

JOHN ADDENBROOKE M.D. (1680–1719)

by

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WHEN A PUBLIC benefactor is neither a well-known local or national figure nor the subject of contemporary writings, an eponymous benefaction may be his only memorial. Such is the case of John Addenbrooke, who founded the hospital at Cambridge which bears his name. He spent a third of his short life of thirty-nine years in residence at Catharine Hall (now St. Catharine's College) of which he became a Scholar, Fellow, Tutor, and Bursar but attracted no particular attention. After proceeding to the degree of M.D. in 1710, he left Cambridge to practise in London but, a few years later, ill health caused him to retire to Buntingford in Hertfordshire where he died in 1719. His intention to found a hospital in Cambridge for poor people was only disclosed by his will, and it did not open until Monday, 13 October 1766, some forty-seven years after his death and fifty-five years since he had left Cambridge. It is, therefore, scarcely surprising that contemporary information about him is scanty and, by the time that his hospital opened, few people in Cambridge would have known or remembered him. The year 1980, as the tercentenary of his birth, seemed an appropriate opportunity to research and eventually to publish what is known of him and of his education as a medical student at Cambridge during the years 1697 to 1706. Much of this is owed to the researches of A. W. Langford, which are embodied in a thesis for the degree of M.D. of Cambridge University in 1934 and also excerpted in the *St. Catharine's Society* magazine,¹ and to the memoirs of the Reverend William Stukeley,² a contemporary medical student and friend of John Addenbrooke, and to those of the antiquary the Reverend William Cole, whose papers are in the British Library.³

John Addenbrooke was the only child of the Reverend Samuel Addenbrooke, Vicar of West Bromwich in Staffordshire, and his wife Matilda Porry of Wolverhampton. He was born at Kingswinford (Swinford Regis) in Staffordshire, as recorded on his tombstone in St. Catharine's College Chapel (Fig. 1). The exact date of his birth is

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¹ A. W. Langford, 'John Addenbrooke, Pensioner, Fellow, Lecturer and Bursar of Catharine Hall and Doctor of Medicine', *St. Catharine's Society Magazine*, September 1935, pp. 43–51, September 1936, pp. 36–45, September 1937, pp. 61–66.

² William Stukeley, *The family memoirs and the antiquarian and other correspondence*. London, Surtees Society, Whittaker, Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh, William Blackwood, 1882, pp. 20–43.

³ William Cole, Add. MSS, 6402.72, British Library.

unknown, although his baptism was registered on 13 June 1681 at the parish church of West Bromwich. Nothing is known of Addenbrooke's early life and schooling before his admission as a pensioner at Catharine Hall on 13 December 1697. The society was small, comprising the Master, Fellows, Fellow-Commoners, Pensioners, and Sizar, to a total of about forty.⁴ After the death of the Master, John Eachard, in 1697, the Reverend Peter Fisher D.D., a Fellow of Catharine Hall, was elected Master on 12 July 1697 but he resigned on 11 August and so was never admitted. Consequently, Sir William Dawes Bt., who had entered Catharine Hall as a Fellow-Commoner in 1689, was admitted as Master on 18 August, 1697, after William III had given power to elect a Master who was below the age of thirty. Dawes subsequently became Bishop of Chester in 1707 and Archbishop of York in 1713. He died in 1724 from inflammation of the bowels and was buried in the College Chapel.⁵ Addenbrooke's tutor was John Leng (1665–1727), who had entered Catharine Hall in 1683, was elected a Fellow in 1688, and graduated B.D. in 1698 and D.D. in 1716.⁶ He was a staunch Whig, a popular tutor, and a distinguished Latin scholar. He delivered Boyle lectures in 1717 and 1718 on 'The natural obligations to believe the principles of religion and divine revelations'. He was Chaplain-in-Ordinary to George I and was appointed Bishop of Norwich in 1723. He died of smallpox, said to have been contracted at the coronation of George II, and was buried in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster.

Under the ancient statutes of the University, a medical student was required to take an Arts degree before entering upon medical studies. This requirement was removed by the Elizabethan statutes of 1570, which permitted students to start medical work as soon as they came into residence. By the end of the seventeenth century, most intending medical students took the M.B. as their first degree after six years' residence and, after a further five years, they could proceed to the M.D., but many never did so. On the other hand, some students still took a B.A., and often an M.A., before starting medical studies. A survey from the University Grace books showed that of the 141 men who matriculated during the two decades 1690–1709 and subsequently graduated in, or practised medicine, eighteen followed the latter course, including John Addenbrooke. Some may not have decided upon a medical career until they had been at Cambridge for some time, and others may have found it necessary to take an Arts degree to conform to the requirements of scholarships. But eighty-one of the students matriculating during the same two decades took the M.B. as their first degree, and the great majority resided for the statutory six years, although a few kept five years and a few seven years or longer.

It is probable that Addenbrooke had intended to enter the Church and it is not known when he decided to study medicine. He was the first member of his family to do so, which suggests that Cambridge influences swayed him more than his family traditions, which were strongly clerical. In his first years he would have attended the pre-

⁴ Langford, *op. cit.*, note 1 above, September 1935, p. 47.

⁵ W. H. S. Jones, *A history of St. Catharine's College, once Catharine Hall, Cambridge*, Cambridge University Press, 1936, pp. 110, 111.

⁶ J. Venn and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 2 pts, Cambridge University Press, 1924, pt. 1, vol. 3, p. 74.

scribed course for an Arts degree which included studies in classics, ethics, logic, metaphysics, divinity, mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy. He held scholarships to the value of thirty shillings per quarter during the years 1702, 1703, and 1704, and was a graduate during the latter two years, having become a B.A. in 1701–2 and M.A. in 1704, when he was elected a Fellow of Catharine Hall. At this stage he would have commenced his medical studies, such as they were. The University provided little or no instruction, and Winstanley⁷ quoted the University Calendar for 1702 as follows: “A student of medicine in this University is not required to attend any lectures but is left to acquire his knowledge from such sources as his discretion may point out.” Rolleston,⁸ writing in 1932, described the eighteenth century as “the most stagnant of the last four centuries of Cambridge medicine”; for the successive Regius Professors of Physic from 1636 to 1793, namely Francis Glisson, Robert Brady, Christopher Green, and Russell Plumptre, never lectured regularly, and Glisson, the most distinguished of them, was a virtual absentee from Cambridge. It is true that the University did not appoint professors of anatomy, chemistry, and botany until the early years of the eighteenth century and then only to replace private lecturers who had been given titular chairs after many years of teaching. But there were undoubted indications of increasing interest in natural sciences and, whether the Regius Professors of Physic lectured or not, no less than 141 students who matriculated during 1690–1709 graduated in, or practised medicine, as mentioned above. At least five of those who, to the best of our knowledge, had no medical education outside Cambridge, distinguished themselves later in London. Thus John Hollings M.D. (Magd.)⁹ became Physician-General to the Army, Physician-in-Ordinary to King George II, and Harveian orator at the College of Physicians in 1734. William Rutt M.D. (Christ’s)¹⁰ became a Censor at the College of Physicians and gave the Goulstonian lectures in 1722 on the anatomy and diseases of the urinary organs; he was elected F.R.S. in 1720 and Secretary of the Royal Society in 1727. Richard Tyson M.D. (Fellow of Pembroke Hall)¹¹ became a Censor at the College of Physicians five times between 1718 and 1737, Registrar in 1723–25, Treasurer 1734–46, Harveian orator in 1725, and President in 1746–49. Sir Edward Hulse M.D. (Emm.)¹² was Physician-in-Ordinary to Queen Anne and King George II, and was created a baronet in 1739. Henry Plumptre M.D., F.R.S. (Queens’)¹³ became Physician to St. Thomas’s Hospital in 1718 and President of the Royal College of Physicians in 1740–45. In addition, thirteen medical students migrated from Oxford to Cambridge in the two decades 1690–1709; seven had taken a B.A. at Oxford, and the remainder had kept

⁷ D. A. Winstanley, *Unreformed Cambridge, a study of the University in the eighteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, 1935, p. 61.

⁸ Sir H. D. Rolleston, *The Cambridge Medical School, a biographical history*, Cambridge University Press, 1932, p. 17.

⁹ William Munk, *The roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 5 vols., London, Royal College of Physicians, 1888, vol. 2, p. 94.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

from two to twelve terms there without taking a degree. Most of them took the Cambridge M.B. after one to three years' residence and must therefore have started their medical studies at Oxford; but some spent five or more years at Cambridge. The foregoing evidence neither suggests that Cambridge medical teaching was non-existent, nor does it warrant disparagement of what there was, particularly as more may have been available than has been assumed.

All accounts of the early eighteenth-century medical teaching are based largely on the memoirs of William Stukeley (1687–1765), written in his old age after a distinguished medical career followed by ordination and the living of All Saints and St. Peter's at Stamford. The accounts, which mention Dr. Addenbrooke as a contemporary medical student, are no doubt accurate enough but may assume that readers would be aware that basic teaching of medicine from the traditional texts was systematically given and that private teaching supplemented it. Moreover, several colleges had medical fellows who practised and might also have provided teaching and guidance during the years in question. For instance, at the request of Stukeley's own tutor in Bene't College, Henry Plumtre M.D., F.R.S., then a Fellow of Queens' College, acted as Stukeley's Director of Studies in physic until 1707, when he moved to London and, as mentioned above, became physician to St. Thomas's Hospital and President of the Royal College of Physicians. Stukeley also mentions that he was acquainted with Dr. Craske M.D.,¹⁴ a Fellow of Caius who practised in Cambridge, and that he himself "visited the apothecary's shop to make myself perfect in the knowledge of drugs and official compositions". Of the private lecturers, James Keill (1673–1719),¹⁵ who practised medicine at Northampton, had lectured on anatomy both at Oxford and Cambridge before 1700. In 1698 he published his popular compendium *The anatomy of the humane body abridg'd*, and on 16 April 1705 the University conferred upon him the honorary degree of M.D. (Com. Reg.)¹⁶ when Queen Anne visited Cambridge. Keill had also repeated the observations of Sanctorius on variations of body weight from insensible perspiration and other causes, which were published under the title *Medicina statica Britannica* as an appendix to John Quincy's *Medicina statica* of 1723. He also applied a proposition from Newton's *Principia* to the calculation of blood velocity through the aorta and arteries. He was elected F.R.S. in 1712, sponsored by his friend Sir Hans Sloane.

Another private anatomist was George Rolfe M.D.,¹⁷ upon whom the University conferred the title of Professor of Anatomy in 1707; he had taught in London and Cambridge for some years, but in 1728 he was deprived of his chair "for continued absence for several years from his office". Perhaps the best known private lecturer was John Francis Vigani (1650?–1713),¹⁸ a native of Verona who came to Cambridge

¹⁴ John Venn, *Biographical history of Gonville and Caius College*, 7 vols., Cambridge University Press, 1897, vol. 1, p. 483.

¹⁵ F. M. Valadez and C. D. O'Malley, 'James Keill of Northampton, physician, anatomist and physiologist', *Med. Hist.*, 1971, 15: 317–335.

¹⁶ Venn and Venn, *op. cit.*, note 6 above, pt. 1, vol. 3, p. 3.

¹⁷ Rolleston, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 57.

¹⁸ L. J. M. Coleby, 'John Francis Vigani', *Ann. Sci.*, 1952, 8: 46–60.

about 1683 to teach chemistry. He had published his *Medulla chymiae, variis experimentis aucta, multisque; figuris illustrata* in London in 1683. He resided for a time at Catharine Hall, possibly as the guest of John Eachard, the Master, “whose note books contain many medical prescriptions and more or less accurate information about the power of drugs and herbs”,¹⁹ and who was an amateur physician.²⁰ Vigani later had a laboratory at Queens’ College and in February 1703 he was granted the title of Professor of Chemistry by the University in recognition of twenty years’ successful teaching.²¹ Abraham de la Pryme, an undergraduate of St. John’s College, records that in 1692, “I went on a course of chymistry with Seignior Johannes Franciscus Vigani, a very learned chemist and a great traveller, but a drunken fellow. Yet by reason of the abstruseness of the art I got little or no good thereby”.²² In 1707, Vigani was provided with a laboratory in Trinity College in which his friend Stephen Hales (1677–1761)²³ recalls repeating an experiment of Boyle’s on the distillation of mercury.²⁴ Vigani also lectured on materia medica and formed a collection of some 600 specimens, the cost of which was met by Queens’ College where the cabinet can still be seen. The contents, together with the collections of John Addenbrooke in St. Catharine’s College (p. 175) and of William Heberden in St. John’s, are described by E. Saville Peck,²⁵ a well-known Cambridge pharmacist in the early twentieth century. Vigani ceased teaching in Cambridge about 1708 and died at Newark-on-Trent on 26 February 1713. Stukeley, in his medical student years from 1703 to 1707, had attended Vigani’s lectures having “turned my mind particularly to the study of physic and in order thereto, began to make a diligent and near inquisition into Anatomy and Botany”.²⁶ This he did

in consort with Hobart, a senior lad of our college . . . since dead. With him I went frequently a simpling, and began to steal dogs and dissect them and all sorts of animals that came our way. We saw too, many philosophical Experiments in Pneumatic Hydrostatic Engines and instruments performed at that time by Mr [John] Waller, after parson of Grantchester, where he dy’d last year, beeing professor of chymistry, and the doctrine of Optics and Telescopes and Microscopes and some Chymical Experiments with Mr Stephen Hales, then Fellow of the College [Bene’t], now of the Royal Society. I contracted acquaintance with all the Lads (and them only) in the University that studyd Physic, and Swallow²⁷ of Pembroke who took his Batchelor of physic degree while I was there and since practised near or at Bp. Stortford, now dead; Child²⁸ of Magdalen who now practises at Lavenham Suffolk, and Parry Humphry²⁹ who both took the same degree, the latter now lives in North Wales; Joseph Sparkes³⁰ of St.

¹⁹ Jones, op. cit., note 5 above, p. 103.

²⁰ A. H. T. Robb Smith, ‘Medicine in seventeenth century Cambridge’, in Allen G. Debus (editor), *Medicine in seventeenth century England*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 1974, p. 353.

²¹ Cambridge University Grace book *theta*, p. 490.

²² *The diary of Abraham de la Pryme, the Yorkshire antiquary*, Edinburgh, Surtees Society, 1869, vol. 64, pp. 24–25.

²³ A. E. Clark-Kennedy, *Stephen Hales, DD, FRS*, Cambridge University Press, 1929.

²⁴ Stephen Hales, *Vegetable staticks or an account of some statical experiments on the sap in vegetables*, London, Innys & Woodward, 1727, pp. 194–195.

²⁵ E. Saville Peck, ‘Three early materia medica cabinets in Cambridge’, *Med. Illust.*, 1953, 7: 122–129.

²⁶ Stukeley, op. cit., note 2 above, p. 53.

²⁷ Venn and Venn, op. cit., note 6 above, pt. 1, vol. 4, p. 189.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, vol. 1, p. 333.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, vol. 3, p. 314.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, vol. 4, p. 128.

John's, who now lives at Peterburgh; Henry Stebbing³¹ of Katherin Hall, who since took Orders, and has signalled himself agt the Bp. of Bangor; Kitchener³² of Queen's College, since dead; Dr Ashenhurst,³³ now living in Trinity College; Dr Addenbrook, now dead. I was acquainted with Dr Crask,³⁴ since dead at Bury St. Edmonds. With these I used to range about once or twice a week the circumjacent country, and search the Gravel and Chalk pits for fossils. Gogmagog hills, the Moors about Cherry Hinton, Grantchester, Trumpington, Madingley Woods, Hill of health, Chesterton, Barnwell, were frequent scenes of our simpling toyl, armed with candleboxes and Ray's Catalogues.³⁵ We hunted after butterflies, dissected frogs, used to have set meetings at our chambers, to confer about our studies, try chymical experiments, cut up dogs, cats and the like.

Stukeley's tutor also gave him a room in college for his dissections and chemical experiments, where he made sal volatile oleosum, tinctura metallorum and Elixir Proprietatis which he distributed to his tutors and Fellows. He also practised gratis while still a student "among the poor people that depended upon the college and such lads as would trust themselves to my care".³⁶

Whether John Addenbrooke also practised in this way is unknown, but it was a usual custom. He qualified by gaining admission as an Extra-Licentiate of the College of Physicians on 8 September 1706, which enabled him to practise outside a seven-mile limit round London. As was the custom, his address was registered as that of his old home at West Bromwich. "The extra-licentiates of the College were altogether less strictly scrutinized than the London physicians. Their licences cost them £11 15s 6d or thereabouts, with the expenses of a journey to London. But very few took the trouble to apply."³⁷ Addenbrooke did not take the examinations for either the Cambridge M.L. (University Licence to practise medicine) or the M.B. degree, but proceeded directly to the M.D. in 1710. This unusual course was suggested by Langford³⁸ as possibly being due to Addenbrooke's status as an M.A. and Fellow of his college, which had exempted him from the lower examinations, but we are unaware of other examples. Nevertheless, Addenbrooke was certainly in a special position with regard to his Fellowship at Catharine Hall, upon which Jones comments as follows: "An interesting point in his career is that prior to 1860 he is the only Fellow to take the medical course at Cambridge. The Founder permitted his Fellows to study [for a degree] only philosophy and sacred theology; the Edwardian statutes added 'the Arts' but not until 1860 was it strictly legal for a Fellow to study medicine. It is perhaps significant that Addenbrooke ceased to be a Fellow in the year following his taking the degree of MD."³⁹

This comment, which was not available to Langford in 1934, may explain why

³¹ Ibid., pt. 1, vol. 4, p. 153.

³² Ibid., pt. 1, vol. 3, p. 26.

³³ Ibid., pt. 1, vol. 1, p. 45.

³⁴ Venn, op. cit., note 14 above.

³⁵ John Wray or Ray, F.R.S. (1627–1705), Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, published his *Catalogus plantarum circa Cantabrigian nascentium* in 1660 with appendices in 1663 and 1685. He published his *Catalogus plantarum Angliae* in 1670, systematized as *Synopsis methodia stirpium Britannicarum* in 1690.

³⁶ Stukeley, op. cit., note 2 above, pp. 33, 39, 40.

³⁷ Sir George Clark, *A history of the Royal College of Physicians of London*, 3 vols. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966, vol. 2, p. 519.

³⁸ Langford, op. cit., note 1 above, September 1937, p. 62.

³⁹ Jones, op. cit., note 5 above, p. 174.

Addenbrooke did not take the Cambridge M.L. or M.B. examinations but qualified to practise medicine by the relatively obscure licence from the College of Physicians under the address of his old home. He could thus practise legally in Cambridge without infringing his Fellowship regulations, and it is also possible that his marriage allowed him to resign his Fellowship and go out of residence without reference to his taking the M.D. degree. There is also a tradition in his family that Addenbrooke was granted the M.D. of Caen University in 1712, when it was merely a degree-giving institution. But the records at Caen have not survived and the matter cannot be confirmed. If the date is correct, it is hard to see what advantage the Caen degree could give him which had not already been provided by the Cambridge M.D. in particular, the authorization to practise in London.

Addenbrooke married Miss Susan Fisher about 1710 but they had no issue. Her father, the Rector of Benington in Hertfordshire, had been elected Master of Catharine Hall in 1697 but resigned before admission (p. 170). Addenbrooke had evidently been particularly interested in materia medica, possibly from Vigani's influence, and he lectured on the subject in Catharine Hall from 1705 before he qualified to practise medicine. He amassed a large collection of specimens which he presented to the college library, where the medicine chest can still be seen. In 1730, Richard Bradley F.R.S., the first Professor of Botany (1724–1732), published his course of lectures "based upon the collections of Dr Attinbroke [*sic*] and Signor Vigani deposited in Catharine Hall and Queens' College." Peck⁴⁰ suggests that the medicine chest was presented some years before Addenbrooke's death because of an undated entry in the Catharine Hall Stewards' account book of 1705–16 which reads: "Library Account: Given to Dr Addenbrooke's man for bringing ye Materia Medica presented by ye doctor his master to ye library, 00.5.0". Peck describes the chest as made of deal in the shape of a modern flat-topped writing desk with a knee-hole in the middle and drawers all down both sides and at the back of the recess. Each of some twenty drawers is divided into small compartments about three inches square and two to three inches deep. The best parts of the collection are in the drawers for gums, rosin, roots and rhizomes, barks, woods, and seeds; some having been labelled by Addenbrooke himself. The collection was up-to-date with recent drugs such as cinchona bark or *Cortex Peruviana*, introduced into Europe in 1638, and coffee berries which had become fashionable for a beverage in 1680, although considered to be useless for nourishment or debauchery. Other seventeenth-century drugs included jalap, serpentaria or Virginian snake root brought from America, calumba, mandragora, and cantharides. There was also a specimen of *Lapis nephriticus*, a grey stone, fat and oily like Venetian talc, which was said to disperse urinary stones or gravel if hung on the thigh, neck, or arm of the patient. Addenbrooke also gave a number of books to the college library, including the classical texts of Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, and Aretaeus, the works of seventeenth-century authors such as Theophile Bonet, Van Helmont, Boyle, Fernel, and Bartholin. Later works included those of Turquet de Mayerne (1701), Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1702), and

⁴⁰ Peck, *op. cit.*, note 25 above, pp. 126–127.

Walter Harris's *De morbis acutis infantum* (1705). They suggest a broad catholic approach to medicine, but some obvious gaps may be explained by books which Addenbrooke took with him to London.

He had been Bursar of Catharine Hall for one year from November 1709, and had acted as a Tutor for seven years, but only had seven pupils, two of whom were relatives, one of them being his cousin John Addenbrooke, a future Fellow, Bursar, and Dean of Lichfield. It had always been a matter of conjecture that Addenbrooke practised medicine in Cambridge after he left Catharine Hall in 1711. But the discovery of a letter⁴¹ dated 18 July 1771 from the Dean of Lichfield (see above) to Professor Charles Collignon⁴² established that he had settled in practice in London in 1711 or 1712, but in which part and with what success was unknown. In 1714, Addenbrooke published his only known or surviving literary work, namely *A short essay upon free-thinking*, a tract of sixteen pages, price three pence. Addenbrooke's tutor, John Leng, had been a vigorous controversialist in the Whig cause, as had Benjamin Hoadly, later Bishop of Bangor and of other dioceses, also Leng's pupil and a Fellow of Catharine Hall from 1697 to 1701. Addenbrooke's tract is almost incomprehensible. It was obviously written with strong convictions so that the philosophical argument is tortuous and obscure. However, it is of interest that he equates opposition to free-thinking with anti-clericalism, unlike the majority of Whig anti-clericals of the period.

Three of his autograph letters survive. One, in the Library of the Wellcome Institute, is dated "Aug. 25th 1715" and addressed to "Dr [Edmund] Waller Fell.[ow] of St. John's Coll[ege], Cambridge";⁴³ it reads:

Dear Sir, I recd yours of the 7th curr. I cannot give you a great deal of cases as to purging in the small pox at the time you mention, but I know it is done often with success by the best Physicians. Your brother in town has at last a child which I suppose you have heard. I cannot make him a good neighbour to me as to practise for my life, though he has it much in his power his acquaintance lying all round me. I hear Dr Tyson designs to stick with you, pray let me know if he gets any business. My humble service to all my friends is all at present from, Dear Sirs, your most devoted servant J. Addenbrooke.

Another letter, dated 4 August 1716, written to an apothecary, was presented to Addenbrooke's Hospital by (then) Mr Maynard Keynes C.B. (Fig. 2). It concerns the treatment of a patient with a probable ulcer in the rectum, but it also contains remarks about a doctor with a stone in the bladder and it is not clear whether the letter concerns one or two patients. The third letter, presented to the Hospital by Addenbrooke's family, deals with a supposed breach of professional etiquette by a colleague, so far as the wording can be understood; but the style is so obscure that the meaning of the letter is far from clear. Nevertheless, the letters show that Addenbrooke was practising at least until August 1716 but, at some time before 1719, he was forced by ill health to leave London and retire to a house named Littlecourt⁴⁴ at Buntingford in

⁴¹ John Addenbrooke, Dean of Lichfield, quoted by Langford, *op. cit.*, note 1 above, September 1937, p. 62.

⁴² Arthur Rook, 'Charles Collignon (1725–1785): Cambridge physician, anatomist and moralist', *Med. Hist.*, 1979, 23: 339–345.

⁴³ Venn and Venn, *op. cit.*, note 6 above, pt. 1, vol. 4, p. 321.

⁴⁴ We are grateful to Peter Walne Esq., County Archivist of Hertfordshire for information that the house



Figure 1. The tomb of John Addenbrooke in the Chapel of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge.

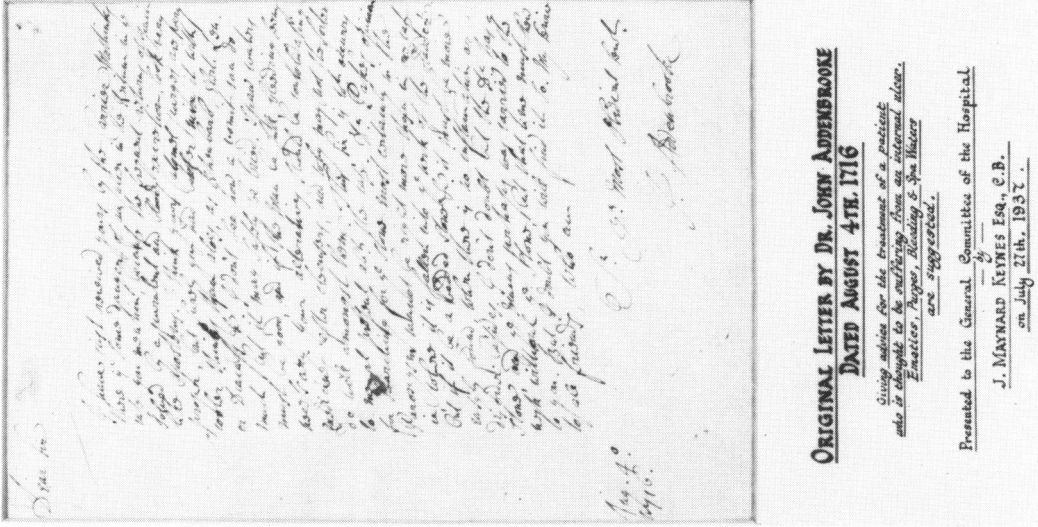


Figure 2. Letter from John Addenbrooke dated 4 August 1716, in the possession of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.

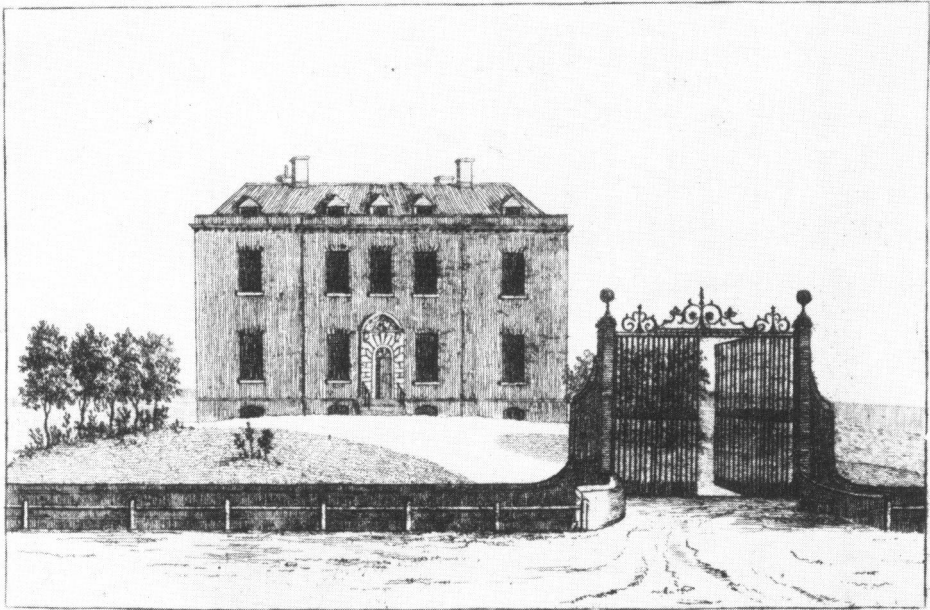


Figure 3. Addenbrooke's Hospital about 1766.

Hertfordshire. He died there on 7 June 1719 and was buried in the chapel of Catharine Hall. His wife returned to London but died there about six months later. Addenbrooke's cousin, the Dean of Lichfield, recalled that his portrait had been painted at about the time of his marriage when he still lived in Cambridge but that all trace of it had disappeared.

Thus only a brief description survives of Addenbrooke's appearance, by Mary Collis, one of his servants at Buntingford. This was in an undated letter from an unknown writer and may have been addressed to the Reverend William Cole, the antiquary, as it appears in the Cole MSS.⁴⁵ Thus Addenbrooke was said to have been tall and thin, of a studious bearing, and he wore a wig; he had many oddities and was, at times, supposed to be insane. Before his death, he ordered and witnessed the burning of all his writings and manuscripts in the courtyard of his house, and it may be that his portrait suffered the same fate. Being skilled in necromancy, Addenbrooke foretold the day and hour of his death with an accuracy which was fulfilled to within a few minutes. He appears to have been of a retiring disposition, serious, earnest and somewhat austere. He was not wealthy but had sufficient private means to be independent of his practice earnings. In his will⁴⁶ he left his land to two of his nephews, and his money – about £4,500 – for the foundation of a hospital after a life interest by his wife. It may be surmised that his medical practice among poor people had impressed him with the total inadequacy of parish relief for the sick, and prompted him to found a voluntary hospital, as was already being done in London. The Master and Fellows of Catharine Hall were thus charged, as Trustees, “to hire, fit-up, purchase or erect a building fit for a small physcall hospital for poor people.” Those of any parish or county should be admitted “if there should be room and the revenue would answer.” Addenbrooke's hospital (Fig. 3) was among the earliest voluntary general hospitals to be opened in the provinces. But, had the Trustees been less dilatory, it might well have been the first. As it was, that at Winchester opened first – on 18 October 1736 – some seventeen years after Addenbrooke's death. During the ensuing ten years, other hospitals followed, at Bristol, Shrewsbury, and Northampton.⁴⁷ The opening of Addenbrooke's hospital forty-seven years after the founder's death, followed by the Radcliffe Infirmary at Oxford four years later on 18 October 1770, no less than fifty-six years after the death of John Radcliffe, suggests that both trustee bodies were guided by the academic axiom – *Festina lente*.

SUMMARY

John Addenbrooke, founder of the hospital at Cambridge, had a short life of thirty-nine years, of which thirteen were spent at Catharine Hall, now St. Catharine's

named Little Court which now stands at Buntingford is not that in which John Addenbrooke lived. The original one, on the same site, was built at the end of the sixteenth century and remained in the Ghyll family until 1651 when it was sold. It was demolished and rebuilt in 1819. See also *Victoria history of the County of Hertford*, 4 vols., London, 1971, vol. 4, p. 80.

⁴⁵ Letter in Cole MSS, op. cit., note 3 above.

⁴⁶ P.R.O., C11/2206/5.

⁴⁷ F. N. L. Poynter (editor), *The evolution of hospitals in Britain*, London, Pitman Medical Publishing Co., 1964, pp. 48–55.

College. He was successively Scholar, Fellow, and Bursar of the college. His medical education took place entirely in Cambridge during the first decade of the eighteenth century. He took the M.D. degree in 1710, and had qualified to practise medicine as an Extra-Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians in 1706. An account is given of the available teaching in Cambridge and of Addenbrooke's contemporary students and teachers. After he married in 1710, he left Cambridge to practise in London in 1711 but, after a few years, ill health forced him to retire to Buntingford in Hertfordshire, where he died in 1719. His intention to found a hospital in Cambridge was only revealed by his will, and it did not open until 1766. It was probably the fifth voluntary general hospital to be opened in the provinces, and was followed, four years later, by the Radcliffe Infirmary at Oxford.