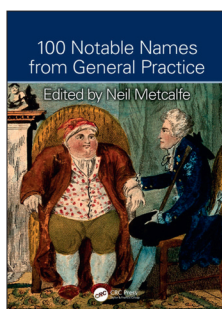


Life & Times Books

100 Notable Names from General Practice

Neil Metcalfe

CRC Press, 2018, PB, 334pp, £49.99, 978-1498751988



BRIEF LIVES

This book is a compilation of 100 short biographies illustrated with portraits (20 colour and 80 black & white illustrations) of many of the subjects.

A few of the authors are professional historians but many are medical students. Consequently, the standard of writing and historical scholarship is variable. Arguably, the book would have benefited from tighter editing.

The text is arranged in four chronological

sections and each is introduced by a helpful preface. The sections break down like so:

- In the period leading up to 1900 the surgeon-apothecary morphed into the general practitioner. This section includes names such as Edward Jenner (the pioneer of smallpox vaccination and considered the father of immunology), John Snow (known as one of the fathers of modern epidemiology), and Arthur Conan Doyle, who will be familiar to readers. Less well-known are George Man Burrows, who helped introduce the first compulsory medical qualification, Hugh Owen Thomas, whose eponymous splint saved many lives in the First World War, and Henry Faulds, who pioneered fingerprint identification.
- 1900–1950 was a period of social and political reform led by doctors such as Alfred Cox, the medical trade unionist, Lachlan Grant who helped found the Scottish Highlands and Islands Health Service, and Edith Summerskill, who promoted the concept of the NHS.
- 1950–1967 was the period when general practice came out of the doldrums. The foundation of the College of General Practitioners in 1952 was led by John Hunt and Fraser Rose, and later the GP Charter

(1966), proposed by James Cameron, led to a 'golden age' for general practice.

- 1967–2017 was when GP training and research developed apace. This latter section concentrates on the many people who have played a leading role in the development of the Royal College of General Practitioners (so named in 1967 when the royal prefix was approved).

In some cases, the 'notable names' have been chosen for the celebrity or notoriety of the subject rather than their contribution to general practice; for example, the serial murderer Harold Shipman is included. Although the selection is wide ranging, I could find only one black and ethnic minority doctor, Chuni Lal Katial, in the compilation of 100.

By collecting these biographies together in a single book, the publisher has produced a compact work of reference. It is likely to appeal more to the general reader than to historians of general practice.

Christopher Derrett,
Retired GP, London.

Email: derrett@ntworld.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp19X704897>

