

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS QUEEN MOTHER LAYS FOUNDATION STONE

A distinguished gathering, which was presided over by Sir ROBERT PLATT, P.R.C.P., and which included many Fellows and Members, saw QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER lay the foundation stone on March 6 of the new Royal College of Physicians of London, which is to rise on the site where Someries House used to stand at the south-east corner of Regent's Park.¹ The Royal College of Physicians, then, is to join the many professional organizations—among them the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Medical Research Council—which have recently moved into this area, so dominated by the architecture of Nash. To its massive solidity the dignity of their traditions is fittingly allied.

The College's Past Homes

"The Royal College of Physicians," Sir Robert Platt said, "was founded by Henry VIII in 1518 in the tenth year of his reign. Its first President was Thomas Linacre, who was Physician to Henry the Seventh and to Henry the Eighth, and our close connexion with the reigning sovereign has never been lost in 440 years. The purpose of its foundation was 'The improvement and more orderly exercise of the art of Physic and the repression of irregular unlearned and incompetent practitioners' within the City of London and within seven miles thereof. Although Linacre died in 1524, the College went on meeting in Linacre's house in Knight-rider Street in the City for nearly a hundred years, and the house remained the property of the College until 1860. It was in this house that John Caius presided over the College during his Presidency and presented in 1556 the silver caduceus which is still carried by its Presidents.

"But by 1614 a new College had been built at Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, near by St. Paul's Cathedral. Of the opening of the College we know little except that Thomas Moundeford was President and that in his speech at the dinner held to celebrate the opening of the new College he praised the King and denounced smoking. So times change but little. It would be in this, the second College, that William Harvey gave his Lumleian Lectures in which he spoke of his discoveries concerning the circulation of the blood.

"But the second College was to be short-lived, for it was destroyed by the fire of 1666 in which the College lost so many of its possessions, including most of its books and some of its most valuable records, and it is because of this

fire that I am unable to tell Your Majesty whether I am the eighty-eighth or the eighty-ninth, or even perhaps the ninetieth, President of this College.

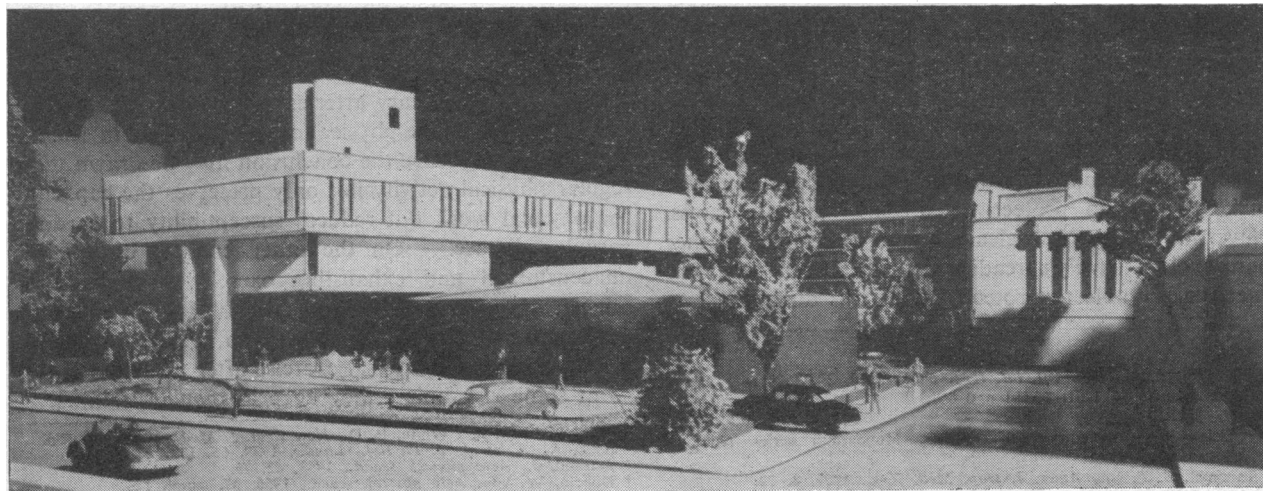
"A new College was built to replace the loss, still in the City of London, namely in Warwick Lane, by Robert Hooke, though Wren had some part in its designs, and this was opened in 1674, and the Mace, which has the monogram of Charles II upon it, dates from this time. The connexion between Charles II and the College was a close one through his physician, Sir George Ent. The King himself came, during the plague year, to hear Ent's Lumleian Lecture and immediately knighted him at the end of the lecture. This was in the exciting days of the early activities of the Royal Society, of which Ent was one of the original Fellows.

"The College in Warwick Lane served its purpose for about 150 years, when the present building in Pall Mall East, designed by Robert Smirke, was opened in 1825. Sir Henry Hallford, who in his time was physician to George III,



[BIPPA]

The Queen Mother laying the foundation stone.



[Denys Lasdun and Partners]

Model of the new Royal College of Physicians, with St. Andrew's Place on the right.

George IV, William IV, and Queen Victoria, was President at the time, and most of the sons of George III were present at the opening ceremony.

Looking Ahead

"From this very brief review of some of our past let us turn to the present and the future. The work of the College and the scope of its activities continually increase. This is partly because of the exciting period of scientific discovery and medical progress in which you and I, Ma'am, have been privileged to live, and partly due to the changes in the organization of medicine consequent upon this progress. The need for postgraduate study and for communication between physicians and research workers becomes ever more imperative, and the College's age-long concern with the standards of medical practice has made the need for bigger, better, and more convenient premises urgent. We hope that our new building will become the meeting place of physicians from all over the world.

"Our premises in Pall Mall East, which we rent for a peppercorn from the reigning sovereign, will be taken by the Canadian Government as an extension of Canada House, but we build again, most fortunately on Crown land, and here I must refer at once to the magnificent benefaction which we received from the Wolfson Foundation which has made it possible for us to have a building which should in every way be equal to its purpose.² We decided very early that if we were to build in the nineteen-sixties we should build a modern building and we appointed an architect whom we believe equal to meet this challenge. I asked him, I think the first time that we met, whether it was possible to build a building of dignity, charm, and beauty, while fully exploiting the opportunities of design, structure, and engineering which modern technology has made possible. He has no doubts about this, and his designs have been praised in the highest quarters.

The Right to be Royal

"To move from the City of London to Westminster in 1825 required an Act of Parliament, and another was necessary in 1960 to allow us to hold land, and to conduct our business, outside the City of Westminster. Imagine our surprise and horror when in preparing for this Act of Parliament we found that our right to the Royal title rested on no recorded Act, Statute, or document of any kind. Perhaps our Royal tradition has been so close that the title was always assumed and no one had questioned it.

"It was certainly the wish of Charles II that we should be called the King's College of Physicians and the title 'Royal' was used by Charles himself and frequently since his time, but the new Charter which Charles II was to grant was never confirmed by Parliament, partly because of opposition from the Apothecaries and the Barber Surgeons. Indeed, the Barber Surgeons employed Counsel and presented a petition against the granting of a Charter to the Physicians and, they record, 'This business involved several meetings at Taverns and some presents to the Duke of York's secretary,'" and so it may be that the granting of the Royal title to our college is included among those many wise things which Charles II said but never did.

"But since the Act of 1960 the Royal title is now secure.³ In that same Act we did consider whether we should take the opportunity of changing our name from the Royal College of Physicians of London to the Royal College of Physicians of England, but although we claim to speak for the physicians of England and Wales, and, indeed, even for parts of Scotland and Ireland, and the Commonwealth (though Your Majesty will know that there is a famous and ancient Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh), nevertheless we felt that we should maintain, if only for traditional and historical reasons, our original association with London, and so the Royal College of Physicians of London we proudly remain, and we delight that the Royal tradition lives on and is personified in your gracious presence here to-day."

A Live Centre of Medicine

QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER, in the course of her speech, said that the College to-day occupied a position of unrivalled renown and influence in the world of medicine. That its Royal title was worthily earned no one could doubt, for distinguished Fellows of the College had been Physicians to the Sovereign since the time of Henry VIII. They had often enjoyed the personal friendship of their King or Queen, but in the best traditions of their profession had never aspired to political power or influence. It was fitting, therefore, that the fifth home of the Royal College should be built on Crown land, among the incomparable beauty of John Nash's terraces. "I am confident," the Queen Mother continued, "that this building will be worthy of the past, and will in the future become a live centre of medicine, where physicians from all over the world will meet to discuss their problems and exchange new ideas." Under the leadership of the President changes were already taking place, and Members as well as Fellows were beginning to play a greater part in the affairs of the College—sharing in clinical and scientific discussions as well as in the traditional lectures, and in this way keeping in closer touch with medical research, which was so vital to their work.

Dr. R. R. BOMFORD, in a gracious and felicitous speech, thanked the Queen Mother for laying the foundation stone of the new College.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS REPORT ON SMOKING

We print below the Royal College of Physicians' own summary of its report on smoking in relation to cancer of the lung and other diseases, "Smoking and Health." The report was prepared by a Committee on Smoking and Atmospheric Pollution† set up by the College in April, 1959. A leading article appears at p. 696.*

Introduction

Several serious diseases, in particular lung cancer, affect smokers more often than non-smokers. Cigarette smokers have the greatest risk of dying from these diseases, and the risk is greater for the heavier smokers. The many deaths caused by these diseases present a challenge to medicine, in so far as they are due to smoking they should be preventable. This report is intended to give to doctors and others evidence on the hazards of smoking so that they may decide what should be done.

History of Smoking

After its introduction to Europe in the sixteenth century, tobacco smoking, mostly in pipes, rapidly became popular. It has always had its advocates and opponents, but only recently has scientific study produced valid evidence of its ill-effects upon health. Cigarettes have largely replaced other forms of smoking in the past 70 years, during which time tobacco consumption has steadily increased. It is still increasing. Women hardly ever smoked before 1920: since then they have smoked steadily increasing numbers of cigarettes.

Present Smoking Habits

Three-quarters of the men and half of the women in Britain smoke. Men smoke more heavily than women. Smoking is now widespread among schoolchildren, especially boys. Many doctors have given up smoking

**Smoking and Health*, 1962, London, Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd Price 5s. net.

†Sir Robert Platt, P.R.C.P., Sir Aubrey Lewis, Dr. J. G. Scadding, Dr. R. Bodley Scott, Dr. F. Avery Jones, Dr. N. C. Oswald, Dr. J. N. Morris, Dr. J. A. Scott, Dr. C. M. Fletcher (*honorary secretary*).

¹*Brit. med. J.* 1960, 2, 61. ²*Ibid.*, 1959, 2, 416 and 427. ³*Ibid.*, 1960, 1, 123.