THE HISTORY OF OBSTETRIC VESICOVAGINAL FISTULA  
(*Practical Surgery, Liston 1846*)
- 11.20 Morning coffee
- SESSION 2* Chairman: Prof A.W. Beasley,  
Reader to the Gordon Craig Library
- 11.50 Mr Marius Fahrer  
OF EUSTACHIUS AND ALBINUS, ANATOMY AND LEIDEN,  
MICE AND MEN  
(*Explicatio tabularum Eustachii, Albinus 1744*)
- 12.25 pm Prof A.J. Thurston  
SEPSIS AND ITS CONTROL  
(*The blood, inflammation and gun-shot wounds, Hunter 1794*)
- 1 Lunch  
- Inspection of archival and library displays; tour of  
College memorabilia (under the guidance of Mr J.P. Royle)

- SESSION 3* Chairman: Mr I.E. McInnes, Honorary Archivist
- 2.15 Dr A.J. Newson  
NOVEMBER 1847 AND 'ALL HERE ARE AGOG  
WITH THE CHLOROFORM'  
(*Twenty-five pamphlets, Simpson, 1843-50*)
- 2.50 Prof Spencer Beasley  
MEDICAL PUBLICATIONS: 'TO READ THEM WOULD...  
BURDEN THE MEMORY TO NO PURPOSE'  
(*An historical sketch of medicine and surgery, Black 1782*)
- 3.25 Afternoon tea
- SESSION 4* Chairman: Prof D.A. Simpson,  
Chairman, Section of Surgical History
- 3.45 Mr S.A. Mellick  
JOHN WHITE AND MATTHEW FLINDERS - 'VOYAGEURS  
AVANTUREUX' IN NEW SOUTH WALES - 1788-99  
(*Journal of a voyage to New South Wales, White 1790*)
- 4.20 Mr Donald L. Murphy  
SURGICAL APPRECIATION OF ROBERT BOYLE  
IN THE 21st CENTURY  
(*The final causes of natural things, Boyle 1649*)
- 4.55 Prof A.W. Beasley  
TO STUDY THE HEALING ART  
(*Mémoires de chirurgie militaire et campagnes, Larrey 1812-21*)
- 5.30 Closing remarks
- 5.45 - 7 pm Cocktail function

# ABSTRACTS

## AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### THE ENGLISH ROOTS OF MEDICAL EDUCATION IN AUSTRALASIA

- THE KENNETH F. RUSSELL MEMORIAL LECTURE

Paget, James (1846) *Records of Harvey: in extracts from the journals of the Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew... with notes by James Paget.* London, Churchill.

Some individuals have a heightened perception of history. K.F. Russell was one of these gifted people, and he wrote many elegant books and papers on historical subjects. Two are already classic works: his history of the Melbourne medical school, published in 1977, and his annotated catalogue of the historical books in the library of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (1979).

Among the books catalogued by Russell is a small work by James Paget (1814-99), entitled *Records of Harvey: in extracts from the journals of the Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew...* (1846). Interesting in itself, this book recalls Paget's career as a teacher and reformer in medical education during the second half of the nineteenth century. In his history of the Melbourne medical school Russell did justice to Paget's role in drafting a model curriculum for Australia's first university medical school.

Medical education in Melbourne and later in Adelaide was largely moulded by Paget and other leading London teachers; Cambridge, where Paget's brother George held the Regius chair of medicine, was also influential in Adelaide. Scottish influences were stronger in the contemporary medical schools of Dunedin and Sydney. In the two decades before World War I, many graduates from these new medical schools went to Britain for postgraduate experience and credentials. They were assisted by imperial ideology and by the new imperial institutions.

*Donald Simpson was born in Adelaide, and graduated in medicine there in 1949. He studied neuroanatomy in Oxford under Professor W.E. Le*

*Gros Clark, and thereafter underwent neurosurgical training under Mr J.B. Pennybacker. He completed his postgraduate education in Adelaide under Mr 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. He was president of the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia in 1973-75, and is curator of that society's historical museum; he was concerned in postgraduate education as chairman of the College's neurosurgical board from 1979 to 1982. He is an honorary member of the Society of Neurosurgery of Vietnam, and is an admirer of that country.*

*He has published articles on various historical topics; in these he has always striven to be politically correct, but has nevertheless been open to charges of anglophilia and closet imperialism. His chief historical interests now centre on medical education in the nineteenth century.*

### THE HISTORY OF OBSTETRIC VESICOVAGINAL FISTULA

Liston, Robert (1846) *Practical surgery.* London, Churchill.

*Unhoused, unfriended, solitary slow  
On Tigris banks I wander to and fro.*

- Jami. (817 A.D.)

Obstetric fistula has a history as old as mankind and as yet, despite improved obstetric care, such benefits have failed to penetrate the underdeveloped world. The incidence of fistula is an indicator of the quality of obstetric care available and accordingly, genital fistula remains the commonest gynaecological surgical problem throughout the world.

Early attempts to deal with the problem endeavoured only to mop up the 24-hour incontinence until 1663 when Hendrik van Roohuysen of Amsterdam published probably the first text on operative gynaecology, in which he stated the three important principles necessary to achieve operative success in fistula closure. Then followed a long period when famous and not-so-famous surgeons endeavoured to solve the problem: occasional successes were reported but these were rarities.

Robert Liston (1846) in his text *Practical Surgery* emphasised the aetiology of vesicovaginal fistula and the state of attempted surgical correction at that time. It was James Marion Sims (1852) who defined the important principles necessary to

ensure success with fistula closure which enabled successes to be repeated rather than the previous hit and miss attempts.

He established the first hospital devoted entirely to fistula surgery in New York in 1855; in 1974 the second fistula hospital was founded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by Reginald and Catherine Hamlin. Between these dates many important contributions to fistula repair emerged.

There is no longer a need for a fistula hospital in the U.S.A., but the Ethiopian fistula hospital continues to treat some 700 patients every year, and will remain necessary until both patient education and modern obstetric care catch up to eliminate this entirely preventable problem.

*Robert Fyfe Zacharin, AO, is consultant gynaecologist to the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, a former vice-president of the Royal Australian College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and recently chairman and book review editor of the Australian & New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He is a member of numerous societies in the U.S.A.: the Societies of Pelvic Surgeons and of Gynaecologic Surgeons, Medicine for Humanity and the O&G Travel Club. He has been a visiting professor in the United Kingdom, U.S.A., Europe, Africa, the Middle and Near East.*

*He has numerous publications on bladder function and pelvic floor problems in the female, and books on stress incontinence, obstetric fistula, pelvic floor anatomy and the surgery of pulsion enterocoele - and on emigrant eucalypts.*

*His academic qualifications are formidable: MD, MGO, FRCS, FRACS, FRCOG, FRANZCOG; he has been Te Linde Lecturer of the Society of Gynaecologic Surgeons in Phoenix, Arizona.*

## OF EUSTACHIUS AND ALBINUS, ANATOMY AND LEIDEN, MICE AND MEN

Albinus, Bernard (ed., 1744) *Explicatio tabularum anatomicarum Bartholomaei Eustachii*. Leiden, Langerak & Verbeek.

Bartolomeo Eustachius (1520-74) was professor of anatomy in Rome. Like his contemporary Andreas Vesalius in Padua, Eustachius based his teaching on dissections. He illustrated his teaching by 'colour-in' plates for the students. Less artistic but often more accurate than those of Vesalius, the plates of Eustachius were never accompanied by a text. They disappeared

for two centuries and started a new life in the XVIIIth century.

We have in the Cowlshaw collection a superbly presented copy of the 1744 edition of these plates, published with comprehensive legends and amply commentated by Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697-1770), professor of anatomy and surgery at the Batavian Academy and president of the College of Surgeons in Leiden. The plate illustrating the peripheral nervous system contains what I believe to be the first ever illustration of the recurrent thenar branch of the median nerve.

The Museum of Anatomy in Leiden contains old specimens, some prepared by Albinus, displays of surgical instruments and other curiosities.

*Marius Fahrer, born in 1927 in Bucharest, Roumania, is a countryman of Count Dracula the Vampire. Marius came to Australia in 1963 after five weeks of sailing 'migrant class' on an Italian liner and carefully avoided pasta for the following decade.*

*He has worked as an anatomist, orthopaedic and hand surgeon and later as a rehabilitation medicine consultant, and is presently involved with the 'pilot' course in Surgical Anatomy run by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the University of Melbourne.*

*He is curator of the Cowlshaw collection at the College.*

## SEPSIS AND ITS CONTROL

Hunter, John (1794) *A treatise on the blood, inflammation and gun-shot wounds*. London, Nicol.

It was with the advent of firearms that military wound surgery diverged from civilian surgery. The first real treatise on the subject was by Hieronymus Brunschwig (1450-1533): *Buch der Wund Artzney*. He developed the idea that all gunshot wounds were poisoned and advised the use of a seton - a silk cord pulled through the wound to remove the powder - and the promotion of suppuration.

However, Ambroise Paré with his extensive experience as a military surgeon revolutionised the treatment of wounds, particularly gunshot wounds. The cautery and the boiling oil were widely used until Paré discovered, somewhat



serendipitously when his supplies of oil ran out during one campaign, that the application of a simple lotion to the wound produced a much healthier and more comfortable patient than one treated with boiling oil.

Paré died in 1590 but John Hunter's work on *the blood, inflammation and gun-shot wounds* was not published until 1794 - the year after his death. By that stage the knowledge of the function of the blood and its role in inflammation had progressed somewhat.

John Hunter must be regarded as one of the grand old men of science and medicine. As a child he had no inclination to scholarship but then went on to vast researches into comparative anatomy and physiology which were to occupy him for most of his life. Later in his career he lectured on the whole circle of the sciences around surgery. It was his insatiable curiosity that fired him and led him to his investigations and his often quoted advice to Edward Jenner, 'Why think? Why not try the experiment?'

*Alan Thurston was born in 1947 and received his schooling in Feilding, New Zealand. He graduated MB ChB (Otago) in 1972, with distinction in anatomy and the David Whyte prize in clinical surgery. He undertook compulsory military training as a student and was commissioned in 1971.*

*He trained in orthopaedics with an interest in hand surgery, in Wellington, and was admitted FRACS in 1980. A research scholarship took him to the Orthopaedic Engineering Centre in Oxford, where he graduated MSc (bioengineering) in 1982. Returning to Wellington as a senior lecturer, he was promoted associate professor in 1996. He was an ABC Travelling Fellow in orthopaedics in 1986, and was awarded the Iverach Postgraduate Fellowship in Medicine in 1991.*

*He is president of the New Zealand Society for Surgery of the Hand, and deputy chairman of the College's Hand Surgery interest group. Apart from hand surgery, he has a special interest in the care of amputees, and in the biomechanical aspects of amputation stumps and prostheses.*

*He commanded 2 (GH) Field Hospital 1986-90 and was awarded the Efficiency Decoration in 1987. He is now ADMS Land Command in the rank of colonel, and honorary surgeon to HE the Governor-General.*

Simpson, James Young (1843-50) *Simpson's essays: 25 pamphlets on anaesthesia, obstetrics and gynaecology, archaeology.*

James Young Simpson introduced chloroform into obstetrical and general surgical practice during 1847 in Edinburgh. Although the anaesthetic properties of chloroform were not recognised until the evening of 4 November, by the end of the same month chloroform was being used throughout Britain. Simpson was never slow to report his successes, and the 'indecent haste' associated with its introduction meant that its sinister effects were as yet unrecognised.

Simpson's extraordinary capacity for sustained work was phenomenal, and his commitments during November 1847 are an excellent example of his stamina and fortitude. He was an active participant in the discovery and recognition of chloroform's anaesthetic properties. Six days after that event he presented a paper to the first Winter Meeting of the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society, based on his experiences with the use of chloroform in midwifery! Within the next five days he published two pamphlets on chloroform, based on that presentation. Later the same month articles written by Simpson appeared in the *Lancet* and the *London Medical Gazette*, both items relating to the use of chloroform as an alternative to ether as an anaesthetic agent.

Simpson was 'known to all to be a man of parts, and a keen, though not over-scrupulous controversialist' and, not surprisingly, during this month a lengthy and acrimonious quarrel with Dr Robert Lee, which had been fought through the pages of the *Lancet*, came to a close. In this case there was no clear-cut victor, which was unusual because Simpson thrived on controversy.

A letter written by Simpson on or about 13 November to Dr Fleetwood Churchill of Dublin reflects its author's excitement and enthusiasm relating to the introduction of chloroform in Edinburgh. This letter is one of two written to Churchill and is in the collection of twenty-five of Simpson's pamphlets, bound into one volume, which is held in the Gordon Craig Library.

NOVEMBER 1847 AND 'ALL HERE ARE AGOG WITH THE CHLOROFORM'

Anthony Newson was educated at Christ's College and Otago University, from which he graduated MB ChB in 1958. He obtained his DA in 1963, his Fellowship of the Faculty of Anaesthetists of the English College the following year, and his FFARACS in 1971.

He has been a specialist anaesthetist at Auckland Hospital since 1970, having previously served in the Royal New Zealand Navy 1967-70 (after five years in RNZNVR). His naval service included a period with the NZ Services Medical Team in Vietnam in 1969; he retired in the rank of Surgeon Lt-Cdr.

He was NZ education officer of the Faculty 1973-85, and chairman of its New Zealand committee 1986-88. He served as an examiner 1976-88. In 1982 he was chairman of the organising committee of the 6th Asian-Australasian Congress of Anaesthesiology.

His interests include the subject of anaesthesia in colonial New Zealand, postal history and reading.

#### MEDICAL PUBLICATIONS: 'TO READ THEM WOULD... BURDEN THE MEMORY TO NO USEFUL PURPOSE'.

Black, William (1782) *An historical sketch of medicine and surgery from their origin to the present time and of the principal authors, discoveries, improvements, imperfections and errors.* London, Johnson.

In 1782 William Black published his 'Historical Sketch of Medicine and Surgery', in which he addressed the subject of medical publications and their value. He doubted whether even one physician in a thousand managed to add 'one iota of information to the medical fund' and whether more than a tiny fraction of medical publications over the centuries had contained 'any material discovery for useful improvement' in medical knowledge. The debate on the value of published material continues.

This paper looks at the explosion of medical publication (the National Library of Medicine search service, for instance, now has access to 9 million articles on Medline since 1966, from 3900 current medical journals); at the problem of making findings from one segment of medical research accessible to workers in an unrelated discipline; and at the potential - for good or ill - of the development of electronic communications.

Black's concerns about medical publications, concerns which echoed the more general doubts of the philosopher

Voltaire, would indeed appear to be timeless.

Spencer Beasley was educated at Wellington College and the University of Otago, graduating MB ChB in 1976. He became FRACS by examination in general surgery in 1985, and his certificate was endorsed in paediatric surgery the following year. He obtained the Melbourne MS in 1988 with a thesis on testicular descent; by this time he was on the staff of the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

He was an International Guest Scholar of the American College of Surgeons in 1991. In 1996 he returned to New Zealand to become clinical director of the Department of Paediatric Surgery at Christchurch Hospital, and was appointed Clinical Professor of Paediatrics and Surgery by the University of Otago.

He is chairman of the College Board of Paediatric Surgery, and a member of the Court of Examiners.

His main research interest is in the embryogenesis of oesophageal atresia and the other abnormalities of the VATER association. He has written or edited six books on various aspects of paediatric surgery, is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* and has a strong interest in teaching.

#### JOHN WHITE AND MATTHEW FLINDERS: 'VOYAGEURS AVANTUREUX' IN NEW SOUTH WALES - 1788-99

White, John (1790) *Journal of a voyage to New South Wales, with sixty-five plates of nondescript animals, birds, lizards, serpents, curious cones of trees and other natural productions.* (2 vols.) London, Debrett.

The Cowlshaw collection contains John White's *Journal*, a two volume publication describing in detail the voyage of the 'First Fleet', which sailed from England for Terra Australis in 1787 for the purpose of establishing a new penal colony here: one which was destined to become 'the world's largest gaol'. Following earlier voyages to the West Indies and India, White travelled as Principal Surgeon to the First Fleet in the transport *Charlotte* carrying Marines as well as convicts, and he was largely responsible for the remarkably low death rate on the journey. At Port Jackson he became Surgeon General to the colony where, apart from his administrative and medical work, he discovered and named many species of plants and animals and undertook several local explorations. Volume 2 of his *Journal*

contains 65 beautiful drawings of the local flora and fauna, and some of his animal specimens were subsequently examined in London by John Hunter who had earlier reviewed material from Cook's *Endeavour* voyage.

Matthew Flinders came to Sydney in 1795, destined for renown as a navigator and cartographer. With surgeon George Bass he circumnavigated Tasmania in 1798 in the leaky sloop *Norfolk*. Later that year he led an expedition in the same vessel to search for a large river in south-east Queensland. He explored Moreton Bay but failed to find the mouth of the Brisbane River. Back in England he married Anne Chapelle in April 1801, but three months later left in the sloop *Investigator*, another somewhat unseaworthy vessel. He sailed her round Terra Australis in just under two years, and his charts and maps were unusually accurate, given the primitive navigating equipment of the time. His return to England was delayed till 1810 by a period of six years' imprisonment by the French on Mauritius, but he finally completed his remarkable *Voyage to Terra Australis*. Ironically this was published in 1814 on the very day that he died. He was the first person to name the continent Australia and he referred to the local inhabitants as Australians.

Surely White and Flinders deserve to be called 'voyageurs aventureux'.

*Sam Mellick was born in North Queensland and qualified with first class honours at the University of Queensland in 1948. After gaining his English Fellowship in 1953 he returned to become lecturer in operative surgery and surgical anatomy, and a surgeon at 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 served the College as chairman of the Board of Examiners, Censor-in-Chief and as senior Vice-president. He was the founding chairman of the Section of Vascular Surgery and is a member of the Court of Honour. His FACS dates from 1967, and he served two terms as a Governor of the American College. He was made an honorary Fellow of the Irish College in 1989, and was the first Australian to be president of the International Society for Cardiovascular Surgery.*

*He has been Windsor Lecturer, a Hunterian Professor, Bancroft Orator of the AMA, medallist of the John Loewenthal Society and Colles lecturer and medallist of the RCSI, and he is the Herbert Moran lecturer for the Melbourne 2000 ASC.*

*He was awarded a CBE in 1987*

## SURGICAL APPRECIATION OF ROBERT BOYLE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Boyle, Robert (1688) *A disquisition about the final causes of natural things: wherein it is inquir'd whether, and (if at all) with what cautions, a naturalist should admit them.* London, H.C. for John Taylor.

Robert Boyle (1627-91) was known as the Father of Chemistry. He lived at a time when science and religion were closely linked. A pious and puritanical time, it was also a time of great enlightenment.

His original and paramount thesis, that air has weight, has given us Boyle's law.

It is stated that, at one stage, he was deliberating whether to be a scientist or a priest.

Surgical appreciation of Boyle's Law has poignant application in scientific methods and research in the 21st Century. The development of advanced laparoscopic surgery represents a challenging new era in surgery - one not envisaged by our surgical predecessors.

Basic surgical research into the effects of gas pressure on renal function and bowel response will be presented.

*Donald Murphy qualified MB BS from Monash University in 1970, and became a Fellow of the Australasian College in 1978. Since that time he has been urologist at Geelong Hospitals, and a clinical assistant at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne.*

*He has been a co-opted member of the Victorian State Committee, he has convened a Younger Fellows residential course, and he joined the Archives committee in 1997. He is a Victorian committee member of the Basic Suergical Skills project. He has become deeply involved in laparoscopic surgery, as demonstrator, teacher and researcher.*

*He received the College's Johnson & Johnson Research Award in 1997, and 1999 was a further year of awards: the Urological Society of Australasia's BAUS Perpetual Cup for the best presentation at its Adelaide meeting; the Cutler prize awarded jointly by the English College and the Cutlers' Guild, for the design of an ergonomic laparoscopic needle holder; and a BARD silver medal in the British Society's prize essay competition.*

*His laparoscopic researches have brought him back more than three centuries, to the man who laid down the rules: the Honourable Robert Boyle, son of the Earl of Cork.*

## TO STUDY THE HEALING ART

Larrey, Dominique (1812-21) *Mémoires de chirurgie militaire et campagnes*. (5 vols) Paris, Smith.

This paper traces the careers of two men: Dominique Larrey, who became the Baron Larrey in Buonaparte's new creation of honours, and James McGrigor, who served with Wellington in the Peninsula and (as Sir James) occupied the post of Director-General of the Army Medical Department until the age of 80.

Larrey developed an urge to travel in the course of a Newfoundland voyage as a recently-qualified doctor in the naval reserve; he satisfied it by serving in virtually all the campaigns of revolutionary and Napoleonic France. In the Italian campaign of 1797 he devised the *ambulance volante*, which was both a military medical unit and the light 'flying ambulance' vehicle which enabled the rapid evacuation of casualties from the battlefield. Thereafter he served his Emperor through Egypt (where he was wounded) to Spain and Russia, and on to Waterloo, where he was wounded again.

McGrigor's career was equally varied, taking him to Jersey and his first attack of typhus, to Flanders and two more; to the West Indies where he escaped the yellow fever but most of the force did not, and then to India and Egypt (where his observations on the plague epidemic were to be quoted approvingly by Larrey!) In the Peninsula he braved Wellington's fury in introducing his own medical reforms, before gaining his chief's approval in the winter withdrawal of 1812.

The two men between them changed the face of military medicine in their generation.

*Wyn Beasley is a former vice-president of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. He is now Reader to the Gordon Craig Library, and in this capacity is convenor of today's Cowlshaw Symposium.*

*During his active surgical career he was a visiting orthopaedic surgeon at Wellington Hospital in New Zealand. In recent years, he has turned to writing as a second career. He has recently been commissioned to write a history of the College.*

*He is now a Professorial Research Fellow at the Central Institute of Technology in Wellington.*