

SPICERS AND APOTHECARIES IN THE
CITY OF CANTERBURY

CANTERBURY is fortunate in having been able to retain many of its medieval records, particularly those relating to her freemen and traders from the late fourteenth century. Early this century J. M. Cowper published a *Roll of the Freemen of the City, 1392-1800* and *Intrantes: A List of Persons admitted to Live and Trade . . . from 1392-1592*. It is from these that the following notes are compiled, in the hope that it may induce pharmacists in other cities, boroughs and towns to use similar lists where they are available, for the study of the development of pharmacy in their own regions. The *Intrantes* or 'Enterers' were those men and women admitted to trade or to follow their usual occupations in Canterbury on payment of a small annual fine, from 6d. to 2s. a year. Some paid only for a year or two and then took up their freedom. Freemen paid a lump sum: freedom of the city could be claimed by birth, by marriage to a freeman's daughter, by apprenticeship, or by redemption, i.e. payment of a fine. In many instances freedom by apprenticeship seems to have been taken up at about the age of twenty-four. A few selected persons were given the freedom for service to the city but of the 137 names from 1450 to 1800, about one every two years, there are included only six physicians and two surgeons; there were no apothecaries so honoured. Apparently foreigners, and many came to make a living in Canterbury, or persons not born in the city, paid a larger sum than those who were city born.

Some family names recur for centuries. In the earlier years admissions were recorded in Latin: occupations were often stated in French. In the eighteenth century entries were abbreviated and the information is therefore incomplete. Freemen took an oath to be loyal to the sovereign, to obey the bailiff or mayor, to observe the city's customs, to pay dues, and to be a partner in the city's affairs.

The first mention of citizens and burgesses of Canterbury representing the city at Westminster is in 1294-5. The importance of the trade of spicer and the standing that some who dealt in spices attained may be inferred from the fact that in 1304-5 and again in 1307-8 Stephen le Spicer was one of the city's two representatives there. In the two years 1310-12 Edmond le Spicer had this honour and in 1332 he had given place to Richard Spicer.

It is convenient to examine the entries period by period*.

1392-1400 Spicers 3: Goldsmith, 1392, Esscheby, f 1393, Chilton f 1399. (S 5, B-S 1, P 1).

1401-1425 Spicers 6: Payne, Robyn f 1416, Dunkyn, Mason f 1417, Thrift, Baldewyne. Three of these made annual payments for several years. It is likely that John Spicer, named as a trader, was a spicer, for there are many instances where the occupation is given for the first time with the full name: later only the Christian name is repeated with the occupation. (S 2, P 2).

1426-1450 Spicers 1: Grenlef. In this period the first 'apothecary' is named—William Kenet f 1427. He was followed by John Borovere (or Dorovere) f 1446. Borovere is listed as a trader for one year and then purchased his freedom. He may have been a Fleming, many coming

*Note: the year mentioned is the first year in which the name or occupation is recorded; 'f' denotes freeman; 'S' or 'B-S' denotes surgeon or barber-surgeon, and 'P' physician or medicus. The numbers of surgeons, etc. are noted for comparison. For the sake of brevity surnames only are given here in most cases.

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to Canterbury during the fifteenth century. The name of William Chapman, 'triacleman' recurs over some years. (S 1).

1451-1475 Spicers 1: Meryweder. Apothecaries 1: Folvyle f 1452, a freeman by marriage. (S 1, P 8).

1476-1500 After the year 1453 there is no further listing of spicers. The trade now seems to be carried on by apothecaries or by grocers. Apothecaries 4: Bokengham f 1491, Bradbury f 1496, Wyspart f 1500, Rutland (of London) f 1500. (S 1, P 1). There are now more shopkeepers listed, e.g. 'Two men of Sandwich in le Mercery, who occupy two opellas' (shops), and 'Agnex vs (wife of) John Robert, pro shopa sua' (for her shop). More foreign names are recorded and a greater variety of occupations. The entries of broiderer, pointmaker, fruiterer, barber and barbitonsors suggest that life is now more agreeable and that attention is being paid to the finer things of living.

In the first 109 years therefore the totals are as follows: spicers (for 60 years) 11; apothecaries (for 75 years) 15; surgeons 21; barber-surgeons 3; physicians 9.

1501-1525 Accounts for some years are missing. Fewer occupations are noted, possibly the names of newcomers only are given under 'traders'. No new apothecaries are recorded. (S 5, P 2). Pedlars now replace hucksters.

1526-1600 During this period of seventy-five years only eight names of apothecaries are listed: R. Brown f 1529, Young, May f 1545, B. Brown, son of R. Brown f 1563, Chesman f 1564, Wildboore f 1560, Colffe f 1589, Dod f 1592. Either less information was recorded or the rules relating to practice or trading without an annual payment were relaxed; alternatively the accounts were badly kept. In the second half of the century there was an influx of foreigners into Canterbury. This was largely accounted for by the number of Walloons who had fled from the Spanish Netherlands in consequence of the persecution by the Duke of Alva. Many weavers came to Canterbury and they, with others, brought new life and vigour to the city which had entered into a period of decay after the dissolution of the monasteries. These newcomers had licence to trade and Queen Elizabeth I gave them a place in the Undercroft of Canterbury Cathedral for worship in 1568. Subsequently weaving became the largest single industry of the city, so much so that by 1665 there were almost 1300 workers.

When we come to the seventeenth century we find a considerable increase in the number of apothecaries during each decade and by comparison with earlier years a large increase in the number of barber-surgeons. For the whole of this century 30 apothecaries took up their freedom; 9 by birth, 1 by marriage, 18 by apprenticeship, and 2 by redemption. During the same period there are recorded 14 surgeons, 16 barber-surgeons but few physicians. Most of the surgeons and barber-surgeons obtained their freedom by apprenticeship though a few, probably newcomers to the city, obtained theirs by marrying daughters of freemen.

In the eighteenth century the numbers of apothecaries are: 1st quarter 14; 2nd quarter 18; 3rd quarter 10, including 2 surgeon-apothecaries, the description being used for the first time in 1755; 4th quarter 5, of whom 4 were surgeon-apothecaries. It is the last quarter of this century that changes in description to chemist, druggist, or chemist and druggist were first used. The four persons described as chemists and

druggists are: John Littlewood f 1771, William Keene f 1779, William Bates f 1781, and Edward Goldfinch f 1794; Clough Lees f 1793 was a chemist, and Samuel Thornton (of Ashford, Kent), a druggist who took up his freedom in 1800. The total for the century was 53 apothecaries and chemists, etc. compared with 35 surgeons and barber-surgeons and physicians. The population of Canterbury in 1770 was about 9000, of whom more than half lived within the city walls.

From the bare bones of these lists of traders and freemen a direct connection can be established for well over a century through those apothecaries who took up their freedom by apprenticeship. Thus George Young who had been apprenticed to Thomas Browne, became a freeman in 1682; Avery Hills, app. to Young f 1634; Israel Jacob, app. to Hills f 1649; Thos Smith, app. to Jacob f 1668; George Hall, app. to Smith f 1692; Hall's son, Samuel, app. to his father f 1727. Other groups can be similarly traced. It would be interesting to know whether and for how long these apothecaries' businesses were carried on in the same premises and their ultimate fate. Several apothecaries served their city as aldermen, some as mayors: as aldermen—William Rutlond, 1529; James Frenchman, 1600; Joseph Colffe, c. 1610; Avery Hills, 1663; Anthony Oughton, 1722; and as mayors, Colffe and Hills.

Hasted in his *History of Kent* records a number of memorials in Canterbury churches to leading apothecaries, e.g. to Joseph Colffe, d. 1620, a wall monument with arms in St. Mary Breadman's; to Thomas Dunkin, a churchwarden of St. Alphage's, who gave the third bell in 1664; to Anthony Oughton, 'descended from an ancient family of that name in Warwickshire . . . lived in the city 66 years', d. 1750, aged eighty-seven, a mural with arms in St. Margaret's; to Charles Knowler, d. 1750 aged seventy, in St. Alphage's; to Benjamin Chandler (apprenticed to Knowler), d. 1778, aged sixty-eight, in St. Mary Magdalene's; etc.

No attempt has been made to relate the number of apothecaries practising at any one time to the population, indeed it would not be possible to do so from these two lists. No addresses are given, save in some instances the name of the ward of the city is recorded. It is hoped that the information in this summary form will serve to stimulate others to examine similar lists of freemen, etc. and in the case of Canterbury, to go more deeply into this aspect of pharmaceutical history.

BOOKS CONSULTED:

COWPER, J. M., *The Roll of the Freemen of the City of Canterbury, from A.D. 1392 to 1800*, Canterbury, privately printed, 1903.

— *Intrantes: A List of Persons admitted to Live and Trade within the City of Canterbury, from 1392 to 1592*, Canterbury, privately printed, 1904.

HASTED, EDWARD, *The History and Topographical Scenery of the County of Kent*, Canterbury, 1799, vol. iv, pp. 388 *et seq.*

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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE HISTORY OF PHARMACY

THE International Congress of the History of Pharmacy, organized by the International Society of the History of Pharmacy and Académie Internationale d'Histoire de la Pharmacie, will take place in London from 1 to 8 September 1965. Meetings will be held at the School of Pharmacy, 29/30 Brunswick Square, W.C.1, and the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 17 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1. Canterbury Hall, a hall of residence of London University, has been taken over for the week for