



A DOCTOR'S LIFE

Dr R P Cookson

New Millennium 1996 (Second edition)

353 pages, price £8.95

ISBN 185845056X

This is the story of a dedicated general practitioner (GP) who qualified from Edinburgh in January 1943; his final examinations were taken six months early in order to release hospital doctors for war service. Dr Cookson was then appointed to the sole residency at the 100-bed Arbroath General Hospital where, in peacetime, there had been two resident doctors. In spite of visits by consultants and local GPs who visited their own patients, it was indeed a baptism of fire, as in addition to the other duties he was required to administer all the anaesthetics.

After six months at the hospital, Dr Cookson served in the army in North Africa, and on demobilization returned to Arbroath Hospital for a further six months before looking for an opening in general practice.

Eventually he settled in a three-man private practice in the small seaside town of Bridlington. There he had access to local hospitals and also visited villages up to seven miles away. He enjoyed this challenge as he had enjoyed all the others, in spite of the chaos involved in the transfer to the National Health Service in 1948.

In 1975, the practice moved from its three separate surgeries to a new health centre where Dr Cookson remained until he retired in 1982.

Most of this detailed and interesting saga deals with his life up to the 1960s and will interest those doctors who qualified during the war or soon after. Younger GPs, in particular, should read this narrative to gain some detailed knowledge of the massive changes which affected general practice in the early post-war era.

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ABC OF MEDICAL COMPUTING

N Lee and A Millman

BMJ Publishing Group 1996

Price £17.95

This is an excellent book that is suitable not only for beginners in information technology, but for many of us who want to fill in the gaps in our experience. There is inevitably much detail that is not

particular to medicine, but the book is rightly aimed at both primary and secondary care. The chapters relating to general practice are concise and informative and detailed enough for a book of this kind. A deeper understanding would be gained from books on specific subjects such as audit and practice management, and from becoming familiar with the major general practice computer systems. Although the book is broadly comprehensive, one subject not addressed is how to progress after having read it. Although some of the chapters attempt to take a step-by-step approach, readers will learn more of what can be done rather than how it is done. Help will still be required and there could be more advice on courses, further reading and the best approach to gaining practical experience.

The book is attractively presented in A4 size with the text in one column and relevant illustrations or information boxes at the same level in the adjacent column. The excellent glossary and index are necessary because terms are introduced before being explained in the text.

The authors have produced a very up-to-date and factual book. It is interesting to see how, in doing so, they have moved beyond simply giving readers an understanding of how IT works and the wonder of it all.

FREDERICK DIFFORD

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JOINT AND SOFT TISSUE INJECTION - INJECTING WITH CONFIDENCE

Trevor Silver

Radcliffe Medical Press 1996

84 pages, price £19.95

ISBN 1857751434

Whether we inject a lot or a little, reminders of the anatomy and technical knowledge required to inject safely and accurately are invaluable. This book has very clear photographs showing each technique, with excellent accompanying drawings demonstrating the underlying anatomical landmarks. These are ideal for encouraging confidence in novice injectors. The adjacent text concisely describes the diagnosis and approaches to each injection, and often includes some pearls of practical knowledge through which Silver's experience of the subject shines.

In the first two chapters, the author covers the general principles and medico-legal aspects of joint injections concisely