Robert Scot Skirving (1859-1956)
a little case of instruments; an extraordinary story to tell

Catherine Storey MBBS MSc FRACP
School of Medicine, University of Sydney
30,000 items

Books
Early works – 400 published prior to 1801
Manuscripts and diaries
Photographs and pamphlets
Papers relating to the most influential medical events of the past 80 years
Old medical instruments
14th December 1938 – Great Hall, Sydney University
“glittering gathering”

Photograph courtesy RACP archives
“to acquire by purchase, donation or otherwise a library of scientific works and to maintain and from time to time extend and improve such a library”

Dr Leslie Cowlishaw (1877-1943) – Honorary Librarian
Important milestones for the Library

1938  Inauguration of RACP
1941  Library endowed by Mrs A.E. Mills
1954  RCP (London) gift of 30 books from 1500-1900
1954  RACP decides to concentrate on History of Medicine
1954  Professor (Sir) Edward Ford curator of the Library
Important milestones for the library

1971  Medical Journal of Australia – Australasian Medical Gazette 1884-1910


1979  NSW branch of AMA – 5000 books <1951

1982  The Royal Australasian College of Physicians History of Medicine Library
Sir Edward Ford – MB BS DTM MD DPH Hon D Litt FRCP FRACP (1902-1986)

1936 – courtesy – Royal Australasian College of Physicians

C1950 – courtesy Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Early Medicine
A catalogue of books (chiefly medical) printed before 1801, now in the History of Medicine Library, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
2004

(438 books)
A little case of instruments; an extraordinary story to tell
Who was Robert Scot Skirving? (1859-1956)

These four typescript volumes are the trifling memoirs of my most ordinary and undistinguished life.......I hope some doctor may find interest in the material for papers on the past history of Sydney.....

R Scot Skirving
18th November 1939
Who was Robert Scot Skirving? (1859-1956)

1859 - Born Scotland, trained at Naval Academy; joined Merchant Navy
1876 (17) – entered University of Edinburgh, Faculty of Medicine
1881 - graduated MB ChM
1883 - Ship’s surgeon to Sydney
1927 - Foundation member RACS
1938 - Foundation member RACP

Caricature: Lionel Lindsay – Sydney
University Heritage Collection
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930)

1876 – Entered Medical Faculty
1881 – Graduated MB ChM

Inspired by Joseph Bell, whose powers of deduction impressed at least this student – later become model for Sherlock Holmes
– J Gardner & Son – well known surgical instrument makers – Edinburgh (1830-1921)
– Gardner started 45 South Bridge
– Moved to Teviot Place
– 1870: J Gardner & Son
  32 Forest Rd., Edinburgh
Who was the owner? An Edinburgh ophthalmologist before 1870

Douglas Moray Cooper Lamb Argyll Robertson (1837-1909)

1837 – Born Edinburgh
1857 – Graduated St Andrews
   Travelled to Berlin to work with
   Albrecht von Graefe (1828-1870)

Returned to Edinburgh as the only trained Eye specialist
Who was Robert Scot Skirving? (1859-1956)

1881 - graduated MB ChM
    House surgeon to Argyll Robertson
1883 - Ship’s surgeon to Sydney
1927 - Foundation member RACS
1938 - Foundation member RACP

Caricature: Lionel Lindsay – Sydney
University Heritage Collection
Set of Eye Instruments
has, I fear, incomplete
Given me
by
Sir D. Angell

With formal address & possession
I had then, at a fair, Four when Christendom
the intended part of the
March accent and
Who was Robert Scot Skirving?  (1859-1956)

1881 - graduated MB ChM
   House surgeon to Argyll Robertson
1883 - Ship’s surgeon to Sydney

1927 - Foundation member RACS

DID HE EVER PRACTICE AS AN EYE SURGEON?

1938 - Foundation member RACP

Caricature: Lionel Lindsay – Sydney
University Heritage Collection
Other material held by the College?

- 83 publications
- 1884-1955
- Broad range of topics
- Medical Journal of Australia
- Australian Medical Gazette
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EMIGRATION SERVICE TO AUSTRALIA IN SAILING SHIPS IN LONG-PAST YEARS.

By R. SCOT SKIRVING.

Sydney.
Another Scot Skirving collection
A. W. Scot Skirving: Lecture notes 1908
Medical student – 1907
A.W. Scot Skirving: Lecture notes 1908
Graduated MB ChM 1911, MS 1913
The History of Medicine Library of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians is a truly remarkable collection. A collection that still has a lot of secrets to reveal.