

British Society for the History of Paediatrics and Child Health

G242 THE FIRST DAY – A FILM RECREATING 18TH-CENTURY VOLUNTARY HOSPITAL CHILD HEALTH CARE

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Children are a nation's most precious resource and all deserve having the best start to help them live full and meaningful lives. At some time or another, all children are unwell, but some have additional needs. 21st century child health care is exemplified by that of the Children's Directorate, Northampton General Hospital, United Kingdom.

Here, a range of different units working together provide excellent care as an integrated Children's Department. For children with more complex needs, other provision such as educational support also have an important role.

Until recently, historians of paediatrics have generally assumed that "paediatrics as a specialised branch of medicine had no real existence before the middle of the nineteenth century."¹ Of course, this is only true if we equate paediatrics here with specialised children's hospitals and with professional organisations.

It is clear from earlier surviving archival records such as that held at Northampton that hospital paediatrics has a much longer history and that hospital child health care was occurring and in large numbers. Indeed the first inpatient ever admitted at the then Northampton General Infirmary on 29th March 1743 was Thomasin Grace a 13 year old child who suffered from 'scald head'. Reconstructing the history of what might be called "paediatrics before paediatricians" using present day Northampton children with original archival material is what this brief film will demonstrate.²

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G243 DR ISAAC HENRY GOSSET (1907–1965) FOUNDER OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PAEDIATRICS

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Dr Isaac Henry Gosset was the first consultant paediatrician for Northampton. His Northamptonshire responsibilities included both general and neonatal care also included hospitals in North Oxfordshire.

As a boy he had great gifts as an engineer, reportedly making his own television. Having trained in Oxford and St Thomas' London, he initially tried general practice before starting in paediatrics. After serving in the RAF, he did a further year of postgraduate training at Great Ormond Street Hospital before being appointed to Northampton General Hospital in 1947

In neonatal practice he designed the 'Gosset icterometer,' made of perspex allowing an accurate estimation of serum bilirubin without requiring a blood test.⁴

Icterometers, although at that time an important advance, and used for many years afterwards, have been superseded and are no longer supported by current NICE guidelines

⁵He died of a coronary thrombosis aged only 57

Shortly before his death, he designed the neonatal unit at Northampton. In this he was a generation ahead of his time which even in the 1970's saw such units as being restricted to teaching centres.⁶ The Gosset Neonatal unit is named after him and working to this day.

On the 50th anniversary of his untimely death, we his consultant successors in Northampton dedicate this presentation to his life and memory.

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G244 PAEDIATRICIANS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH PLAY SPECIALISTS

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Aim An historical account of the role of paediatricians in the development of play in health services in the UK, prior to and since the founding of the National Association of Health Play Specialists in 1975.

Methods Scrutiny of records journals and interviewing.

Results The recognition of the importance of play in children's lives was slow in society generally and particularly in medicine. However certain children's doctors played a part and the roles of Montessori, Lowenfeld, Winnicott, MacCarthy, Morris, Jolly and David Harvey were significant. They assisted the main thrust for changes in care which came from pioneers such as James Robertson, from parents and voluntary organisations and particularly by Susan Harvey.

This is the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the N. A. H. P. S. Since then training has become established under the Hospital Play Staff Education Trust. The original role of using play skills to enable communication, advocacy and continuity of care has been integrated into normal practice. Paediatricians working in other parts of hospital and community services have improved care by involving Play Specialists. Specialty areas such as burns units, feeding programmes, diabetes and growth clinics, constipation teams, bereavement care, and many other examples now use play specialists to improve the care of children and the effectiveness of other staff. These major changes will be illustrated.