

# **THE FORMATION OF THE LIVERPOOL MEDICAL INSTITUTION: DISPERSAL OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBRARY**

**Ann Florence and Mair Pierce Moulton<sup>†</sup>**

The history of the Liverpool Medical Institution is closely linked to the development of the medical profession and medical education in the city of Liverpool. By the early eighteenth century, Liverpool had become a thriving, prosperous town and seaport. Despite the new wealth in the town a large proportion of the population were poor, housed in atrocious conditions in narrow, unlit streets with no drainage. Accommodation was grossly deficient, sanitation non-existent. Disease was rife amongst the inhabitants. Appalled by these living conditions and the inadequate provision for the sick and injured, a group of leading citizens, clergy, physicians, surgeons and merchants raised funds for the provision of a hospital. On 3 April 1745 they were granted the lease of land on Shaw's Brow, now the site of the magnificent St George's Hall. Alas construction was delayed by the chaos created when Prince Charles Edward Stuart landed at Moidart, intent upon seizing the throne of England. Consequently, the first Liverpool Infirmary did not open until 25 March 1749. It had an honorary medical staff of three physicians, a surgeon and a full time apothecary. These gentlemen, however, made little apparent contribution to the advancement of the profession.

Later in the eighteenth century, as Liverpool continued to prosper, there was a rapid expansion of the medical profession, with the influx of qualified doctors from a variety of established, highly acclaimed medical schools, principally Leyden and Edinburgh. These new doctors, innovators, experimentalists and writers made notable contributions to the development of medicine and surgery in the town and were the driving force behind the foundation of the Medical Library. They also led the integration between the profession and other prominent citizens.

Henry Park, John Lyons and Edward Alanson, three gifted young surgeons who had been appointed to the Infirmary staff between 1768 and 1770,

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<sup>†</sup> *Addresses for correspondence: Anne Florence, 49 Howey Lane, Frodsham, Wirral, WA6 6DD; Mair Pierce Moulton, The Liverpool Medical Institution, 114 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5SR.*

proposed the formation of a 'Surgeon's Book Club'. They decided to 'purchase books for general use' which would then be divided between themselves at the end of each year when the 'material in the books would be of no further merit'. However, before the plan came to fruition, the physicians of the Infirmary expressed interest in contributing to the scheme on the understanding that all the books purchased would be deposited in the Infirmary. It is impossible to put an exact date to the inauguration of the scheme. Writing in 1808, Henry Park suggested that no books had been purchased until early 1778. If this was indeed the case, as numerous medical historians have recorded, the idea germinated in 1770 had a protracted gestation period.

It soon became apparent that the clinical services provided by the Infirmary were totally inadequate. This resulted in the founding of another charity, the first Liverpool Dispensary, to provide medicines and advice for the poor. It opened in a small rented house in Princes Street in August 1778. The staff, a group of physicians and surgeons, were entirely committed to the Dispensary. Almost immediately they expressed a desire to participate in the 'library scheme' and agreed that the books, while being the property of both institutions, should remain in the Infirmary. A year later this collection attracted adverse comment from other practitioners in the town, who accused the medical officers of both 'charities' of keeping important information to themselves. Consequently the 'Gentlemen of the Faculty attending the Public Infirmary and the Dispensary of Liverpool' (the original proprietors of the Library) met at the Union Coffee House on Mount Pleasant on 7 October 1779. At this meeting it was unanimously resolved to establish a medical library which would be funded by subscription. It would be known as the Liverpool Medical Library. Thus the oldest free-standing medical library in the Kingdom was founded. Membership was open to all the gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood with an interest in medicine who wished to subscribe. Gentlemen of other professions were excluded. The meeting then proceeded to approve twenty rules for the conduct of the Library. Life membership could be purchased for five guineas. The ordinary subscription would be half a guinea annually, and apprentices would be elected members for the period of their indentures for the payment of two guineas in advance. The apothecaries of both charities would have free membership in perpetuity but would be responsible for the care of the books.

It was agreed that the original proprietors – the physicians, surgeons and apothecaries of both institutions – would form a 'perpetual committee to purchase books and make the necessary arrangements' in return for relinquishing their rights of ownership of the books. This committee would meet quarterly, with five members constituting a quorum. While membership of the Library was open to all members of the medical profession in the town who satisfied the 'Rules', management of the Library remained firmly in the hands of the staff of the Infirmary and the Dispensary until 1800.

Although absent from the meeting in October 1779, the leading physician, Matthew Dobson, was elected as the first President of the Library. Matthew Dobson (1732-84), a graduate of Edinburgh, was the first Liverpool doctor whose medical writings attracted attention in London and the first to be elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society (1778). His principal research interest was the effects of excessive heat on body temperature and pulse rate. Using many of his colleagues as subjects, he carried out his research in a small chamber within the Infirmary that became known as the 'sweating room'. However, his most important contribution to medicine was the discovery of sugar in the urine of a diabetic patient, thus promoting the establishment of a basic test for the disease. Matthew Dobson is the only Liverpool medical pioneer for whom no portrait survives. According to Thomas Bickerton, probably Liverpool's most prominent medical historian, it was 'unfortunately damaged by a mischievous house surgeon with a pea-shooter'.

The hand-scripted minutes of this first meeting have since confused historians. In item twenty-two, the statement that 'Dr Matthew Dobson be President for the ensuing year' is followed, without explanation, by a list of twenty names including all those previously recorded as being present with the apparent exception of Thomas Avison, the apothecary from the Dispensary. Two names are indecipherable. The list also includes the names of John Rutter (1762-1838), at the time a mere lad of seventeen, and Thomas Renwick also young and unqualified. Varying suggestions about the origin of this list have been made. Bickerton speculated that Rutter may have subscribed to the 'Rules' while an apprentice to a physician in Liverpool. Others have suggested that it included a record of members who joined later. Certainly both Rutter and Renwick had qualified in Edinburgh in 1786 before any subsequent recorded meeting of the Library Committee. It is very possible that one of the barely decipherable signatures at the foot of the page belongs to James Currie, who is discussed below.

At first the book collection was kept in the Infirmary in Shaw Street. However, in 1782 soon after the Dispensary had moved to larger, purpose built premises in Church Street, an apparently controversial decision was made to transfer the books to the Dispensary as it was considered to be in a more convenient location. It is not clear when this move occurred, but a *Catalogue of the Books in the Medical Library at the Dispensary*, which listed fourteen thousand books, was published in 1799.

As the eighteenth century was drawing to a close, the medical practitioners of Liverpool, led by James Currie and John Rutter, played a prominent role in the development of unique opportunities for social and cultural intercourse with other professionals and businessmen of the town who shared an interest in the arts, sciences and philanthropy. James Currie (1756-1805), the son of a Church of Scotland minister from Dumfriesshire, greatly influenced the general advance of the profession in Liverpool and activated

interest in the dissemination of medical knowledge, which undoubtedly sowed the seeds for the foundation of the Liverpool Medical Institution. He was also interested in literature and the arts, and in 1790 he was instrumental in the revival of the Literary Society to which the leading businessmen, William Roscoe and William Rathbone, and the medical practitioners, Henry Park, Gerard and Renwick were early recruits.

Originally apprenticed to a tobacco firm with interests in Virginia, Currie left for America in 1771 at the age of seventeen. While there, he was introduced to the rudiments of medical practice by his cousin, Dr James Currie, a physician in Richmond, Virginia. Following the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1775, Currie fled from Virginia and, after a perilous overland journey, embarked for England in September 1776. In December 1777 he matriculated in the Edinburgh Medical School, where he shone as a medical student and soon became a prominent member of the Royal Medical Society. Hoping to take up the post of surgeon to the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers bound for Jamaica, he accelerated the date of his graduation by obtaining his degree from Glasgow University in March 1780. Unfortunately, the post he sought was no longer available, so he turned to another cousin, Dr William Currie of Chester, for help. Knowing that the imminent retirement of Matthew Dobson would create a vacancy in Liverpool, William Currie encouraged his cousin to come to the town. Soon after his arrival in 1780, James Currie was appointed to the vacancy at the Dispensary created by Brandreth's move to the Infirmary to replace Matthew Dobson. Already a competent doctor, Currie's practice and reputation grew rapidly. However, dogged by pulmonary tuberculosis, he resigned from the Dispensary in 1784. Two years later, in 1786, he was elected physician to the Infirmary, where he pioneered the study of hypothermia while using massive volumes of cold water in the treatment of fevers. He was probably the first to observe that active cooling led to an 'after drop' in temperature following discontinuation. His interest in fevers led to his proposal that a fever hospital should be established, but alas this project did not receive much support and did not materialise until after his premature death. He was actively and successfully involved in the establishment of the Lunatic Asylum.

Acknowledgement of Currie's ability soon spread beyond Liverpool. In 1788 he was elected to membership of the Medical Society of London; in 1791 he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and, in 1792, a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was a man of strong character and great ability. Despite recurrent ill health and an exacting clinical practice he found time to continue his study of philosophy, political theory and literature, and wrote the first biography of Robert Burns, *The Works of Robert Burns: with an account of his life and a Criticism on his Writings*, which was published in 1800.

John Rutter, most probably a direct descendent of the Rutters of Kingsley Hall, Frodsham, was born in Liverpool on 23 August 1762 to Thomas Rutter, a

Liverpool chandler, and his Cumbrian wife, Mary Brownsend. Tragically, John's father died at the age of thirty-five, when John was only six-years-old. What happened to John after his father's death is not clear. His mother returned to Wigton, the town of her birth, where she remarried ten years later. Thomas's sister, Rachel, had married into the third generation of the influential Rathbone family, whose name is synonymous with the progressive development of Liverpool. It is possible that the young John Rutter remained in Liverpool under the care and influence of his uncle, William Rathbone, who, learning of his interest in entering the medical profession, possibly arranged for him to be apprenticed to a medical practitioner in Liverpool. This could account for the mysterious appearance of his name in the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Liverpool Medical Library on 7 October 1779. He was certainly in Liverpool in October 1783, as his name appears in the minutes of a meeting of the Hardshaw Society of Friends. Both the Rathbone and Rutter families were practising Quakers. During that year, aged twenty-one, he matriculated at the medical school of Edinburgh University, from where he graduated MD in 1786. The subject of his thesis was 'Phthisis Pulmonalis'. After a short period in London, he settled in medical practice in Liverpool in January 1788.

Rutter had shown interest in literary pursuits from an early age, and soon after his return to Liverpool in 1788 he became a subscriber to the Liverpool Library in Lord Street. Two years later, in 1790, he was elected President of the Library, indicative of his exceptional ability and power. In 1792, at the age of twenty-nine, he joined the staff of the Dispensary, where it is said that he became 'deservedly esteemed as a sound and sagacious physician'. He was certainly a creative genius, clear and concise. Once he considered that something was necessary, he put forward logical and practical arguments and brought all his powers to bear on the attainment of that particular objective, time and time again.

With the merchant, Thomas Taylor, John Rutter promoted the development of the Liverpool Atheneum. Once a site had been selected, Rutter drew up a prospectus clearly explaining the aims and objectives of the proposed building to provide a newsroom, library and dining club. His plans were 'warmly' approved at a meeting held at the Theatre Tavern, Williamson Square on 22 November 1797 attended by William Roscoe, James Currie, Joshua Lace and William Clarke. No time was wasted: the first formal meeting of interested subscribers to the Library and News Room was held in the Council Chamber in Brunswick Street five days later, on 27 November 1797. The success of the enterprise was immediate, and the handsome stone fronted building on the south side of Church Street opened on 1 January 1799. Initially membership was limited to three hundred and fifty subscribers, each paying ten guineas annually. Over the next two years membership was allowed to increase by seventy-five annually. Despite a progressive increase in subscription rates, through twenty to thirty guineas, demand was high. On each occasion the subscription list was

closed within twenty-four hours. The Athenaeum became an ideal meeting place for doctors to discuss and study subjects unrelated to medicine in the company of other professionals and businessmen. Between 1800 and 1840 most of the prominent doctors in Liverpool were members; many served as President during this period.

Rutter was elected as the first Treasurer, and became President from 1804 to 1805. James Currie assumed responsibility for the stocking of the library. When Roscoe became bankrupt in 1815, a group of subscribers purchased much of his personal book collection for the Athenaeum, creating one of the most valuable libraries in Liverpool. Although he had remained an active subscriber to the Liverpool Library, there is no documented evidence that Rutter was involved in the move to the Lyceum in Bold Street. This building, completed in 1803, provided an elegant and conveniently sited library and newsroom. With the increasing support of leading doctors, the Lyceum flourished as a meeting place for both business and professional men. By 1850, the library catalogue contained fifty thousand items, with a medical section of four hundred and twenty texts. Unfortunately, the contents of this early library were completely lost.

No minutes or contemporary records can be found for the twenty years following the inauguration of the Liverpool Medical Library. It can only be presumed that the management of the Library progressed smoothly and thrived under the 'Rules' of establishment. The next recorded meeting of the Committee took place on 12 July 1800. This meeting was apparently adjourned after Drs Lyon, Currie, Bostock, Brandreth, Renwick and Rutter had approved a series of eleven resolutions, which were to significantly change the management structure and the membership of the Library. The 'perpetual management committee' was to be replaced by a committee of seven members to be elected annually. Subscription rates for apprentices were decreased, while those for other members were increased. Both apothecaries would retain free access to the Library. Restriction of membership to the medical profession was abolished. Charles Blundell Esq., the first businessman to become a member, was subsequently elected to the committee at the Annual General Meeting on 8 September 1800.

Two special meetings of the Liverpool Medical Library took place in 1806. At the first, in July, the request from the Liverpool Medical and Physical Society to hold meetings in the Library was discussed. There is, however, no record of the decision made and no record of any Society proceedings following this request. Mysteriously, a note appeared in the minutes of the Medical Library in March 1813 stating that a sum of money which had belonged to the 'late Medical Society of this Town' had been paid into the Library funds. At the second meeting, in August 1806, Park proposed that the Library should be returned to the Infirmary in Shaw Street 'where it would be housed in a room built for the purpose at the expense of the subscribers'. This room was duly

built within the archway above the patients' entrance to the Infirmary facing Shaw's Brow, and was completed before the end of 1807.

Other influential educational developments followed. In 1812, three prominent physicians, Bostock, Vose and Traill, together with a group of merchants, founded the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society as a forum for the 'general discussion of science and literature in an atmosphere free from the exclusive pursuit of Commerce'.

Thomas Stuart Traill, a native of the Orkney Islands, had arrived in Liverpool shortly after graduating from the Edinburgh Medical School in 1801. He rapidly established a highly successful medical practice and developed a pioneering interest in forensic medicine. He was elected Secretary of the Literary and Philosophical Society, and served for many years. He also played a prominent role in the foundation of the Royal Institution as a centre for literature, science and the arts, which opened in 1817 in a large converted mansion in Colquitt Street, which had been built by a rich merchant in 1799. The Royal Institution was the most important cultural and medical development in nineteenth-century Liverpool that owed so much to Roscoe and his circle. This magnificent building became the venue for the meetings of the Literary and Philosophical Society and many other societies.

In 1834, the Liverpool Royal Institution School of Medicine and Surgery was opened – for the first time providing Liverpool with a school of medicine offering a complete medical education for students. Formal lectures were given at the Royal Institution, while clinical experience was obtained predominantly at the Infirmary. By this time, Traill, whose other achievements included the editorship of the eighth edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, had left Liverpool to become Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in Edinburgh.

The profound influence of the Literary and Philosophical Society continued for over forty years. Many advances in medicine and allied sciences were discussed at Society meetings long after the opening of the Liverpool Medical Institution. At consecutive meetings in January 1847, first the local dentist Felix Yaniewicz and, subsequently, the surgeon Alfred Higginson demonstrated the pieces of apparatus which they had individually designed for the administration of ether. Later that year, on 29 November, the chemist, James Waldie, gave an account of his personal discovery of the anaesthetic properties of chloroform which he had purified, in the laboratory of Liverpool's Apothecaries' Hall.

John Rutter, first elected President of the Liverpool Medical Library in 1809, was re-elected in January 1827, just as the Corporation gave notice that the Infirmary was to be demolished in preparation for the building of St George's Hall, necessitating relocation of the Library. Rutter agreed to approach the Corporation to persuade this august body of their obligation to provide accommodation in a 'suitable building on any convenient and nearly central piece of land not wanted for any purpose more important'. After

rejecting, as impracticable, the Corporation's first suggestion that the Library Committee seek accommodation within the new Infirmary in Brownlow Street, Rutter recommended that the Corporation should grant them the use of the vacant building behind the Cattle Market Weighing Machine Room in Lime Street. The Corporation acquiesced immediately, and by September 1827 the building was ready for use by the Library. All the subscribing members showed their appreciation by sending 'their warmest thanks to the Mayor and Common Council', applauding their prompt attention to the application of the Committee and for liberally complying with their request by erecting the spacious premises now occupied by the Library. Further change took place in March 1832, when it was decided to extend the educational role of the Library by opening on Saturday evenings for the discussion of medical topics.

Bickerton speculates that the Saturday evening meetings stimulated a desire for more regular discussion of medical subjects, which resulted in the formation of the Liverpool Medical Society when forty members of the medical profession met in the rooms of the Medical Library on 10 January 1833. It was declared that the object of the Society was 'the promotion of medical and surgical knowledge and every branch connected herewith'. Rutter, the most senior and most respected of those present, presided. A series of laws that had been drawn up by Drs Reynolds, Lane and Duncan and Messrs Banner, Churton and Palmer – the prime movers behind the founding of the Society – were adopted. It was agreed that the Society would meet fortnightly on Wednesday evenings between October and April, and that the annual subscription should be half a guinea. It was also agreed that four 'rotating' Presidents would be elected by ballot annually at the start of each academic session in October. Rutter would act as President and Banner as Secretary until the first official meeting on 23 January. However, as ill-health prevented Rutter's attendance, Dr Carson presided at this second meeting, when it was unanimously agreed that Rutter should be elected as Senior President without ballot in recognition of his assistance in the formation of the Society. Carson, Banner and Squires were elected by ballot as the three other Presidents. The 'Laws of the Society' proposed at the first meeting were adopted following 'amendment and re-codification'. These laws, or rules, were subsequently used as the basis for the Constitution of the Medical Institution.

Reynolds informed this meeting that he had obtained provisional permission for the Society to meet at the Royal Institution. After considerable discussion on this occasion, and at a subsequent meeting, the Committee unanimously agreed to accept the invitation from the Literary and Philosophical Society to meet in their rooms. For the next six years, the Liverpool Medical Society met regularly in the comfort and elegance of the Royal Institution.

Meanwhile, further trouble for the Library loomed. On 13 April 1833, Dr Squires, President of the Medical Library, received notice that the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company wished to repossess the building in the Cattle

Market occupied by the Medical Library, to enable the development of Lime Street railway station. Two days later, John Rutter presided at a special meeting of the Committee of the Medical Society, when it was unanimously agreed to cooperate fully with the members of the Medical Library in negotiations to obtain a new building commensurate with the needs of both Societies and the profession in general. He wrote to Squires suggesting that the time had come for the profession in Liverpool to acquire a building entirely for its own use, of a design suitable to accommodate a library, a pathological museum, a large meeting room for lectures or meetings of the various associated medical societies, a designated committee room and a suitable residence for a librarian. He counselled that, if the Corporation did make the expected gift of land, the profession should be prepared to bear the cost of the building, estimated at the time to be six hundred pounds. Alas, this proposal did not produce an immediate response from his professional colleagues.

To enable him to execute 'this remarkable vision', Rutter was re-elected President of the Medical Library in 1834 and given the full authority to negotiate directly with Liverpool Corporation, or any other organisation, as the acknowledged leader of the profession and trusted friend of many influential citizens. In December 1834, Rutter wrote to all the doctors of Liverpool to inform them that members of the Medical Library had unanimously agreed to raise a sum of money by subscription to provide the proposed facilities. Initially, he agreed to pursue the possible use of vacant ground in Colquitt Street belonging to the Royal Institution. However, after at times ignominious discussion, it was decided at a meeting on 3 March 1835 that the conditions of acquisition laid down by the Royal Institution were totally unacceptable. At this meeting, a committee of eleven was elected to oversee the building of a 'great medical institution'. This committee became the Trustees of the Building, under the guidance of Rutter and Jeffreys with Rogerson as Secretary.

In the knowledge that six hundred pounds (three hundred pounds from Rutter) had already been contributed by the medical profession, Jeffreys launched a public appeal in the *Liverpool Mercury* on 14 and 21 March 1835, inviting the 'Inhabitants of Liverpool' to contribute to this development which would be of undoubted benefit to the town. By now, the cost had risen to between one thousand five hundred and two thousand pounds. The Corporation promptly responded with the generous gift of one thousand pounds, and, by October 1835, two thousand four hundred pounds had been subscribed – including a significant contribution from Rutter's cousin, William Rathbone.

After protracted discussions with the Corporation about the suitability of various plots of land, the Trustees were granted the free lease – ownership in perpetuity – of land at the corner of Mount Pleasant and Hope Street on 18 July 1835. This land, valued at £557 10s, was the site of the tavern in which William Roscoe had been born (Martindale's Inn) and the adjacent bowling green. Work commenced on the site in August 1835. As President of the Medical Library

and Chairman of the Trustees of the Institution Building, John Rutter presided at the opening on this site on 31 May 1837, an event preceding both the laying of the foundation stone of St George's Hall and the opening of Lime Street Station.

Once the building was completed, Rutter relinquished his role as Chairman of the Trustees, devolving the management of the Institution Building upon the other Trustees who met monthly under the guidance of either Carson or Jeffreys. He presided over the Library Committee for the last time on 20 June 1837.

The completion of the building in less than two years was a remarkable achievement, but the cost had exceeded four thousand pounds. Despite the generosity of the Corporation and Dr Rutter's personal donations of nine hundred pounds, the Trustees of the Building were heavily in debt. However, a successful bazaar organised by Mrs James Dawson, the wife of the Treasurer, and her friends, held in the new building between 10 and 12 October 1838, secured sufficient funds to clear the debt. Before John Rutter died on 16 October 1838, in his seventy-seventh year, he had the satisfaction of learning that the Institution was free of debt.

At first, the Liverpool Medical Society found itself unable to accept the terms of accommodation offered by the Trustees. It survived as a separate, distinct entity, holding meetings in the Royal Institution until 16 August 1839. It then became officially integrated with the Committee of the Medical Library and the Trustees of the Medical Institution on the understanding that the title of the united societies would be the 'Liverpool Medical Association'. In October 1839, Mr Banner, one of the Presidents of the Medical Society, delivered the inaugural address of the Association. At the first Annual General Meeting on 14 January 1840, Mr James Dawson was elected President, a position which he held for the next twenty-five years. The Trustees continued to hold the building and its contents in legal trust, but ceased to exert any influence on events. Eighteen former members of the committees of the Medical Library and the Medical Society were elected to the Council, the new governing body. At an Extraordinary General Meeting on 27 February 1840 it was agreed that the Liverpool Medical Association should be renamed the Liverpool Medical Institution.

The foundation of the Liverpool Medical Institution was a feat of the highest statesmanship, and the aims and objects for which it was established no less remarkable. The concept alone remains a tribute to the diligence of one man, John Rutter. Succeeding generations of members of the Liverpool Medical Institution owe a debt of gratitude to John Rutter, whose portrait hangs prominently in the lecture theatre. He was the first to make a public declaration of the profession's need for such a meeting place. Acknowledged by the profession as a man of outstanding ability with a great capacity for negotiation, with their support he assumed the responsibility of seeing the project to

completion.

From its foundation to the present day, the Liverpool Medical Institution has been the centre of medical life in Liverpool, associated with the dissemination of knowledge of high quality in ever expanding fields and the social well-being of the members.

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#### APPENDIX (Mair Pierce Moulton)

##### *Archives of the Liverpool Medical Institution*

From small beginnings in 1779, there are now over thirty thousand volumes acquired over the years by purchase, donation and bequests. There is a tremendous range, from sixteenth century imprints to the present day. The subjects covered are no less awesome: as well as medical texts there are unexpected seminal works on subjects such as botany, geology, electricity and plumbing.

The Liverpool Conservation Centre has recently expertly preserved many volumes, funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Examples on display included: Andreas Versalius *De humani corporis fabrica epitome* of 1642; two volumes by Eucharis Roesslin, *Byrth of mankinde* (1613) and *De partu hominis et quae circa ipsum accidunt* (published in 1532, with woodcut illustrations); and a particularly fragile copy of John Hull’s *Dissertatio medica inauguralis de catharticiis* of 1792, which has a very attractive hand-printed paper cover.

The archive material is comprised largely of the papers of the original Medical Library and the Liverpool Medical Institution, as well as some material from other, earlier medical societies with links to the Institution. There is a small collection of papers of individual doctors. Until recently this collection was a hidden resource, since it had not been catalogued. The Wellcome Trust has recently awarded a grant to the Library so that an archivist could be employed for eighteen months to sort out and catalogue the material for the benefit of future historians. At the talk to the Medical History Society on 20 March 2003, the minutes of the Library’s first meeting in 1779 and the minutes of the Liverpool Medical Society meeting in 1833 were displayed, together with letters from and a photograph of the cricketer, Harold Larwood.

There is also an instrument collection of over two hundred items, most of which have been cryptically listed. No research or preservation work has been undertaken with this particular collection. The small number of items that have already been identified are known to date from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. There are also amputation knives from around 1780, a paraffin oil microscope, a trepanning set dating from the eighteenth century and a resuscitation set used for patients who were drowning.

