

Life & Times

Professor Richard Scott:

celebrating the first professor of general practice in the world



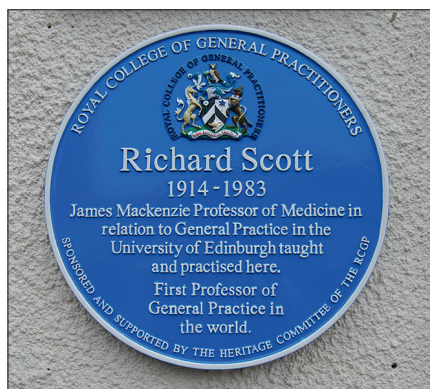
Professor Richard Scott. Image from RCGP archive.

HISTORY

As the 70th anniversary of the NHS approaches next year in 2018, its exact contemporary in Edinburgh deserves to be remembered. On the very same day in 1948, Richard Scott began a general medical practice there. This practice was not only a centre for community health and welfare but also a place of teaching for medical students and research into general practice. It put into effect the research he had just undertaken for the University of Edinburgh's Department of Public Health and Social Medicine.

Having also played his part in the establishment of what was then the College of General Practitioners, Richard Scott became the first Professor of general practice in the world in 1963, an

The Blue Plaque unveiled. Image credited to Guy Jackson.



achievement that was recently marked by the unveiling of a Blue Plaque in his honour.

UNVEILING THE PLAQUE

On June 15th 2017, at the Mackenzie Medical Centre in West Richmond Street, Edinburgh, around 30 members of Professor Scott's family joined former colleagues, the RCGP President Terry Kemple and members of the RCGP heritage committee, guests from Edinburgh University and elsewhere to hear speeches including from Professor John Howie, who had been one of Scott's students and was his immediate successor.

After the unveiling of the plaque, a drinks reception followed in the Playfair Library, before the annual Richard Scott Lecture.

This year, John Campbell, Professor of General Practice and Primary Care, University of Exeter, considered how good-quality general practice care can be achieved in a cost-constrained healthcare environment. This topic resonates interestingly with the Richmond Club, the (admittedly short-lived) experiment of a family social club formed in 1949 for the patients of Scott's teaching practice to foster better family health and community cohesion, but also to extend educational and cultural opportunities.

LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Having studied at Edinburgh University and achieved his MD, with commendation, in 1938, Richard Scott served throughout the Second World War in the Royal Army Medical Corps. As Honorary Secretary of the First Scottish Council, he also chaired the Undergraduate Education Committee



Terry Kemple pictured with Richard Scott's great-granddaughter. Image credited to Guy Jackson.

in the 1950s, contributing articles about education in general practice, and the general practice teaching unit in particular to the *Journal of Medical Education*, *The Lancet* and the *BMJ*.

In 1961, he represented the UK at the World Health Organization and, while Chair of Medicine in Relation to general practice, he chaired the Scottish Council of the RCGP between 1972 and 1975. For his promotion of efficiency and dignity in general practice, Professor Scott received the Baron Dr ver Heyden de Lancey Memorial Award in 1979. The Collette Tartan, presented in 2002 is based on the sett of the Scott tartan in recognition of his contribution to general practice and the RCGP.

The papers of Richard Scott will constitute a significant addition to the archives of the RCGP, allowing future researchers to study the history of general practice education.

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