

THE MACKEITH FAMILY
IN MEDICAL AND HEALTH CARE

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INTRODUCTION

Members of the branch of the MacKeith family who came south from Scotland in the last century have worked in medicine and other branches of health care for four generations; this paper is a summary account of what they did. It concentrates on the second and third generations, because less is known about the first generation, and the fourth generation is not described in detail, because it is still developing.

The account in many ways parallels the development of medicine and health care over the last two centuries. The first generation worked in the early days of general practice and supplemented their income with Poor Law work. The second generation continued in private practice, gave up Poor Law work when they became established and were involved in medical politics and a variety of medical organisations. The third generation became specialists in the early days of serious specialisation in medicine and developed their own interests within their specialties. The fourth generation has seen a greater degree of specialisation, and members of the family have gone into other health care professions, as these have become more established, as well as being involved in forms of patient participation in health care.

THE FIRST GENERATION

John McKiech, who lived from 1779 to 1842, was a farmer who inherited the family property, Damside or Burnside, in the hamlet of Ruskie near the Port of Menteith in Perthshire. He was married twice; he and his first wife, Jean McEwan, who died young, had two sons, Donald, born in 1815, and William, born in 1816. Both studied medicine at the University of Glasgow and became doctors. It is not clear how they came to go into the profession.

Donald qualified in 1835. It is not known what he did in the years immediately following qualification, but by the 1840s he had moved to England and was working as a general practitioner in the village of Sandhurst in Kent. He worked for a time as visiting medical attendant at North Grove House, a private lunatic asylum at Hawkhurst nearby. He also worked as a Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for one of the Poor Law districts, as did his brother and his sons later. The Poor Law arrangements for those unable to provide for themselves

were run locally by Boards of Guardians for Unions, i.e. unions of parishes, which were previously responsible for the administration of the Poor Law. Medical Officers were employed to provide medical care for those receiving outdoor relief, i.e. living at home as opposed to living in the workhouse. Donald was employed at a salary of £10 per annum for the Bodiam district of Ticehurst Union, which is in fact across the border in East Sussex. Normally Medical Officers were supposed to be resident in the district, but, because there was no one qualified for the post in that parish, he was reappointed on an annual basis.

He married a local woman, Harriet Relf, in 1854 and they had six children: three daughters, Ellen, Jean and Harriet, and three sons, John, William and Alfred, who died in his first year. As the eldest son, Donald inherited the family home on his father's death in 1842, but appears to have never lived in it. Other members of the family occupied it and he sold it to his half brother, Alexander, for £1,000 in 1877. Donald died in 1879, a few months after his wife's death.

William qualified (but only in surgery) in 1838. He worked in Scotland in his early years, in particular in Buchlyvie, not far from the family home, where he lodged in the house of a woman who was a stocking knitter. He married Margaret McGhie while he was living in Buchlyvie and the first four of their nine children were born there. There were five daughters, Jane, Isabella, Mary, Margaret and Catherine, and four sons, William, John, Alexander and Donald, the last of whom died in childhood.

Around the end of 1860 William and his family moved to England, to the village of Hurst Green at the eastern end of Sussex, very near to his brother, Donald, and family. From 1868 he was employed as Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for Hurst Green at an annual salary of £40. In addition to the salary he received extra payments for medicines provided, for attending births and for treating fractures; on one occasion he was paid £1 for certifying the lunacy of a pauper. In 1866 he became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, presumably to make good the lack of a qualification in medicine, so as to be qualified for a Medical Officer post.

He died in 1872 and his body was taken back to Scotland to be interred in the family grave at Kilmahog, near Callendar. Not long afterwards his widow returned with their children to Scotland where they set up home in Glasgow. A family group photograph shows him as a serious, very bewhiskered gentleman, standing behind his wife who seems to have a strong personality.

THE SECOND GENERATION

All the five sons of Donald and William, who survived to adulthood, trained in medicine, although Donald's sons never qualified.

Donald's sons

John, Donald's eldest son, was born in 1855. Not much is known about him, but he studied medicine at the University of Glasgow from 1875 to 1879, without qualifying. He appears to have returned to England on the death of his father in 1879. He died the following year at Gravesend while working as a medical assistant, having inadvertently taken an overdose of a narcotic substance to help him sleep. He apparently never married.

William Donald, Donald's second son, was born in 1857. He appears to have studied medicine in London, but to have never qualified. It is interesting to note how he describes himself; his marriage certificate lists him as Doctor of Medicine and his death certificate as medical practitioner (retired), but on his children's birth certificates he is recorded as a student of medicine and the family tree records him as an unqualified doctor. He married Emily Kate Arthur in 1893 at the same church in Southampton, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, as was attended by Alexander MacKeith and his family when they moved there seven years later. They had three children, Marjorie, Kathleen and John. They moved to Scotland after the birth of Marjorie around 1895, and lived initially in Glasgow and then in Govan. He died in 1925.

William's sons

William Donald, the eldest son of William (not to be confused with the previous William Donald) was born in 1856, while his family was still living at Buchlyvie. When his mother moved their family back to Scotland from Sussex on the death of his father, he studied medicine at the University of Glasgow and qualified in 1880. Soon after qualifying he moved to Creetown in Kirkcudbrightshire. To begin with he lodged there with a butcher, but in 1882 he married a local woman, Janet (Jessie) Sloan. He worked as Parochial Medical Officer for the district of Kirkmabrech. He and his wife had two children, Gracie, born in 1884, and Donald, born in 1891. Tragically Donald, his mother and father all died within about a year, leaving Gracie, who was brought up by her aunt, Margaret, William's widow, in Glasgow.

John, second son of William, was born in 1864. He studied medicine at the University of Glasgow and qualified in 1885. He worked for a short time in Glasgow and then moved briefly to Whickham Market in Suffolk, before settling in Exeter in 1888. He lived initially at St Thomas' on the west side of the city near his brother, Alexander, before moving to the centre of the city. He, too, held a Medical Officer post with a Poor Law union, but also seems to have had wider responsibilities as Medical Officer of Health; he was also medical officer for a variety of charitable institutions.

Around 1908 he moved to London to set up practice in Kennington, south of the Thames. Initially he lived in a house near Kennington Park which was later pulled down for the enlargement of the park, but he soon moved to a house in Kennington Park Road, which still stands. For some of the time he lived there he had separate surgery premises in Lower Kennington Lane; later he also had the use of premises in Cavendish Place and Wimpole Street in the centre of London. He held a number of hospital appointments, chiefly in the treatment of the ear, nose and throat, and latterly specialised in tuberculosis of the larynx.

He served as a councillor on Lambeth Borough Council for a number of years, from 1912 to 1919 and again from 1923 to 1930. For the first of these periods he was a member of the Public Health Committee. The committee minutes record him as being deeply involved. He raised many matters and asked many questions. He moved many motions, many of which were rejected. His membership as a doctor seems to have been an embarrassment to the other members and it was agreed that he be known as 'Mr MacKeith'. For his second term of office he was an elected representative on Lambeth Board of Guardians, who administered the Poor Law arrangements. Here too he was heavily involved on various sub-committees, visiting institutions and asking searching questions. The end of his term of office coincided with the abolition of Boards of Guardians, workhouses and the whole Poor Law arrangements.

He never married, but had a resident housekeeper. Three of his nephews, Malcolm, Norman and Stephen, stayed with him while they were studying as medical students in London. They remembered him as a retiring person with little small talk and a regular church-goer. He died in 1931.

Alexander, third son of William, was born in 1866. By the age of 15 he had already left school and was working as a clerk in a lawyer's office. He, also, studied medicine at the University of Glasgow and qualified in 1887. He appears to have completed his studies at too early an age to be registered and so to have spent some time as a ship's surgeon, travelling to India. Soon after becoming fully qualified he moved to Exeter, like his brother, John. He became Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator of one of the Poor Law districts and medical adviser to various assurance and friendly societies. In 1892 he married Alice Gadd, daughter of a local wholesale chemist (her brother, Henry, married Alexander's sister, Catherine in 1897), and their first two children, Donald and Malcolm, were born in Exeter. Around 1895 they moved to Ilfracombe and he was appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator. While living there he wrote an article on Ilfracombe as a health resort. Their next two children, Eric and Dora, were born at Ilfracombe.

Around 1900 he and his family moved to Southampton. This is how his son, Norman, described his practice in Southampton:

"...(he) moved from Ilfracombe, because his family was increasing and he was looking for a place where there was scope to increase the size of his practice and income; also there was a strong Presbyterian church, because of the link of the port with Scottish seamen. Events justified his choice and he remained in Southampton for the rest of his life. However initially none of the other doctors' wives came to call on his wife when he set up practice in Millbrook, as he was seen to be 'squatting or poaching'.

He established a private practice there which grew until he needed the help of two partners.Some of his partners or assistants left to set up practices of their own in the neighbourhood, to which (contrary to usual practice) he did not object; he had sound and canny reasons for being unafraid of such competition. At least three other partners became whole or part time consultants (with, at that time, better incomes than G.P.s had) to the then voluntary hospitals - perhaps an indication of the quality of the doctors whom he was able to attract to the practice. Also another reason for being unafraid was that those who transferred to his former partners were likely to be those with whom he got on less well. In 1911, on the passing of Lloyd George's National Insurance Act and of the 'panel' system of general practice, he was one of the relatively few G.P.s who decided not to join the scheme. This was largely because he did not believe in this form of nationalisation of medical practice. But it was also a courageous decision; by this time he had a family of 10 children to bring up and educate, and nobody knew how many (or how few) people would choose to be private patients rather than use the medical service to which they were entitled by their National Insurance contributions. But he had confidence in his

ability to attract private patients - a confidence justified by his experience in the ensuing years. This confidence was grounded in his conscientious, methodical, thoughtful and sympathetic qualities; the interests of his patients always came first. In addition he had determination and a strong sense of fair play.

It was these same qualities which led to his recognition as a leader of his profession in the town and in other public spheres. He was commissioned in the local Territorial Army unit as a medical officer. In his retirement he became the leader of the 'Penny-in-the-Pound' scheme (Southampton and District Hospitals' Association contributory scheme: Vice-Chairman and Vice-Chairman of its Executive Committee) by which employees of large firms allowed 1d in the £ of their wages to be deducted at source for the support of the then Voluntary Hospitals. Without the large sums so raised, it would have been impossible for the Voluntary Hospitals to have survived until they were taken over by the National Health Service. His interest in hospitals led eventually to his being elected Chairman of the Southampton Eye Hospital (1924-1933)".

He was active in the British Medical Association, the doctors' professional body, and wrote letters to its journal on medico-political matters. He was responsible for a medical war emergency committee, which arranged for carrying on the practices of doctors who were away on active service during the 1st World War, and was presented with a silver salver in recognition of this. He published a booklet giving details of local medical and health facilities.

He and his wife had seven further children: Norman, Monica, Vera, Stephen, Ronald, Kathleen (Kaye) and Isabelle (Wasie). They lived for about 20 years at Howard Road, before moving to 31 Archers Road, their final home. Alexander died in 1934.

THE THIRD GENERATION

Only Alexander had sons who went into medicine. Of his five sons who survived to adulthood, all except Eric, who was not strong and went into office work, became doctors. At that time there was no question of any of the daughters going into medicine, even if they had wanted to, as it was not a profession which was thought appropriate for them. However, two daughters, Dora and Kaye, went into work allied to medicine, i.e. dispensing and dietetics respectively.

Malcolm, the eldest son, was born in 1895 and went, as did all the brothers, to King Edward VI School, Southampton. From there he went to Queen's College, Oxford on a Southampton exhibition and then on to Guy's Hospital, London, with an entrance scholarship. His training was interrupted by the 1st World War, in which he served in a field ambulance unit, from which he was recalled to complete his studies, because of the need of the country for doctors; he was very much traumatised by his experience of the war.. He graduated with 1st class honours and went into academic medicine, becoming Lecturer and then Fellow and Tutor in Medicine at Magdalen College, Oxford. His subjects were physiology and pharmacology and in the early 1930s he became Dean of the Medical School at Oxford. Shortly afterwards he was appointed the first Dean of the new British Post-graduate Medical School, based at Hammersmith Hospital. However he had to resign a year later due to ill-health. He was latterly in general practice and lived in Farnham and Aldershot; he died in 1942. He had married Joan Mallam in 1925; she was the daughter of Ernest Mallam, an eminent physician. They had three children, Jean, Donald and Robert, the last of whom also went into medicine.

His teaching and advice were much appreciated by his students at Oxford, who referred to the "MacKeith" school. However his appointment to the prestigious post at Hammersmith was strongly opposed by the London medical establishment and the strength of the opposition forced his resignation. This, and his war time experience, contributed to his comparatively early death.

Dora was born in 1898 and trained in dispensing at the technical college in Southampton. She practised in Brighton and at the chemist shop of a friend at Steyning in Sussex. She worked at East Park Clinic and also at Southampton Children's Hospital. She also helped dispense for her father's practice and assisted in the running of the family home. She died in 1981.

Norman was born in 1901 and did all his undergraduate medical training at Guy's Hospital in London, qualifying in 1924 and living during his training with his uncle John at Kennington. He did further training in the specialty of ear, nose and throat at hospitals in London before being appointed to the Royal South Hants Hospital in Southampton, first to a Clinical Assistant post, then as Assistant Surgeon and finally in 1934 as Consultant in charge. He also worked at Southampton Children's Hospital and made visits to hospitals in the Isle of Wight. He established a private practice at his home at 1 The Polygon and subsequently at 7 Westwood Road and at nursing homes in the town.

During the war from 1940 to 1946 he was a specialist in ENT in the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving for six months with Eastern Command in India and attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After the war he resumed practice in Southampton and on the foundation of the National Health Service became a part-time consultant in the Southampton area. He retired in 1966 and worked as a locum for a number of years in the area. He was also Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research at the University of Southampton, studying in particular the detection of simulated deafness and its measurement.

In the 1930s he was especially interested in tuberculosis of the larynx, which was a particular problem before the advent of antibiotics. After the war he became involved in a multi-disciplinary team with the early diagnosis and management of severe deafness in young children with the object of helping them acquire speech. He was also actively involved with the welfare of hearing-impaired people whose deafness could not be relieved by medical or surgical treatment and held office in the local and regional associations for the deaf; after his death a room in the local club for the deaf was named after him.

He married Mavis Burnett in 1931 and they had two children, John, who went into hospital and health service administration, and Mary, who became a doctor. Mavis assisted him with reception and secretarial work at home. He was much loved and respected for his kindness to his patients, and was meticulous in his concern for detail. At a thanksgiving service a former colleague aptly used the word 'probity' as a word describing all aspects of his character.

Stephen was born in 1906. He studied classics with a view to becoming a solicitor, but at a late stage changed to medicine. He went with a scholarship to St Mary's Hospital in London and qualified in 1932. Having worked for a short while as a locum medical officer in a mental hospital, the experience made a great impression on him; he then worked for a further two years there and became strongly attracted to psychological medicine. He became Deputy Medical Superintendant at a mental hospital at Warwick and then held a similar post in Sussex.

In the 2nd World War he served in the RAMC as a specialist in psychological medicine and adviser in psychiatry. He played a major part in the development of psychiatric services in the army, in particular in the invasion of North Africa and was awarded the OBE (military division). After the war he was appointed Medical Superintendant of Napsbury Mental Hospital and then in 1950 he went to Norwich as

Consultant Psychiatrist. While there he carried out two consultancies for the World Health Organisation in the Far East. In 1957 he was appointed Medical Superintendent of Warlingham Park Hospital outside Croydon in Surrey, and then in 1964 he became Consultant Psychiatrist at Knowle Hospital in Hampshire, as well as Regional Tutor in Psychiatry. He gave up clinical work in 1967 in order to establish the Wessex Regional School of Psychiatry, which became absorbed into the Medical School of the University of Southampton.

He was innovative in all forms of treatment and new ideas which would help those with mental illness. He was interested in occupational therapy in the early stages of its development, and also in art therapy and music therapy (being an examiner in the latter knowing very little about music!). Both in the army and as a Medical Superintendent, he showed great administrative skills.

On retirement he worked for some years as a medical adviser in health education and also lectured and taught in Australia and the United States. He had time too to develop his interest in aspects of psychology, particularly in the private imaginery world of children. He co-authored a book "The Development of Imagination: The Private Worlds of Childhood"; he became an Honorary Visiting Fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of Southampton.

Stephen married Frances Culpin (known as Jo to the family) in 1938; she was the daughter of Millais Culpin, a distinguished psychotherapist. They had six children, James, Alice, William, Lucy, Thomas and Nancy, several of whom developed interests in forms of health care. In retirement Stephen and Jo lived in Winchester. He was always willing to listen to people talking about their ideas, as well to talk about his own ideas and experience. He enjoyed the company of children, especially his own grandchildren. In later years he attended meetings of the Society of Friends and became a member a few years before his death.

Ronald was born in 1908. He went to Queen's College, Oxford as a scholar and trained at St Mary's Hospital, London, qualifying in 1932. He worked for a while on a travelling fellowship in New York. During the war he served as a Medical Specialist in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. At the end of the war he was undecided whether to specialise in heart and lungs or in children. He decided on children and did a refresher course at the Central Middlesex Hospital. In 1948 he was appointed paediatrician at Guy's Hospital and the Tavistock Clinic, a child guidance unit; he stayed at Guy's Hospital for the rest of his life.

He developed an interest in handicapped children and the neurological side of paediatrics, working with the Spastics Society. In 1958 he was appointed Director of the

society's Medical Education and Information Unit and established the Newcomen Centre for Handicapped Children.

He was a person of great enthusiasm and energy and was influential on the care and treatment of children in many ways, especially in seeing the whole child rather than the disability or illness alone, and in understanding the psychosomatic aspects of illness. In addition to his teaching of medical students, he organised a series of international study groups at Oxford on neurology and child development.

He was influential too in what he wrote and encouraged others to write. He was co-author of two text books on paediatrics: "Infant Feeding and Feeding Problems" with Philip Evans (latterly known as "MacKeith's Infant Feeding and Feeding Problems") and "The Child and His Symptoms" with John Apley. He established and co-edited the journal "Cerebral Palsy Bulletin" with Martin Bax, which became "Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology". In addition to the textbooks he wrote many articles and letters, especially to 'The Lancet'.

He was awarded many honours and his work was especially appreciated in the United States. He was active in many medical organisations and was consultant for the World Health Organisation. He married Elizabeth Bartrum in 1943 and they had four children, Caroline, Andrew, Philippa (Pippa) and Peter - both girls became nurses. He died in 1977 and the tributes paid to him then showed how much he meant to so many people through his stimulating teaching and the warmth and generosity of his personality.

Kathleen (Kaye), Ronald's twin sister, was born in 1908 and trained in Household and Social Science at King's College of Household and Social Science, which later became Queen Elizabeth College and is now part of King's College. She worked as Assistant Dietitian at University College Hospital and was a foundation member of the British Dietetic Association. She subsequently taught dietetics and cookery in a variety of schools. She is the co-author of "The How and Why of Cookery", which has run to four editions (one more than her twin brother's "The Child and His Symptoms" but two less than his "Infant Feeding" !). She married Angus Scallon in 1937 and they had three children, Jacqueline, Robert and Nicolette.

THE FOURTH GENERATION

Several of the sons and daughters of the third generation have entered health care professions or have been involved in health care in some way. The ideas about what is suitable work for women have changed and there are now a much greater variety of openings in health care.

Robert, son of Malcolm, trained as a doctor and spent most of his working life in the Royal Army Medical Corps, finishing with the rank of Colonel. John, son of Norman, trained as a hospital administrator and worked for some years abroad. On return he spent some time helping to run health service management courses at university and then returned to health service administration. Latterly he has been a member of a Community Health Council. Mary, daughter of Norman, trained as a doctor. After early experience in paediatrics and work in general practice, she went into family planning and has for a number of years had administrative responsibility for family planning and women's health services for a district.

James (Jim), son of Stephen, trained in medicine and is a psychiatrist. He worked at Broadmoor Hospital for a number of years and is now a consultant forensic psychiatrist. William (Bill), was a member of a Community Health Council for some years. Nancy started to be involved in health care while working as a play leader. She became interested in women's health and edited a book on the subject. She has a diploma in health education, has worked as a regional organiser for people with epilepsy, trained as a nurse and midwife and has held nursing research posts.

Caroline, daughter of Ronald, trained as a nurse and a health visitor. She has also taken a certificate in health care research. She has adopted a young multi-handicapped girl. Philippa (Pippa) too trained as a nurse and as a midwife. She has worked in a preventive health project, working with young mothers and children in an inner city area and as a liaison midwife with a community health team for the homeless.

?THE FIFTH GENERATION

It remains to be seen whether any of the members of the next generation will develop a long-term interest in health care.

