

Sir Patrick Dun

Born: 1642

President: 1681-1686, 1690-1693, 1696-1697, 1698-1699, 1706-1707

Died: 1713

Patrick Dun was born in Aberdeen in 1642, the son of Charles Dun, a dyer, and his wife Catherine Burnet. Dun's family had a longstanding connection with the area. His great-grandmother was burnt as a witch in 1597 at the peak of the 'witch craze', convicted largely on her own testimony. Dun's great-uncle and godfather, another Patrick Dun, was Principal of Marischal College in Aberdeen.

Patrick Dun the younger certainly studied at Marischal College, but it does not appear to have been medicine. We know from correspondence between Dublin Castle and a John Forbes of Culloden, that Dun was a student of medicine in Dauphiné and Valence. He also seems to have graduated MD from Trinity College Dublin, although no date is recorded.

By 1676, Dun was in Ireland and had achieved the prestigious position of Physician to the State and to the Lord Lieutenant, then James Butler, Duke of Ormond. Ormond was also Chancellor of the University of Oxford, where he used his influence to have Dun incorporated MD *in absentia* in 1677. In the same year Dun also became a Fellow of the College of Physicians. Seven years later he was one of the founding members of the Dublin Philosophical Society, alongside figures such as Sir William Petty, William and Thomas Molyneux (qv) and Narcissus Marsh.

Dun initially lived on Skinners Row in Dublin, but later moved to Inn's Quay where he carried out a fashionable practice. There is little comment on his medical skill, but he does seem to have been an exponent of water treatments referring patients to Bath, Tunbridge Wells and Wexford to take the waters.

In 1688 Dun fled to England to escape the impending wars but soon returned with the Williamite armies. There is correspondence which shows he was present with the army at Limerick. When the army moved to its winter quarters Dun transferred to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and oversaw the care of the wounded in the hospital and quartered in the town. He and a number of other doctors worked without pay over the winter, supplementing the hospital's meagre resources out of their own pockets. Dun was never reimbursed for this expenditure despite many appeals to the authorities.

In 1694 Dun married Mary Jepson, whose family connections brought him political influence. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1692, 1695 and 1703, although he made little



contribution. He was knighted in 1696, and confirmed by Queen Anne, in 1705, as Physician to the Royal Hospital and to the army in Ireland.

With respect to the College, Dun was instrumental in the granting of the 1692 Charter to the College, which is still in force today. No doubt his involvement with the war, and his closeness to King William III, helped ensure the granting of the Charter. This Charter extended the influence of the College to the whole island of Ireland and loosened the links between the College of Physicians and Trinity College.

In February 1693, while College President, Dun engaged in a dispute and sword fight with his colleague Ralph Howard (qv). The dispute appears to have been over Dun's suspicion that Howard was trying to steal his patients.

At his death in 1713 Dun left his large landed estate and considerable financial investments in trust with the income going to his widow for her life, or until she remarried, when the income would go to the College. The income was to be used by the College to establish a professorship of medicine and a medical school. The King's Professors which were established by the trust fund were appointed by the College, but would teach in the School of Physic in Trinity College. Dun's will also left his personal library to the College, establishing a library in the College which still carries his name. His home on Inn's Quay was to become the meeting place of the College after Lady Dun's death, but it was destroyed by fire before it passed to the College. Dun's bequest has supported medical education and research in Dublin for over three hundred years, through the professorships in Trinity, Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital and, more recently, St James' Hospital.

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