



**Presentation of the diploma of Fellowship of The Royal College of Surgeons (*ad eundem*), to Dr John Hunt by Lord Brock. Also in the picture, Sir Arthur Porritt (right) and Professor Charles Wells, vice-president of The Royal College of Surgeons (left)**

## *Editorial*

### THE HONORARY SECRETARY OF COUNCIL

**A**FTER the fourteenth annual general meeting of the College Dr John Hunt resigned from the office of honorary secretary of Council which he had held since he had been instrumental in founding the College. The absence of John Hunt from the seat on the right hand of the chairman at council meetings will make these assemblies seem different, for he has never missed a meeting.

The part which he played with the help of our immediate past president Fraser Rose in convening the steering committee, drawing up their report and setting up the foundation council is now part of the post-war medical history of this country. Members of that council will recollect being roused on a dark December morning at about eight a.m. by a bright brisk voice announcing, "this is John Hunt 'phoning from London" and inviting them to serve on the foundation council. For them it was the beginning of a great and exciting experience; for John Hunt it was the culmination of a year of hard and untiring work. It was rumoured, and with much truth, that for months he had risen at five in the morning to work on the enormous correspondence which the formation of the College entailed. As secretary of the early councils he continued to work at the same rate. No wonder the College prospered as it did.

In general practice the years 1948 to 1952 were a period of disillusion, distress and confusion following the new circumstances of practice brought about by implementation of the National Health Service Acts at a time when post-war resettlement of doctors was in progress. For some of us the idea of a college of general practitioners to demonstrate and develop an intellectual approach to the application of medical knowledge and experience in the home backgrounds of our patients became a guide to lead us through a dark period of transition. John Hunt himself acted as guide to the Council in those early days, lending the first floor back room in his own house in Sloane Street as the only premises. From this small space the paperwork flowed during the first three years of the College's existence. Four typewriters clattered, the register of membership grew within it, and the mountain of post-bags which filled his busy entrance hall before the annual general meetings remain a vivid memory.

Few of us, if any, can know the details of his travels to address  
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meetings—often of very few—and to establish the local faculties which constitute the strength of our organization today. In addition to all this John was forever pursuing contacts with men and women both within and outside the profession, conferring with lawyers and other advisers and with the band of foundation members, laying sound foundations for the College to build on.

A little of all this is recorded, for the most part it lingers in our own memories. His assessment of the qualities of those first chosen to develop the faculties was invaluable. His service on the standing committees of Council and the *ad hoc* groups which were formed for the consideration of special issues meant very much to the rest who scarcely knew each other. This is the moment to recall it.

In addition, John Hunt practised his gift of handing on the baton; this never resulted in less work for himself, for there were always expanding areas to explore, but it established a firm basis of experience and involvement of members throughout the College. We must not forget that the early years of the College coincided with heavy claims of his own practice and those of his quite young family. Our own indebtedness to his wife Elizabeth Hunt can only be met by our gratitude in recognizing her own share of sacrifice in those early days and on to the present.

The College is proud to share in the general professional recognition of John Hunt's qualities; election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians in 1964 (he was a member since 1934) together with the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1966 is unique in family practice and rare in any branch of the profession of medicine today. In the U.S.A. he has been created this year one of the twelve Honorary Members of the Academy of General Practice and he has been a Fellow of the Australian College of General Practitioners since its early days. His appointment as consultant in general practice to the Royal Air Force is further tribute to his quality in our own sphere of professional work.

We can share in our pride for John Hunt, too, for the influence of the various opportunities he has used, among others the Lloyd Roberts lecture in 1957 and the Lumleian lectures to come in 1967, to proclaim the essential principles of medicine in general practice.

Most of all we value the richness of warm friendship with him and around him. We keep the advantage of his advice in Council as deputy vice-chairman until such time as we shall make yet more claim upon him for further office. Meanwhile we try to express our appreciation and gratitude to John Hunt for all that he has done.