

## The Dun's Table: An Unexpected Memorial of World War One.

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Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital opened on what is now Grand Canal Street in 1808 and was used as a teaching hospital, training medical students and junior doctors from Trinity College Dublin until it was closed in 1987. As in most hospitals of the period, medical students and junior doctors were expected to live on site and a doctors' residence was provided. At some point in the 1870s one of these residents scratched their name on the large circular residence table (the first we can identify is J.C. Hall in 1878) and started a tradition that carried on for the next century of students and junior doctors doing likewise. By the 1920s the table surface was completely filled with names and the hospital provided a wooden cover at which point the residents began to carve their name in this. When the hospital closed the table was transferred to the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland in Kildare Street.

This year a project was initiated to identify and record the names from the original table and to begin to produce short biographies for each of them. In the centenary year of the outbreak of World War One, and for the purposes of this paper, focus is on those who served in the War. In this our research was aided by the Dun's Roll of Honour, a record compiled by the hospital to commemorate those who had served in the forces.

There were 289 legible names identified on the table and another 30 just consisting only of initials or which were illegible being faded, varnished over or overwritten. Of these records 121 people were identified as having served in the First World War, all but one recorded on the Dun's Roll. The most frequent branch of service was the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), but others also served in the Royal Navy, the Indian Medical Service and even the New Zealand and Sudanese Medical Services. Five of the doctors who carved their names died in the course of the War. The first of these was William Ormsby Ball who was killed at the First battle of the Aisne in September 1914. Robertson Stewart Smyth, who was both a medical student and later a House Surgeon in the hospital, and who was capped twice for Ireland in rugby in 1909, was killed in

1916, an early victim of phosgene gas. Patrick George Hyde died of pneumonia aged 38 in March 1915. Edward Henry Montgomery was a medical student in the hospital but died in Flanders serving with the Royal Field Artillery in 1916. George Taylor drowned whilst on service in Mesopotamia in 1917; the circumstances of his death are unclear.

Several other doctors were recorded as having been wounded and several received decorations for bravery, including the Military Cross and Distinguished Service Order from the UK; others received decorations from countries as diverse as France, Belgium, Serbia, Italy and Greece.

Whilst most of the doctors served only for the duration of the War, some went on to have successful careers in the army and the navy. Indeed, three ended up as Major Generals in the RAMC. Another man, Thomas Madill, had his first experience of combat as an officer cadet in Trinity College during the Easter Rising of 1916. He left TCD before qualifying to serve as a surgeon-probationer in the Royal Navy during the War. He subsequently returned to Trinity and, on graduation, rejoined the navy where he was eventually promoted to Rear Admiral, was awarded an OBE and Commander of the Bath and was made an honorary surgeon to both King George IV and Queen Elizabeth.

Many of the doctors who served went on to have successful careers outside of military life. Walter Clegg Stevenson, for example, is regarded as a pioneer in the field of radiation oncology. Joseph Bigger became Professor of Microbiology and Preventative Medicine in Trinity and was the person who provided Alexander Fleming with the culture plates on which he grew the original penicillin mould.

Some of the medics who carved their names on the Dun's table went on to work across the globe, from China and Hong Kong, to Australia, New Zealand, the Seychelles, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa and Argentina. Whilst most had careers in general practice and hospital medicine, others became college presidents and professors in medical schools across the world. Still others developed interests and expertise outside medicine including, for example, Arthur Francis Kerr who became a world-renowned expert on Siamese orchids or Harold Marrable who co-wrote the book *Cactus Growing for Beginners*.

