

News, Notes and Queries

ROYAL PHYSICIANS IN SCOTLAND, 1568–1853

There are many purposes for which historians may need to know who have held appointments in the Medical Households of British sovereigns. On the one hand this is a part of the history of the monarchs and their courts; on the other it is part of the history of the medical profession and, more widely, of medicine. Unfortunately many mistaken statements are handed down from one writer to another, so that any list of royal physicians compiled from even the best available printed authorities is bound to omit names which ought to be there and to include others which ought not. In an attempt to sort out some confusions of this kind, I recently addressed an enquiry to the Scottish Record Office and received not only a full reply but complete lists of H.M. Ordinary Physicians and H.M. First Physicians, with references to the sources and to other relevant materials. From these lists I have already been able to settle several doubts; but evidently they would be useful to many other workers besides myself, and the Scottish Record Office has most kindly given me permission to publish them here.* They speak for themselves, and I have nothing to add by way of introduction except that there is no information on any office exercising supervision over the medical offices of the Household comparable to that of the Lord Chamberlain in England; and that the Scottish Record Office has no record of the medical appointments made after 1847.

G. N. CLARK

H.M. ORDINARY PHYSICIANS, 1568–1853

Royal physicians (usually called mediciners in the sixteenth century) are mentioned in the *Exchequer Rolls* and other sources from the fourteenth century onwards, but it is impossible to trace actual appointments before the reign of James VI. In the seventeenth century there was a Principal Physician and a varying number of ordinary physicians (or physicians-in-ordinary). After 1714 there was only one of the latter, sometimes referred to as the Second Physician. The salary of £50 attached to the office was discontinued in 1844 and the practice of making appointments by commission under the privy seal lapsed after 1847.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Names and Notes</i>	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Source</i>
1568–c. 1580	ALEXANDER PRESTON Reappointed 20 Mar. 1576 (MS. Reg. Sec. Sig. xliii, f75). Still in office in May 1580 (<i>Exchequer Rolls</i> , xxi, 154–5.)	13 July 1568	<i>Reg. Secreti Sigilli</i> , vi, No. 392
1575–1598	GILBERT MONCRIEFF OF MYRESIDE Reappointed 8 Jan. 1579 (<i>ibid.</i> , xlv, f101). Died 24 Feb. 1598 (<i>The Moncrieffs and the Moncrieffes</i> , 602–606).	21 Sept. 1575	MS Reg. Sec. Sig., xliii, f28.

* I wish to thank in particular Dr. Athol L. Murray, Assistant Keeper in the Scottish Record Office.

News, Notes and Queries

1581-1599	GILBERT SKENE Died June 1599 (Edinburgh Testaments; <i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	16 June 1581	Ibid., xlvi, f39
1593-c. 1620	MARTIN SCHONER Appointed Queen's physician 22 July 1597 (ibid., lxix, f143). Dead before May 1620 (<i>Reg. Magni Sigilli</i> , viii, No. 22)	27 Oct. 1593	Ibid. lxx, f245
1597-1617	DAVID KINLOCH Died 10 Sept. 1617 (<i>Roll of Eminent Burgesses of Dundee</i> , 92-4)	21 Mar. 1597	Ibid, lxix, f82
c.1622-1623	JOHN MCCULLOCH In office on 24 April 1622 (<i>Reg. Mag. Sig.</i> , viii, No. 315) Died Jan. 1623 (<i>Reg. of Retours</i> , xxvi, f116)	—	—
c.1623	JAMES MCCULLOCH Dead before May 1623 (<i>Reg. Mag. Sig.</i> , viii, No. 455)	—	—
c.1631-c.1650	ALEXANDER RAMSAY In office on 9 Mar. 1631 and 9 April 1650 (<i>Part. Reg. Sasines</i> , Edinburgh, xvii, f181, xxxvii, f388).	—	—
c.1635-1644	JAMES CHALMERS In office on 25 Mar. 1635 (<i>Reg. Mag. Sig.</i> , ix, No. 298). Died Sept. 1644 (<i>Reg. of Retours</i> , xxvii, f31).	—	—
1635-1655	JOHN CRAIG Died Jan. 1655 (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	c. 4 Apr. 1635	Min Bk of Signatures (E/262) f16
c.1646-1679	SIR JOHN WEDDERBURN In office on 9 Apr. 1646. Pension of £2000 Scots granted 10 Jan. 1647 and renewed 28 June 1661 (<i>Reg. Sec. Sig.</i> cxiv, f351; <i>Privy Seal</i> , Eng. Rec., i, p.166). Died July 1679. (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i> ; <i>Wedderburn Book</i> , i, 132-7)	—	—
c.1660-1674	SIR ROBERT CUNNINGHAM OF AUCHENHARVIE In office on 25 July 1660 (<i>Roll</i>	—	—

News, Notes and Queries

	<i>of Edinburgh Burgesses, 136</i>		
	Buried 4 Mar. 1674 (G.E.C., <i>Complete Baronetage</i> , iv, 295)		
c.1670	SIR ALEXANDER MARTIN OF STRATHENDRY	—	—
	Mentioned in commission to next. Dead before 29 Sept. 1670 (<i>Reg. Privy Council</i> , iii, 227)	—	—
1672–1689	THOMAS BURNET Appointed Principal Physic- ian Dec. 1689.	30 May 1672	Privy Seal (English Record), ii, 344
1672–1699	SIR DAVID HAY Died June 1699 (Edinburgh Testaments).	30 May 1672	Ibid. 417
1675–1681	ARCHIBALD STEVENSON Appointed Principal Physic- ian Nov. 1681	24 Sept. 1675	<i>Cal. State Papers Domestic</i> , 1675–6, 314
1681–1694	ANDREW BALFOUR Died 10 Jan. 1694. (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	11 Nov. 1681	Privy Seal (English Record), iii, 451
1682–c.1707	SIR ROBERT SIBBALD Ceased to hold office by 1708. Died Aug. 1722. Also Geo- grapher Royal. (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	30 Sept. 1682	Ibid, iii, 457
1691–1704	THOMAS DALRYMPLE Appointed Principal Physician Mar. 1704	15 Dec. 1691	Ibid. iv, 494
1704–1717	SIR EDWARD EIZAT Resigned Aug. 1717	31 Mar. 1704	Secretary's Warrant Bk. xix, 176
1714	GEORGE MACKENZIE Appointed Third Physician by Anne. Appointment not re- newed by George I.	22 Mar 1714	Privy Seal (English Record), vii, 121
1717–1719	WILLIAM DOUGLAS Died 22 Mar. 1719 (Exchequer Establishment List, E.229/10/1).	10 Aug. 1717	Ibid, vii 224
1719–1732	ALEXANDER DUNDAS Died 1 Apr. 1732 (Ibid.)	31 Mar. 1719	Ibid., vii, 272
1732–1761	JAMES LIDDERDALE Resigned Apr. 1761	18 Apr. 1732	Ibid., viii, 14
1761–1806	FRANCIS HOME Resigned June 1806. Died 15 Feb. 1813 (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	13 Apr. 1761	Ibid., ix, 141

News, Notes and Queries

1806–1844	JAMES HOME Died 5 Dec. 1894 (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	10 June 1806	Ibid., xiii, 240
1844–1847	ANDREW COMBE Died 9 Aug. 1847 (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	20 Dec. 1844	Ibid., xvi, 40
1847–1853	JOHN SCOTT Died 3 May 1853. (Edinburgh Inventories, lxxxi, 484)	31 Dec. 1847	Warrant Bk. (HH29/1) 9

H.M. FIRST PHYSICIANS
1603–1844

The first appointment to the office of Principal Mediciner (later termed Principal or First Physician) was that of John Craig in 1603. His commission refers to a vacancy caused by the death of Gilbert Moncrieff, but there is no evidence that the latter ever ranked above the other ordinary physicians (*q.v.*). The office lapsed on the death of Dr. John Abercrombie in 1844, together with the salary of £100 attached to it.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Name and Notes</i>	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Source</i>
1603–1620	JOHN CRAIG Died 1620 (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	3 Jan. 1603	MS Reg. Secreti Sigillii, lxxiii, f233
1645(?)–1681	SIR ALEXANDER FRASER OF DORES Said to have been appointed in 1645. Definitely in office by 17 Dec. 1662 (Reg. Deeds, Mack., viii, 135). Died 3 May 1681 (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	1645(?)	G.E.C., <i>Complete Baronetage</i> , iv, 292
1681–1686	ARCHIBALD STEVENSON Still in office on 5 Feb. 1686 (Great Seal Reg., lxx, f37)	12 Nov. 1681	Privy Seal (English Record), iii, 359
1686–1689	CHRISTOPHER IRVINE Also Historiographer Royal. Died 1693. (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i> ; <i>Book of the Irvings</i> , 142–6).	20 Sept. 1686	Great Seal (Paper Reg.), xii, No. 188
1689–1704	SIR THOMAS BURNET Dead by Mar. 1704. (<i>Dict. Nat. Biog.</i>)	7 Dec. 1689	Privy Seal (English Record), iv, 380
1704–1725	THOMAS DALRYMPLE Died 23 July 1725. Exchequer Establishment List (E229/10/1)	31 Mar. 1704	Ibid, vi, 207
1725–1733	JAMES CAMPBELL Died 16 Jan. 1733 (Ibid).	23 Sept. 1725	Ibid, vii, 444