

THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE.  
FOUNDATION

The growth of interest in the history of medicine in Britain in the last five years is generally acknowledged to be a result of the establishment of the Faculty of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Society of Apothecaries of London. Although this has had considerable success in its efforts to co-ordinate the activities of the societies already in existence and to enrol the support of the corporations and universities, the position of the United Kingdom with regard to international co-operation in this field has remained an unsatisfactory one for want of a single national body to represent British interests abroad. This has affected especially the representation of the United Kingdom in the International Society for the History of Medicine (founded in 1921) which is responsible for organizing the International Congresses of the History of Medicine and for relations with other international bodies. It therefore may be seen as a logical conclusion of the Faculty's integrating task that it should have taken the initiative in obtaining the co-operation of the other important bodies concerned with the subject in Britain—the Scottish Society for the History of Medicine, the Royal Society of Medicine (Section of the History of Medicine) and the Osler Club of London—in the foundation of a *British Society for the History of Medicine*.

The founding committee comprised the following:

Dr. W. S. C. Copeman and Dr. F. N. L. Poynter of the Faculty of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy.

Dr. Douglas Guthrie and Dr. H. Tait of the Scottish Society for the History of Medicine.

Dr. K. D. Keele and Dr. E. Clarke of the Royal Society of Medicine (Section of the History of Medicine).

Dr. Charles Newman and Dr. D. Geraint James of the Osler Club of London.

This committee held its first meeting at the Royal Society of Medicine on Wednesday, 2 June 1965, when the following Constitution was adopted:

1. The chief object of the British Society for the History of Medicine is to represent on a national scale the various societies and groups active in the history of medicine within the United Kingdom. This representation applies especially to the International Society for the History of Medicine, the Permanent Committee of which is composed of National Delegates from all countries and from which the Executive Bureau of the Society is elected.
2. The Society, as the national body concerned with the history of medicine, shall promote, organize, or sponsor, when desirable, functions on a national scale, co-operate with other national bodies with related interests (e.g. The British Society for the History of Science), seek representation on any international bodies or committees where its interests may be involved, or (in conjunction with the Faculty of the History of Medicine and Pharmacy) on national committees appointed to consider matters touching on study, teaching, or research in the history of medicine.
3. The British Society shall consist of federal members (the constituent societies and groups) as well as individual members.
4. Its affairs shall be governed by a committee of representatives nominated by the

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four founding bodies. From their number shall be elected a president, two vice-presidents, an honorary secretary, an assistant honorary secretary, and a treasurer. The Committee may co-opt additional members and may elect a third vice-president from members co-opted. It may also elect not more than two honorary presidents; these shall not be members of the committee and their term shall be unrestricted.

5. The Committee shall appoint from its members a National Delegate, a deputy or alternate delegate, and a reporter for the International Society for the History of Medicine. The Delegate (or his deputy) will represent the interests of the British Society on the International Committee. The duties of the reporter are (a) to inform the Secretary-General of the International Society of the more important functions and activities connected with the history of medicine in Britain, and at which the International Society may wish to be represented; and (b) to inform the Committee of the British Society of important functions of an international character at which the British Society may wish to be represented.
6. The term of office of the committee shall be two years, but the honorary secretaries shall serve for three years. Officers may not be re-elected to the same office but may be elected to a different office. The president shall always be nominated from the two (or three) vice-presidents. The retiring president shall occupy the vice-presidency thus vacated for two years and shall, when a vacancy arises, be elected to an honorary presidency.
7. The official journal of the Society shall be *Medical History* and the president and vice-presidents shall be ex officio members of its Editorial Board.
8. The funds of the Society shall be provided by a block subscription from federal members, and by subscriptions of £3 a year from individual members, which will cover the official journal, *Medical History*. Membership is open only to British nationals.
9. These statutes may be amended at any time provided that three months' notice in writing is given to each member of the committee and that, when put to the vote, the proposed revision is approved by two-thirds of the committee.

The following officers were then elected:

President:

Honorary Presidents:

Vice-Presidents:

Honorary Secretary:

Assistant Honorary Secretary:

Honorary Treasurer:

National Delegate to S.I.H.M.:

Deputy National Delegate to S.I.H.M.:

Reporter to S.I.H.M.:

Representative of the British Society for  
the History of Science:

Society's representative on Council of

British Society for the History of Science:

Dr. Douglas Guthrie, 1965-7

Sir Zachary Cope

Sir Arthur MacNalty

Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, 1965-7

(by co-option)

Dr. W. S. C. Copeman, 1965-7

Dr. K. D. Keele, 1965-7

Dr. F. N. L. Poynter, 1965-8

Dr. Edwin Clarke, 1965-8

Dr. Charles Newman, 1965-7

Dr. F. N. L. Poynter

Dr. D. Geraint James

Dr. Edwin Clarke

Dr. Alistair Crombie

Dr. W. S. C. Copeman