

News, Notes and Queries

CEREMONY IN HONOUR OF DR. MARC DAX AND DR. GUSTAVE DAX

ON 12 June 1966, there took place in the little township of Sommières near Montpellier, an interesting ceremony in honour of Dr. Marc Dax (1770–1837) and his son Dr. Gustave Dax (1815–1893). The former was the first to draw attention, in 1836, to the greater importance of the left cerebral hemisphere as regards the faculty of language. A considerable congregation of notables, medical and otherwise, assembled under the auspices of the Maire of Sommières, Dr. R. André. Professor Alajouanine of Paris unveiled a plaque over the house where the younger Dr. Dax was born, while Dr. Macdonald Critchley in his capacity as President of the World Federation of Neurology, unveiled a tablet in the market square now renamed 'Le Place des deux Docteurs Dax'. Among the many well-known persons in attendance were Professor Euzière, Honorary Dean, and Professor Benezech, Dean, of the Faculty of Medicine of Montpellier; Professor Passouant of Montpellier who instigated and organized the ceremony; Dr. Fergus Ferguson (Manchester); Professor Romieu, President of the Medical Historical Society of Montpellier; and Professor F. Lhermitte of Paris.

THE LISTER CENTENARY CONFERENCE. LONDON, APRIL 1967

Patron: H. M. The Queen

Chairman: The Rt. Hon. The Lord Brock of Wimbledon, M.S., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S.

A Conference will be held between *2nd and 6th April, 1967 at the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, to commemorate the beginning of a revolution in Surgery. In March and April 1867, Lord Lister's first reports on the antiseptic technique were published and so presented to the world. Before this, surgery was precarious and its scope limited, and it was through the understanding of the cause of sepsis that modern surgery was born.

The Conference is being organized by the Royal College of Surgeons of England, in association with: The Royal Society; The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; The University of Edinburgh; The University of Glasgow; The University of London; University College Hospital; King's College Hospital; The Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine; The Wellcome Trust; The Ciba Foundation.

The programme will begin with the historical background to Lister's life and work and will include a Symposium entitled 'SAFE SURGERY'. Speakers and guests are being invited from many parts of the world, including Denmark, France, Germany and Russia, countries which were among the first to recognize the importance of Lister's work. A special exhibition will demonstrate the significance of Lister's achievement, both in his own time and today.

THE HEALTH SCIENCES HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Health Sciences Historical Society of British Columbia has been formed. Its objects are to provide a forum for expression of interest and to promote the study of the history of the sciences dealing with human health.

Those mainly responsible for the stimulus to constitute the Society were the Professor of the History of Medicine and Science in the University of British Columbia (Professor William C. Gibson) and the honorary lecturers in his department. With this support, the constitution of the Society has been designed to encourage the widest possible opportunity for participation in active and associate membership by all individuals concerned with the health sciences in British Columbia.

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Active members shall be elected from students and graduates of recognized Faculties of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy and Schools of Nursing and Rehabilitation Medicine practising in British Columbia. Associate members shall be elected from other individuals interested in the history of the health sciences. A Patron and Friends may be elected from persons who are in sympathy with the objects of the Society.

It is the intention of the members of the Society to encourage and co-operate with other science-orientated historical societies. An important object of the Society is the promotion of informal meetings between undergraduate students and graduates in all the health sciences.

The President of the British Columbia Medical Association has expressed enthusiastic support of the objects of the Society and has accepted an invitation to election as an honorary member. Applications for election to active and associate Membership are invited and further information and a copy of the constitution and by-laws of the Society may be obtained from the Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. S. W. A. Gunn, 750 West Broadway, Vancouver 9, B.C.

The first annual meeting of the Society will be planned as a dinner meeting to be held at the Faculty Club, University of British Columbia in the autumn of 1966.

THE OSLER CLUB

The Annual Dinner of the Osler Club was held in the Osler Room of the Royal College of Physicians on Tuesday 12 July 1966, being attended by a large number of members and guests. The Oslerian Oration (to be published in the next issue of *Medical History*) was given by Professor Charles Coury, Professor of the History of Medicine in the University of Paris, the theme being *Osler and French Medicine*. After the publication of so many books and papers about Osler and after so many Oslerian Orations (few of which have in fact dealt with Osler) it was an unexpected pleasure to have new aspects of Osler's activities presented on such an occasion. What clearly delighted the large audience even more was the elegant English style and superb delivery of the Orator who enjoyed a well-deserved personal triumph. Among the distinguished guests at the dinner was H.E. the American Ambassador in London, Mr. John Bruce. In a witty and graceful speech he recalled that the previous Oslerian Oration had been given by Dr. Martin Cummings, Director of the National Library of Medicine in Washington, on the theme *Books, Computers and Medicine* (see *Medical History* 1966, 10, 130–137) based on some correspondence with Osler found in the Library's archives. Mr. Bruce declared that it was his pleasure, on behalf of the United States Government, to present these letters to the Osler Club of London for its own collection of Osleriana and modestly regretted that there were not more of them and that they were not longer. In accepting this important gift on behalf of the Osler Club, the President, Dr. Noël Poynter, justly reminded His Excellency and the audience that it was quality and not quantity that was important to Osler when he was building up his own collections and these letters were of the greatest significance. They were concerned with what has often been called 'America's greatest gift to Medicine'—the great Index-Catalog of the Surgeon-General's Library. This gift was another example of American generosity for which the Osler Club sincerely thanked the United States government.