The Dublin Doctors:
an exhibition at the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine

1 February 2016 – 23 April 2016

ADMISSION FREE OPEN TO ALL

OPENING TIMES
Monday – Thursday: 9.00 – 21.00
Friday: 9.00 – 17.30
Saturday: 10.00 – 16.30

The Library, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 0AE
Tube: Oxford Circus or Bond Street
In a paper delivered in 1968 to the Section of the History of Medicine of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, Dr F.O.C. Meenan described 19th century Dublin as “a city bereft of its natural social leaders. After the Act of Union, the Anglo-Irish aristocracy deserted Ireland for London...they left an architectural and social vacuum. This vacuum was in a great part filled by the professional classes. The lawyers and the doctors settled in the recently-built Georgian Squares of Dublin. The consultants made their houses of social and intellectual life. Unlike their medical contemporaries in London, they were quite sure of their place on the social ladder. The consultants particularly settled in Merrion and Fitzwilliam Squares. Indeed at one stage there was such a concentration of doctors on the north side of Merrion Square that it was known to irreverent Dubliners as The Valley of the Shadow of Death.”

Dr Meenan goes on to say that many of the 19th century Dublin doctors “lived long and fruitful lives” and “did not confine themselves to their consultant work. They would appear to have possessed strong personalities and had many interests outside their work.”

The surgeon **Sir William Robert Wills Wilde (1815-1876)** was a distinguished student of history, folklore, archaeology, ethnology, and the antiquities of Ireland. His studies in natural history contributed to our knowledge of the gizzards of fish and the nipples of whales. Wilde’s passionate interest in the folklore, history and topography of his native Ireland produced such works as *The Beauties of the Boyne* published in 1849, and *Irish Popular Superstitions* published in 1852. Travels in Europe resulted in his 1843 work *Austria: its literary, scientific, and medical institutions*.

Wilde was born at Kilkeevin, Co. Roscommon, the son of a local physician. In 1832 he was bound as apprentice to Abraham Colles at Dr Steevens’ Hospital, Dublin, where he was also taught by the surgeons James Cusack and Sir Philip Crampton. He studied anatomy, surgery, and medicine at a private school in Park Street, Dublin, becoming friends with Robert Graves and William Stokes, and where he was later appointed lecturer in ophthalmology and otology. His Dublin training was completed with a course in midwifery at the Rotunda Hospital under Evory Kennedy.
During travels in the Levant Wilde became interested in surgery of the eye after witnessing numerous cases of ophthalmic trachoma in Alexandria and Cairo. He later studied at the London Ophthalmic Hospital.

On his return to Dublin in 1841 Wilde commenced specialist practice in disorders of the eye and ear at 15 Westland Row, and by 1851 was in practice at 1 Merrion Square. In 1844 he opened St Mark’s Hospital and Dispensary for Diseases of the Eye and Ear, the first hospital in the British Isles to teach aural surgery, and the first in Ireland to combine treatment of the eye with that of the ear. When the Park Street School closed in 1848, Wilde purchased the building and converted it into a hospital with an operating theatre, a lecture room, and an outpatients’ clinic.

In 1845 Wilde became editor of the Dublin Journal of Medical Science, amending its title to the Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science, and in 1851 he was made assistant commissioner for the Irish censuses of 1851, 1861, and 1871. Surgeon Oculist to the Queen in Ireland, Wilde was knighted in 1864.

In 1851 Wilde married the poet and Irish nationalist Jane Francesca Agnes Elgee, known as “Speranza.” They had three children: the barrister and journalist William Charles Kingsbury Wills Wilde, Isola Francesca Wilde (who died aged ten), and the poet, playwright, essayist, novelist, and critic, Oscar Fingal O’Flahertie Wills Wilde.
Works by
Sir William Robert Wills Wilde

WV 200 WIL
**WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876**
Practical observations on aural surgery and the nature and treatment of diseases of the ear.
s.l., Irish Otolaryngology Society, 2008

A.11.f.25
**WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876**
An essay on the malformations and congenital diseases of the organs of sight... With sixty illustrations.

Tract 110(8)
**WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876**
Medico-legal observations upon the case of Amos Greenwood, tried at Liverpool, 1857, for the wilful murder of Mary Johnson.
Dublin, 1859.

Heritage Centre (WIL)
**WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876**
Practical observations on aural surgery and the nature and treatment of diseases of the ear.
London, 1853
*This work derives from the many case reports written at St Mark’s Hospital and Dispensary for Diseases of the Eye and Ear. It was the first textbook on the subject to provide practitioners with a reliable method for diagnosis and treatment.*
Map of Dublin from the Census of Ireland, 1841
Census of Ireland, 1841

Report of the commissioners appointed to take the census of Ireland for the year 1841. This volume contains the Report upon the tables of deaths by William Wilde.

In his book The Parents of Oscar Wilde, Wilde’s biographer, Terence de Vere White commented on how the failure of the first census of Ireland, taken between 1813 and 1815, was partly due to “the not unnatural suspicion of the people that any government effort would work to their disadvantage, to superstition that some great catastrophe would follow a census-taking as in the Bible, reluctance to ease the task of tax-collector, recruiting sergeant (or, as formerly, press-gang), and fear that Catholics would be decimated or banished as in Cromwell’s time. But it failed mostly because the census-taking was left to ‘poorly-paid, part-time constables’ requiring only a certificate of suitability signed by three magistrates. In practice religion was their only qualification, and they were not debarred by ‘their age, their strength, their being perfectly literate, their being tithe-proctors, or their filling any other odious and obnoxious situations.’”

White describes how “Wilde’s acceptance of the offer to conduct a medical census of Ireland was one of the most significant decisions of his career. It would have seemed to most people an impossible brake on a professional career, a burden on anyone who wished to combine with a profession historical, antiquarian and literary interests. But Wilde knew himself. Wilde had been appointed Census Commissioner in 1841. And this was to provide him with opportunities for producing a sort of work which to most people would be infinitely tedious, but for which he had almost a mania. His census report when it came out was almost worthy of Sir Thomas Browne. It is with the Anatomy of Melancholy or Urn Burial, not with dry-as-dust statistics, that Wilde’s report must be catalogued.”
WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876
Contributions to ophthalmic surgery. Part II. The causes and treatment of entropium and trichiasis.
Dublin : Hodges and Smith, 1844.

WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876
Austria: its literary, scientific, and medical institutions. With notes upon the present state of science, and a guide to the hospitals and sanatory establishments of Vienna.
Dublin : W. Curry, jun. and company; [etc., etc.], 1843.

It was this work that drew the attention of the compilers of the 1841 census of Ireland to Wilde leading to his appointment as medical adviser and compiler of the statistical tables of deaths for the census report. The RSM Library’s copy of this book was recently conserved using funds donated by the Friends of the RSM Library.

WILDE William Robert Wills, Sir, 1815-1876
Description of a case of severe trichiasis and convergent strabismus of both eyes.
Descended from a colonel in Cromwell’s army who, following the conquest of Ireland, had acquired an estate in County Limerick, Robert James Graves was born in Dublin in 1796. He graduated MB at Trinity College, Dublin in 1818. Travels in Britain and Europe added to his postgraduate medical education. He studied in London, Goettingen, Berlin, and Edinburgh, and visited medical schools in Denmark, France, and Italy. In Vienna he was arrested and imprisoned for ten days as a suspected spy, and in Italy he met and travelled to Rome with the painter JMW Turner.

Graves was appointed physician to the Meath Hospital, Dublin in 1821. In 1827 he and his colleague William Stokes published *Clinical Reports of the Medical Cases in the Meath Hospital*, a work which had a major influence on clinical practice. Graves made clear his dissatisfaction with the state of medical teaching as he found it in Dublin. Students could then obtain a medical degree without any experience of having physically examined and diagnosed a single patient or without having observed any methods of treatment or administration.

He therefore introduced the practice of bedside teaching that had so impressed him while studying in Berlin. This teaching method stressed the importance of closely observing a patient’s condition and symptoms and came to be adopted in Ireland, Britain, and North America. In 1824 Graves founded the Park Street medical school and offered a syllabus based on these principles.

In 1820s Dublin typhus fever was rife. Many sufferers were treated at the Meath Hospital in rudimentary isolation huts. Graves challenged the prevailing belief that fever patients should be given little to eat and drink.
He advocated a generous and nourishing diet as essential to combatting and recovering from fever. Asked by his students how he would like to be remembered, Graves replied: “He fed fevers.”

A harsh critic of the government’s handling of the 1845-9 great famine, Graves attacked policies that led to overcrowded workhouses and food depots which allowed the spread of contagious diseases such as cholera and typhus. He came into conflict with Dominic Corrigan, physician to the Jervis Street Hospital, Dublin, who insisted that starvation rather than contagion was the cause of fever. He clashed with the board of health over the meagre payments made to doctors who had treated fever victims, and over the board’s view that cholera was not contagious.

In 1843 Graves resigned from the Meath Hospital and worked at his private practice in Merrion Square. He died in 1853 at the family residence at Cloghan Castle, Banagher, King’s County.
Heritage Centre (GRA)

**GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853**

A system of clinical medicine.
Dublin : Fannin, 1843.

*This is Graves’ greatest and most influential work. It was translated into French, German, and Italian, and an edition was published in the United States.*

**GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853**

Graves’ 1835 article “Newly observed affection of the thyroid gland in females” published in the *London Medical and Surgical Journal*. He describes a form of goitre which came to be known as Graves’ Disease. After its first five volumes had been published, the publisher and editor of the *London Medical & Surgical Journal* went their separate ways, each of them continuing to publish separate editions of the journal. Graves’s paper appeared in the edition not held in the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine. It was, however, reprinted, as shown here, in *Medical Classics* 1940; 5: 33-6.

265.e.39

**GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853**

Clinical lectures on the practice of medicine / by Robert James Graves ; to which is prefixed a criticism by A. Trousseau.
Dublin : Fanin, 1864.

265.e.39

**GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853**

Trousseau, Armand, 1801-1867; JACCOUD Francois Sigismond [1830-1913] [Clinical lectures on the practice of medicine].
Heritage Centre (GRA)

**GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853.**

Editor/Add. Author: STOKES William, 1804-1878
Studies in physiology and medicine /
by the late Robert James Graves;
edited by William Stokes.

Heritage Centre (GRA)

**GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853**

Editor/Add. Author: Neligan, John Moore [1815-1863]
Clinical lectures on the practice of medicine / by Robert J. Graves.
Abraham Colles was born at Milmount, near Kilkenny in 1773. When still a schoolboy, the young Colles happened by chance to find a book of anatomy belonging to a local physician whose house had been deluged during a flood. The book had been swept away and had come to rest in a field near to Colles’ home. He returned the book to the doctor who made it a gift for Colles in reward for his honesty. It is said that this incident determined Colles’ choice of a career in medicine. In 1790 he entered Trinity College, Dublin and was apprenticed to Philip Woodroffe, resident surgeon at Dr Steevens’ Hospital.

He graduated BA in 1795 and, in the same year, was awarded the diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He also studied at Edinburgh and graduated MD in 1797 with a thesis: De venaesecetione. Next he went to London where he attended at various London hospitals and worked with Astley Cooper, assisting in the dissections for Cooper’s work on hernia.

Colles returned to Dublin in 1797 and was appointed visiting physician to the Meath Hospital. He was appointed resident surgeon to Dr Steevens’ Hospital in 1799 and held this post until 1813 when he became visiting surgeon. Colles was soon to make significant advances in operative surgery. He was the first surgeon in Ireland to tie the subclavian artery for aneurysm, a procedure attempted only twice before in England, and he was the first in Europe successfully to tie the innominate artery. He was twice president of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland: first in 1802 when aged just twenty-eight, and second in 1830.
Colles is best known for his description of a common fracture of the wrist usually occurring following a fall during which the patient attempts to break their fall with the palm of their hand resulting in a fracture of the radius. To this day, this is still known as Colles fracture.

He was also influential in new treatments for syphilis, replacing the high dosages of mercury formerly used in its cure.

Colles failed to attain the chair of anatomy and surgery at Trinity College, Dublin, a decision he attempted to challenge in law. The following year, in 1803, he became surgeon to the Cork Street Fever Hospital, and in 1804 was appointed professor of anatomy and surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He held this post for thirty-two years.

Colles died on 16 November 1843 at his home in St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin.
Works by
Abraham Colles, 1773-1843

232.h.19

Colles, Abraham, 1773-1843.
Dublin : Machen, 1844-45.
Conserved by donation from the Friends of the RSM Library.

Heritage Centre (COL)
Colles, Abraham, 1773-1843.
A treatise on surgical anatomy.: Part the first.
Dublin : Gilbert and Hodges, 1811.

Heritage Centre (COL)
Colles, Abraham, 1773-1843.
Practical observations on the venereal disease, and on the use of
mercury. London, Sherwood, Gilbert, & Piper [etc.], 1837

On page 304 of this work is stated Colles's law: “One fact well deserving our attention
is this: that a child born of a mother who is without any obvious venereal symptoms,
and which, without being exposed to any infection subsequent to its birth, shows this
disease when a few weeks old, this child will infect the most healthy nurse, whether she
suckle it, or merely handle and dress it; and yet this child is never known to infect its
own mother, even though she suckle it while it has venereal ulcers of the lips and
tongue.”

Colles, Abraham, 1773-1843.
On the fracture of the carpal extremity of the radius.
Colles is best known for his description of a common fracture of the wrist
usually occurring following a fall during which the patient attempts to break their fall
with the palm of their hand resulting in a fracture of the radius. To this day, this is still
known as Colles fracture.
Robert Adams was born in Dublin in 1791. He entered Trinity College, Dublin in 1809, and graduated BA in 1814, and MA in 1832, becoming MB and MD in 1842. In 1810 he was apprenticed to William Hartigan and became licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in 1815, and an elected member in 1818.

Adams returned to Dublin following studies on the continent and was elected surgeon at the Jervis Street Hospital and the Richmond Hospital. His rival applicant for the post at the Richmond was John McDonnell, considered to be of equal ability. The surgeon Richard Carmichael then sacrificed his own post at the hospital especially to create a further vacancy that allowed both men to be appointed. Adams, once in post, was active in the founding of the Richmond (later Carmichael) school of medicine and lectured there on surgery. He was thrice elected president of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland: in 1840, 1860, and 1867. In 1861 he became surgeon to the Queen in Ireland, and regius professor of surgery at the University of Dublin.

Adams’s classic account of chronic rheumatic arthritis was published in 1857, but he came to be remembered for a lengthy article he wrote for the Dublin Hospital Reports in 1827 describing how, in May 1819, he observed in a 69-year old patient “the irregularity of his breathing and remarkable slowness of the pulse.” The eponym “Stokes-Adams syndrome” came to be employed to describe this state.

Adams died in 1875 at his home in St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin.
Works by
Robert Adams, 1791-1895

M.15.c.3 & M.15.c.4

Adams, Robert, 1791-1875.
Illustrations of the effects of rheumatic gout: or, chronic rheumatic arthritis, on all the articulations; with descriptive and explanatory statements. 2nd edition. London: Churchill, 1873.

229.i.1

Adams, Robert, 1791-1875.
A treatise on rheumatic gout, or chronic rheumatic arthritis of all the joints. 2nd edition
London: John Churchill, 1873.

Heritage Centre (ADA)
Adams, Robert, 1791-1875.
A treatise on rheumatic gout, or chronic rheumatic arthritis of all the joints.
Adams’s classic description of chronic rheumatic arthritis.

Adams, Robert, 1791-1875.
Cases of diseases of the heart, accompanied with pathological observations.
Dublin Hospital Reports. 1827; 4: 353-453.
This lengthy article by Adams includes his account of how, in May 1819, he observed in a 69-year old patient “the irregularity of his breathing and remarkable slowness of the pulse.” The eponym “Stokes-Adams syndrome” came to be employed to describe this state.
John Cheyne was born at Leith, near Edinburgh in 1777. At the age of 16 he commenced his studies in medicine at the University of Edinburgh, obtaining his medical degree and surgeon’s diploma in 1795. For four years he served in various parts of England and Ireland as surgeon to the Royal Regiment of artillery.

In 1799 he left the army and returned to Leith where he was placed in charge of the ordnance hospital, a post he held for ten years. His especial interests were in the diseases of children and in acute, epidemic diseases.

Cheyne left Scotland for Dublin in 1809. He established a practice there and remained for twenty years. In 1811 he was appointed physician to the Meath Hospital and later became professor of physic at the Irish College of Surgeons. In October 1815 he was appointed physician to the House of Industry. During the 1817 fever epidemic, the House of Industry admitted more than 700 fever patients.
In 1820 Cheyne was appointed physician-general to the forces in Ireland, and held that post until its abolition in 1833.

Cheyne left Dublin in 1831 and retired to Sherington, near Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire where he gave medical attention to the poor of his neighbourhood. He died in 1836.

Part of his obituary in the Dublin Journal of Medical Science reads: “The members of the medical profession are, by the generality of mankind, considered heartless, and insensible to the afflictions which they are called upon to witness; but they may triumphantly appeal, in refutation of the calumny, to the example of Dr Cheyne, who, though the circumstances of his profession, while engaged in its duties, demanded an assumption of coolness which brought on him the character of heartlessness, was nevertheless mentally grieved by these scenes, to an extent which deprived him of sleep and appetite, and kept him in a state of perpetual fever.”
Works by John Cheyne, 1777-1836

Barker, Francis, 1773-1859.
CHEYNE John, 1777-1836
An account of the rise, progress, and decline of the fever lately epidemic in Ireland: together with communications from physicians in the provinces, and various official documents. London, Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1821.
Cheyne’s two-volume account, written with Francis Barker, of the 1817 fever epidemic during which the House of Industry at Dublin was converted into an emergency depot and admitted more than 700 fever patients.

CHEYNE John, 1777-1836
A case of apoplexy in which the fleshy part of the heart was converted into fat.
Dublin Hospital Reports. 1818; 2: 216-23.
This is the first accurate description of the condition that came to be known as Cheyne-Stokes respiration.
263.f.33  
**CHEYNE John, 1777-1836**  
Cases of apoplexy and lethargy: with observations upon the comatose diseases. London, T. Underwood; [etc., etc.], 1812.  
*This work includes the first illustration of a subarachnoid haemorrhage. Cheyne also discusses his belief that apoplexy may be caused by cerebral anaemia.*  

225.i.28  
**CHEYNE John, 1777-1836**  
The pathology of the membrane of the larynx and bronchia. Edinburgh, Printed by and for Mundell, Doig, and Stevenson ... [et al.], 1809.  

289.g. 3  
**CHEYNE John, 1777-1836**  
An essay on hydrocephalus actus, or dropsy in the brain. Edinburgh, 1808  
Conserved by donation from the Friends of the RSM Library
The name of William Stokes is famous for two eponymous conditions. Cheyne-Stokes respiration describes a pattern of periodic breathing when the patient’s “inspirations become each one less deep than the preceding until they are all but imperceptible” until “apparent apnoea occurs.” There follows “the faintest possible inspiration” until the “paroxysm of breathing is at its height, again to subside by a descending scale.” Adams-Stokes disease denotes a slowing of the heartbeat or episodic cardiac arrest that often results in unconsciousness.

He was born in Dublin in 1804. His father was Whitley Stokes (1763-1845), a physician and surgeon from Waterford who was also a scholar of the Gaelic language and culture and who had published an English-Irish dictionary. Wolfe Tone described Stokes Senior as “the very best man I have ever known.”

Stokes Junior studied anatomy and chemistry at Dublin and later enrolled at the University of Glasgow. He transferred to Edinburgh in 1823 where, in 1825, he took his medical degree. Back in Dublin he was appointed physician at the Meath Hospital where he met and worked alongside Robert James Graves.

Stokes narrowly avoided falling victim to the 1826-7 typhus epidemic during which he treated many patients who were near to starvation. In 1839 Trinity College Dublin conferred on Stokes an honorary doctorate of medicine.
This was ironic since his father had been the subject of a three-year suspension from the college for his membership of the Society of United Irishmen. Once reinstated, he became a senior fellow and regius professor of physic (medicine).

Stokes treated many patients during the great famine of 1845-9, riding to remote areas of rural Ireland with supplies of cornmeal and bread for starving and destitute families. Many poor-law doctors in Ireland had died of the diseases they had tried to alleviate. In 1846 Stokes petitioned parliament to increase the pay of doctors working in the famine-stricken parts of Ireland.

In November 1877 Stokes suffered a paralysing stroke and died two months later at his home in Merrion Square.

The doctor and historian Eoin O’Brien considers Stokes, along with Corrigan and Graves, to be one of the triumvirate of Dublin doctors that raised the standard of medical practice and research in Ireland to new heights.
Works by
William Stokes, 1804-1878

Heritage Centre (STO)

STOKES William, 1804-1878
Lectures on (continued) fever, delivered at the Meath Hospital and County of Durham Infirmary / edited by John William Moore.
London, 1874.

Tr.77(2)

STOKES William, 1804-1878
Discourse at the opening of the school of physic in Ireland, 1864.
Dublin, 1864.

Tr.35(4)

STOKES William, 1804-1878
Medical education : a discourse at the Meath Hospital.
Dublin, 1861.

Stokes believed that an arts education was essential for all students of medicine and aspiring physicians. For him medicine was “no solitary science, but rather a complex system of knowledge of various kinds, derived from many sources.” He opposed a teaching method that confounded instruction with education, and that crammed students with facts at the expense of their general culture.

Heritage Centre (STO)

STOKES William, 1804-1878
The diseases of the heart and the aorta.
Dublin : Hodges and Smith, 1854.

Stokes’ description of fatty degeneration of the heart has hardly been improved upon. He also describes the condition of slow pulse accompanied by cerebral attacks of syncope, since known as the Stokes-Adams syndrome, and he first identified the weak semi-beats of the heart between regular contractions as contractions of the auricles.
STOKES William, 1804-1878


STOKES William, 1804-1878

An introduction to the use of the stethoscope: with its application to the diagnosis in diseases of the thoracic viscera, including the pathology of these various affections. Edinburgh : MacLachlan & Stewart ; London : Baldwin, Cradock & Joy ; Dublin ; McArthur, 1825.

While studying at Edinburgh, Stokes had used a stethoscope of the type developed in Paris by Rene Laennec and championed its use in this treatise for which he received £25.00 in royalties.
Described as the last of the famous band forming the Irish School of Medicine in the 19th century, Dominic John Corrigan was born in Dublin in 1802. In 1820 he enrolled at the University of Dublin and studied medicine under John Crampton, Arthur Jacob, and James Macartney. At this time he also carried on a side-line as a grave-robber supplying cadavers to Kirby’s anatomy school in Peter Street, Dublin.

Encouraged by his fellow student William Stokes, Corrigan continued his medical studies at Edinburgh. He took his degree there in 1825, submitting a thesis on tuberculosis. On his return to Dublin, Corrigan opened a practice at 11 Upper Ormond Quay. As a Roman Catholic and of humble origins, lacking money and social connections, most of his patients were paupers unable to pay his fees. He was later appointed physician to the Sick-Poor Institute of Meath Street in the Liberties, situated in one of the worst slum areas of Dublin.

It was here that he began to specialise in diseases of the heart and lungs, but he continued also to research the epidemic diseases arising from severe malnutrition. In a pamphlet published in 1846, Corrigan stated: “If there be no famine, there will be no fever.”
As Corrigan’s career progressed, he was able to move his consulting rooms from Ormond Quay to Bachelor’s Walk, and then in 1834 to Dublin’s elegant Merrion Square. In 1839 he was appointed physician-in-ordinary to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and from 1840 until 1866 he was physician to the House of Industry Hospital. By the late 1850s his income stood at well over £4000 a year.

In 1847, the year in which Corrigan became the first Roman Catholic appointed physician-in-ordinary to Queen Victoria in Ireland, the Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science published a thirty-page letter written by Robert James Graves castigating Corrigan and holding him responsible for the recommendation made by the recently-created central board of health, of which Corrigan was a member, that doctors working to treat fever victims should be paid just five shillings a day.
Dominic John Corrigan

Source: Wikimedia Commons
Given that these doctors daily risked disease and death, this proposed remuneration was considered meagre and insulting. Graves also blocked Corrigan’s bid to become an honorary fellow of the King and Queen’s College of Physicians in Ireland. It was not until 1855 that Corrigan became a fellow of the college.

Trinity College awarded Corrigan an honorary doctorate in medicine in 1849. From 1856 to 1868 Corrigan served as commissioner of lunatic asylums in Ireland. He became president of the College of Physicians in 1859. His baronetcy was conferred on him in 1866, the same year in which he became consulting physician to the House of Industry (Richmond Surgical) Hospital.

Corrigan was elected to parliament in 1870 as the member for Dublin City. He described Dublin as the “second city of the Empire” and declared that his main interest in getting elected was “justice for our profession with regard to medical remuneration”, but he also campaigned for the early release of Fenian prisoners and for the promotion of secular education. With the defeat of Gladstone’s 1873 Irish University Bill which proposed to expand the University of Dublin into a secular national university incorporating multiple colleges, and abolishing all religious requirements for students and faculty, Corrigan retired from parliamentary politics.

Corrigan died at his home in Merrion Square on 1 February 1880.
Works by
Sir John Dominic Corrigan, 1802-1880

Tr.81(1)

Corrigan, Dominic John, Sir, 1802-1880.
The cholera map of Ireland : with observations.
Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1866.

Heritage Centre (COR)

Corrigan, Dominic John, Sir, 1802-1880.
Lectures on the nature and treatment of fever.
Dublin: Fannon & Co., 1853.

Corrigan, Dominic John, Sir, 1802-1880.
On permanent patency of the mouth of the aorta, or inadequacy of the aortic valves.
Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal. 1832; 37: 225-45.
This paper has been referred to as Corrigan’s guarantee of medical fame. It describes the “water-hammer pulse” which is now commonly known as “Corrigan’s pulse.”
Corrigan, Dominic John, Sir, 1802-1880.

Paralytic (from arsenic) – Lumbago and sciatica – cure by “firing.”

Corrigan’s account of an instrument made to his own design to administer “counter-irritation” in cases of chronic rheumatism. Small iron discs, heated over a spirit lamp, were applied to the affected area. This method proved to be effective and the instrument came to be known as “Corrigan’s button.”

GRAVES Robert James, 1796-1853

A letter to the editor of the Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science, relative to the proceedings of the Central Board of Health of Ireland.
Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science. 1847; 4: 513-44.

In 1847 the Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science published a thirty-page letter written by Robert James Graves castigating Corrigan and holding him responsible for the recommendation made by the recently-created central board of health, of which Corrigan was a member, that doctors working to treat fever victims should be paid just five shillings a day. Given that these doctors daily risked disease and death, this proposed remuneration was considered meagre and insulting. Graves also blocked Corrigan’s bid to become an honorary fellow of the King and Queen’s College of Physicians in Ireland. It was not until 1855 that Corrigan became a fellow of the college.
Original Line drawing of William Wilde and William Stokes sharing a bottle of beer.

This image is used by kind Courtesy of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland

Exhibition Curated by Robert Greenwood, Heritage Officer

Booklet compiled by Robert Greenwood & Ashley Phillips