

Although the list is not yet complete a search can be made for a particular name.

Wills

Wills and probate records provide an important further source of information. It is not possible to detail the method of searching wills here, but one must know where the doctor died and in which diocese his property lay. Lewis published a series of topographical dictionaries over the period 1831–46 which give details of the diocese of each parish. However, as there are exceptions it may be useful to refer to *Wills and their whereabouts*.¹⁰ Some record offices have a full index, listing all wills published up to 50 years ago and giving the deceased's place of death and the date of probate. A copy of a will can be obtained from the record office or Somerset House in London.

Other sources

The record offices may also have the local militia returns which were made annually after 1769 by the lord lieutenant to quarter sessions of all men aged between 18 and 45 years, naming those who were commissioned officers. It is possible that medical men may appear in the returns. The lists are also available at the public record office at Kew as are other naval and military records which cannot be detailed here.

Doctors also gave evidence to parliamentary committees and a search of their reports may give useful information.

A great deal of detailed information can be obtained from the accounts of the overseers of the poor, which may be in the record offices. The surgeons, their places of practice, as well as the parishes visited, their fees and methods of treatment of the poor may well be recorded. By this time a great deal of information will probably have emerged about the doctors, the practice and, perhaps, most importantly, the patients and the health of the community. There may have been hospitals, workhouses and nursing homes in the district which have long disappeared. The general practitioner may well have worked there and referring to the relevant records can be of great interest.

In recent years numerous local history reference books have been published,¹¹ and these indicate how the search can be extended to study the effect medical practitioners had upon the social and political as well as medical development of the community. There are also numerous publications available detailing the sources and method used in researching genealogy.

I have been able to trace two of the practices that I have been associated with back to the mid-eighteenth century (Rowlands JK. *The story of medicine in Maghull*. Unpublished).¹² However, I often wonder which is the oldest practice in the country? Perhaps the above description will enable someone to tell me.

References

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Appendix

The following names and addresses may be useful:

1. Royal College of Surgeons of England, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PN. Tel: 01-405 3474. Librarian: Mr E.H. Cornelius. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 10.00-18.00 hours. Closed bank holidays and throughout August. The staff will answer genealogical enquiries by post and visitors are welcomed. Professional genealogists must visit the library to consult the material held there.
2. The *Medical directory* is published by Longmans Group UK Ltd, Sixth Floor, Westgate House, The High, Harlow, Essex CM20 1NE. Tel: 0297-442601. Editions from 1965 are available. The staff are not able to reply to written enquiries, but visitors or their agents are welcomed. Earlier editions are held at Reading University: Professor J.A. Edwards, The Library, Reading University, White Knights, Reading RG6 2AH. Tel: 0734-875123. Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 9.00-13.00 and 14.00-17.00 hours. The staff are not normally willing to undertake extensive research.
3. The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP. Tel: 01-387 4477. Librarian: Mr E.J. Freeman. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.45-17.15 hours. The staff will reply to written enquiries and visitors are welcomed. The following issues of the *Medical register* are available: 1859, 1863-83, 1885, 1917, 1932-62, 1964-68 and 1974-75. The following editions are also available: Simmons' *Medical register* 1779-80 and 1783, *British medical directory* 1853-54, *English medical directory* 1857, *Kelly's London medical directory* 1896 (ran from 1889-1897), *Nisbet's medical directory* 1908-13, *Medical who's who* 1913-15 and 1925 and *London doctors and dental surgeons* 1923-24.
4. Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC2P 2EJ. Tel: 01-606 3030. Keeper of manuscripts: Mr C.R.W. Cooper. Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 9.30-16.45 hours. The staff will confirm in writing or by telephone the existence of relevant sources, but cannot normally undertake to carry out research.
5. Mr Peter Wallis, School of Education, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, St Thomas' Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU.
6. Mrs Jean Loudon, The Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 45-47 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PE. Tel: 0865-274600.

Corrigendum

In the article 'Psychiatric screening in general practice: comparison of the general health questionnaire and the hospital anxiety depression scale' by M.J.B. Wilkinson and P. Barczak (July, p.311) the negative predictive values given in Table 2 for the 28-item GHQ, HAD and general practitioner should have read 84%, 93% and 70%, respectively.