

Living Medical History Project

ACC/2014/6



Interviews from the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland's
Living Medical History Project.

Catalogued by Fergus Brady
April 2015

LMH
Living Medical History Project

Collection
2012-2013

Extent:
11 files

Creator:
History of Medicine Section, Royal Academy of Medicine of Ireland

Description:

The Living Medical History Project was initiated by the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland in 2012. The project seeks to record the unique memories of medical practitioners who have worked in Ireland over the last seventy years.

The project consists of interviews with ten medical practitioners representing a cross-section of medical fields and specialities. Seven of the interviewees hail from the Republic of Ireland, and three from Northern Ireland. Interviews were conducted by Susan Mullaney, Honorary Secretary of the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, and by Ida Milne, a member of the Oral History Network of Ireland, in 2012 and 2013. In addition to audio recordings, transcripts of the interviews were produced. The audio recordings will be withheld for ten years, while the transcripts (which have been edited where appropriate) are available to consult in the Heritage Centre of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

Throughout their working lives, doctors have accumulated a vast knowledge of professional practice. This project records their unique memories to help others learn from the past, and to document the enormous changes that have taken place during their lifetimes. The testimony of the ten interviewees provides a unique insight into a type of practice that has all but disappeared. They worked with diseases that are no longer common, such as polio and tuberculosis, and in an environment that did not have MRI scanners, CT scanners, or in some cases, access to antibiotics. The interviews also sheds light on changes that occurred in individual specialities over the last seventy years, the many advances in medical treatment, medical training, the experiences of medics in the Second World War, and the family and social lives of medics.

Arrangement:

Files have been arranged alphabetically according to surname of interviewee.

Administrative History:

The Living Medical History Project was initiated by the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland in 2012. The pilot project was completed in June 2013. The Living Medical History Committee was comprised of the following persons:

- Susan Mullaney: Honorary Secretary of the History of Medicine Section, and Project Leader.
- Mary O'Doherty: President of the History of Medicine Section.
- Patrick Plunkett: ex officio
- Ida Milne: Researcher.

Acquisition:

The Living Medical History transcripts were loaned to the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland in 2014.

Access:

Access subject to the conditions laid out in the Heritage Centre Access Guidelines.

Reproductions:

Copying of archive material is subject to the conditions laid out in the Heritage Centre Copying Guidelines.

Language:

English

LMH/1 Interview with Caoimhghin Breathnach

8 February 2013

Extent:

22 pages

Creator:

Ida Milne

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Ida Milne with Professor Caoimhghin Breathnach, a retired physician.

In the interview Dr Breathnach talked about a wide range of topics, including:

- his medical education at University College Dublin and experience as a student in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin;
- conditions in Dublin during the Second World War;
- experiences working in St Kevin's Hospital [later St James' Hospital], Cork Street Fever Hospital, and Rialto Hospital (all in Dublin);
- scarlet fever, whooping cough, pneumonia and poliomyelitis in Cork Street Fever Hospital;
- memories of Dr Christopher Joseph McSweeney, Medical Superintendent in Cork Street Fever Hospital;
- recollections of Dr Noel Browne, Minister for Health, 1948-1951;
- the introduction of antibiotics;
- time as a lecturer in University College Cork and University College Dublin;
- time spent on a post-doctoral fellowship in physiology in the USA;
- involvement in the History of Medicine section of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland;
- research in the field of history of medicine following retirement from University College Dublin;
- developments in radiology and biochemistry during his lifetime;
- immunisation programmes against diphtheria and poliomyelitis;
- use of barbiturates in treatment.

LMH/2 Interview with RSJ Clarke

28 June 2013

Extent:

17 pages

Creator:

Susan Mullaney

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Dr Susan Mullaney with Professor RSJ [Richard Samuel Jessop] Clarke, a retired anaesthetist.

In the interview Professor Clarke talked about a range of topics, including:

- early life and family;
- his medical education in Oxford and Queen's University, Belfast;
- physiology, anaesthetics, open-heart surgery, poliomyelitis, and tuberculosis;
- time working in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast;
- changes in medicine and the lives of doctors;
- the influence of religion on healthcare and the medical profession in Northern Ireland;
- his family and social life;
- his work and interest in history and archival records.

LMH/3 Interview with Claude Field

28 June 2013

Extent:

16 pages

Creator:

Susan Mullaney

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Dr Susan Mullaney with Dr Claude Field, a retired paediatrician.

In the interview Dr Field talks about a wide range of topics, including:

- his education;
- experiences in the British Navy during the Second World War;
- time spent in Durban, South Africa, at the end of the war;
- the involvement of his wife, Dorita, in social causes and politics;
- time spent working as a paediatrician in the City Hospital, Belfast;
- the beginnings of specialisation;
- the polio epidemic in Belfast in the late 1940s;
- common diseases in the 1940s and 1950s, such as rheumatic fever, scarletina, measles, and tuberculosis;
- the introduction of streptomycin and penicillin;
- social changes over the course of his life;
- memories of thalilomide;
- children and grandchildren;
- social life;
- religion and the medical profession in Northern Ireland.

LMH/4 Interview with Peter Gatenby

18 March 2013

Extent:

19 pages

Creator:

Susan Mullaney

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Dr Susan Mullaney with Professor Peter Gatenby, retired physician.

In the interview Professor Gatenby talked about a number of topics, including:

- his early family life and medical education during the Second World War;
- experience of working in Steevens' Hospital, the Meath Hospital, the Rotunda Hospital, and Baggot Street Hospital, all in Dublin;
- time as a clinical tutor and later a Professor of Medicine for Trinity College Dublin;
- the introduction of penicillin and streptomycin;
- time spent working for the WHO [World Health Organisation] in Delhi, India, in New York, USA, and in Rome, Italy;
- books he wrote on the history of the Trinity Medical School and the Meath Hospital;
- the transplantation of organs;
- fears surrounding the spread of tuberculosis in Dublin;
- interest in anaemia and neurology;
- his wife, children and grandchildren;
- social life.

LMH/5 Interview with Max [MV] Graham

**17 December
2012**

Extent:

18 pages

Creator:

Ida Milne

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Ida Milne with Dr Max Graham, a retired ophthalmologist.

In the interview Dr Graham talked about a wide range of topics, including:

- his early family life and education;
- medical education and student work experience at Trinity College Dublin and Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin;
- time spent working in numerous hospitals in Ireland and the UK. These included the Royal West Sussex Hospital, Chichester, England; the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, Dublin; the Birmingham and Midland Eye Hospital, England; the Royal Eye Hospital, London, England; the New End Hospital, Hampstead, London, England; and Cardiff Royal Infirmary, Wales;
- the introduction of antibiotics;
- the treatment of Irish medics in Britain;
- social life, travels, and return to Dublin;
- medico-legal work in Ireland;
- the changes brought about by cataract surgery, phacoemulsification, and lens implantation;
- his recollections of Dr Noel Browne, Minister for Health, 1948-1951;
- religion and the Dublin hospitals.

LMH/6 Interview with William Hederman

21 January 2013

Extent:

27 pages

Creator:

Susan Mullaney

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Dr Susan Mullaney with Mr William Hederman, a retired cardiac surgeon.

In the interview Mr Hederman talked about a number of topics, including:

- the generations of medics in his family;
- medical education in UCD [University College Dublin];
- experience gained while a student in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital and the Coombe Hospital, both in Dublin City, and in St Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire;
- time spent working in the Prince of Wales Hospital in London; the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin,; and in Denver, Colorado, USA;
- treatment of TB lung by pneumothorax;
- new methods in cardiac surgery;
- pioneering work in vascular surgery;
- the change brought about by the development of specialisation in the medical profession;
- the introduction of antibiotics;
- prostate surgery;
- the eradication of tuberculosis by streptomycin;
- life in Ireland during the Second World War and social changes in his lifetime;
- recollections of polio treatment;
- opinions on Noel Browne's time as Minister for Health, 1948-1951;
- the involvement of his wife Carmencita in politics, and in particular her time as Lord Mayor of Dublin during the city's millenium year of 1988.

LMH/7 Interview with Patricia Horne

**December 2012-
February 2013**

Extent:

30 pages

Creator:

Ida Milne

Description:

Transcript of two interviews conducted by Ida Milne with Dr Patricia Horne, a retired physician.

In the interview Dr Horne talked about a wide range of topics, including:

- her early life and family, such as her grandfather Dr Andrew Horne (co-founder of the National Maternity Hospital), father Dr Andrew Horne (who served at Gallipoli in the First World War), and mother Dr Delia Horne (née Mockler);
- medical education in University College Dublin;
- experience of working in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin; Temple Street Children's Hospital, Dublin; and Cashel County Hospital, County Tipperary;
- time spent working with the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Nsukka, Nigeria (Dr Horne talks about childbirth, symphysiotomies, malaria, yaws, and tuberculosis in this period);
- periods spent working in Zambia and Kenya;
- improvements in anaesthesia;
- the advent of antibiotics and medical and psychiatric drugs;
- use of quinine in Africa;
- the generations of medics in her family.

LMH/8 Interview with Livinia Meenan

**23 November
2012**

Extent:

18 pages

Creator:

Ida Milne

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Ida Milne with Dr Livinia Meenan, a retired public health officer.

In the interview Dr Meenan talked about a wide range of topics, including:

- the beginnings of her interest in medicine;
- medical education in UCD [University College Dublin];
- experience working in St Vincent's Hospital and Temple Street Hospital, both in Dublin, as a student;
- time spent working in St Kevin's Hospital, Dublin, [now St James' Hospital] and in England;
- period out of the medical profession;
- return to education to complete a Diploma in Public Health;
- time spent working as an area medical officer with the Eastern Health Board;
- the career of her husband Charlie, a consultant dermatologist;
- her interest in mycology and tuberculosis;
- recollections of Noel Browne's time as Minister for Health, 1948-1951;
- poverty in Dublin during her time as a student and a young medical professional;
- the positive changes brought about by immunisation programmes and improved public health information;
- memories of use of thalidomide;
- a polio outbreak in 1947;
- the changes brought about by the advent of free education in Ireland.

LMH/9 Interview with Dermot O'Flynn

28 December 2012

Extent:

24 pages

Creator:

Susan Mullaney

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Dr Susan Mullaney with Mr Dermot O'Flynn, a retired urological surgeon.

In the interview Mr O'Flynn talked about a number of topics, including:

- early life and family;
- medical education at University College Cork;
- time spent working as a house surgeon in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, England, and in Lincoln County Hospital, England, where he began to specialise in urology;
- Second World War service in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Ghana and Nigeria;
- period spent studying for the Edinburgh Fellowship examinations;
- time spent working in London and Edinburgh;
- return to Ireland to become Consultant in Urology at the Meath Hospital;
- establishment of a private practice with Victor Lane;
- the beginnings of specialisation in medicine;
- tuberculosis and the introduction of antibiotics;
- religion and the medical profession in Ireland;
- period as President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland;
- his children, personal life and interest in sailing.

File also includes an obituary for Mr O'Flynn, taken from the May 2014 edition of the 'Surgical Scope' magazine of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

LMH/10 Interview with James Slein

1 February 2013

Extent:
22 pages

Creator:
Ida Milne

Description:
Transcript of an interview conducted by Ida Milne with Dr James Slein, a retired general practitioner.

In the interview Dr Slein talked about a wide range of topics, including:

- the origins of the Slein family name;
- early life and education;
- poverty on the northside of Dublin City;
- medical education in UCD [University College Dublin];
- experiences in Jervis Street Hospital, Dublin; St. Brendan's Hospital, Grangegorman, Dublin; the Crichton Royal Institution, Dumfries, Scotland; and the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, Scotland;
- move into general practice on the northside of Dublin City;
- the changes brought about by the advent of antibiotics;
- memories of some patients;
- recollections of Noel Browne's time as Minister for Health, and of Sean McBride TD;
- the influence of religion on medical practice in Ireland;
- life following retirement;
- family life, children, and social life;
- the problems of drug addiction and AIDS in Dublin.

LMH/11 Interview with Patrick Daly

15 August 2015

Extent:

47 pages

Creator:

Susan Mullaney

Description:

Transcript of an interview conducted by Susan Mullaney with Dr Patrick Daly, a retired General Practitioner in his home in Farranfore, Co. Kerry. (Also present were his wife, Dr Maureen Daly, a GP, and his niece, Dr Anne Collins from Dunmanway, Co. Cork).

In the interview, Dr Daly talked about a wide range of topics including:

- Growing up in West Cork, and the history of Castletownshend House and Captain Townsend:
- His medical education in University College, Cork, and training in the North Infirmary in Cork:
- First job as a locum in Rosscarbery in Co. Cork, then working in Peamount Hospital, Dublin, The Coombe Hospital, Dublin, and studying for DPH in Dublin:
- Providing Maternity care to mothers in their homes in rural West Cork as a GP in early 1950s:
- Dentistry in West Cork in early 1950s:
- Bone-setters and 'handy women' caring for patients in rural Cork and Kerry in 1950s:
- The work of a General Surgeon in Mr Kiely in Cork Infirmary:
- Memories of Professor James O' Donovan, professor of medicine in Cork:
- Early haematology provision in Cork area, with local soldiers providing blood samples:
- Introduction of Streptomycin:
- Becoming the Dispensary Doctor in Farranfore in 1954, describes the surgery, and providing 24 hour service for patients in rural area:
- Difficulties for patients communicating with doctors prior to widespread availability of house phones:
- Highlights innovation of joint replacements and heart surgery:
- Conditions in rural Cork and Kerry in 1940-50s and highlights greater income levels and independence of people in general, in modern era:

- Canvassing local support for establishing Farranfore airport in Kerry:
- Memories of Mother and Child Scheme:
- His wife, Dr Maureen Daly's contribution to the practice, seeing many female patients:
- Main causes of mortality in 1940-50s were infectious diseases, and how patients' expectations have changed now:
- His life outside of medical practice in Farranfore.