

Hugh Ferguson

Born: 1796
President: 1819-1820, 1827-1828, 1831-1834
Died: 1844

Hugh Ferguson was born in 1768, although it is unclear where exactly in Scotland he was born. He enrolled on the entrance book at Trinity College Dublin in 1783 at the age of 15, and graduated with a BA in 1791. He then moved to Edinburgh University, where he graduated MD in 1794, with a thesis on *De Phthisi Pulmonata*.

Ferguson seems to have returned to Dublin where he was admitted as Licentiate of the College of Physicians in 1802, and elected as a Fellow in 1804. His main area of clinical interest related to infectious diseases. Along with Edward Percival, he convinced the board of the Hardwicke Fever Hospital to establish a School of Medicine at which Samuel Litton (qv) would be a lecturer. Ferguson was appointed as General Lecturer in this School of Medicine in 1812. He published papers which included such topics as cowpox and apoplexia hydrocephalica.

Ferguson held the post of Librarian to the College of Physicians and, in this role in 1814, oversaw the transfer of the Dun's Library from Trinity College Dublin to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, where the College of Physicians had been given a space for a meeting room and their library. Prior to this, the College had been without a permanent meeting place since the surrender of Trinity Hall in the late seventeenth century. The move to the hospital was not without its problems; Ferguson wrote to the College in 1814 stating that 'there are several things wanting in the Library room at Sr. Pat. Dun's Hospital, viz, a mat for the floor, some chairs, perhaps a table, fire irons and a ladder, the presses being higher than in the other room'.¹ He was also concerned about security as 'the Board Room of the Hospital communicates with the library. If the door between them be not shut up it is obvious the librarian cannot be responsible as heretofore for the book, when there may be access to the room in his absence. The lock also on the principle door is very trifling'.²

Ferguson served as President of the College on three occasions. He died on 14 August 1844 at his home on Sackville Street and was buried in St Thomas' Church, Dublin.

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¹ Quoted in John Widdess, *A History of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, 1654-1963* (London: F & S Livingstone, 1963), 139-140

² *Ibid*, 139-140

