

A Foundation Member's recollections of the Earliest Days of our Society

By ANNE HODGES.

WHENEVER attending a meeting, I am impressed by the size and importance that has been attained by the South African Society of Physiotherapy. Having helped to lay down the foundation, may I be allowed to express pride in having taken a hand in the building of this fine organisation.

There is a tedious tendency for pioneers to become reminiscent, but I am hoping that members will be interested in reading something of the Society's first days. I shall touch only on those activities with which I was so closely associated.

When my career began, there was no Society in South Africa attending to the interests of our profession. It was further frustrating, when in trying to create a practice, to find oneself constantly in competition with people who had no recognised qualifications. Eventually, I learnt to accept these conditions as natural hazards. Perhaps I was too young at the time, and certainly too unwise to know that there was anything that could be done about it. For the time being, if enough work was forthcoming, that was all that mattered.

Then, "out of the blue", I had a call from Miss Jennings. She herself was in practice in Cape Town, but until then, I had not met her. With very great urgency, she drew my attention to the fact that unless an organisation was formed which could take active measures immediately, the Medical Bill would make its passage through Parliament without any reference whatsoever to our profession. She pointed out also, that if this were to happen, it would be very many years before we would be able to afford to carry any such measure ourselves. How right she was. This Bill was designed to ensure the proper status of the Medical, Dental, Pharmacy and Nursing professions. The period was sometime in the 1920's.

We then made contacts with properly trained persons. A Society was promptly created and a Constitution drafted. First things first, and the main object was inclusion in the Medical Bill. Thinking back, I wonder how we dared to be so optimistic. Our difficulties were endless. The greatest perhaps our tiny membership, also that our profession was not very generally understood. But we were not lacking in determination and courage. After much rebuff and some triumph, we at last reached the first stage of our goal when on that (to us) exciting day, Advocate Alexander, M.P. addressed Parliament on our behalf.

At about this time, this newly formed Society heard that a similar one had been formed in Johannesburg and had recruited members in Natal as well as some in Cape Town. For an already small body of people, this position seemed indeed unfortunate. Physiotherapy in its true form was rather new on the South African scene and obviously, there had not yet been the chance for its practitioners to get together to form a professional society. News of the Medical Bill precipitated this, to the extent that two societies unknown to each other, were formed. There was neither time nor opportunity to synchronise the individual efforts of both bodies, who although with different approaches, had the same objectives. In fact, it took a surprisingly long time to amalgamate these two societies, there being what seemed, unsurmountable obstacles.

Whatever the reason, it was the Society formed at the Cape, that Authority chose to invite to Parliament and to be heard in Select Committee. Miss Jennings, Miss Werge and myself (then Miss Dreebin) had the honour to represent our Society and given the opportunity to state our case. Our aim was Compulsory Registration. We found ourselves

up against stiff opposition because of sympathy for "Vested Interests". We discovered this to be a term applied to those people who although without recognised qualifications, had been recognised for many years as "Masseurs" and whose livelihood could suddenly be denied them. The other professions concerned in the Medical Bill, being old ones and already largely protected by a former Medical Bill, were quite differently situated. But we obtained Optional Registration, a start on which we hoped at some later stage, progress would be made.

I have dealt only very fleetingly with our obsession—the Medical Bill—but even after all these years, I can still vividly recall those interviews with the High-ups (the heart palpitations and disappointments entailed), the Parliamentary lobbying, etc., all very harassing to our handful of workers so utterly unused to such dealings.

The amalgamation of the two societies became an established fact. There were the fundamental and varied things to do. It was still a very small association and it was vital to gain a solid foothold in the medical world. Amongst other things, a journal was considered a necessity and was discussed very fully at a Conference. Everyone thought it a splendid but extravagant idea. Where was the maintenance money coming from? Who had time to undertake the editorship? By now, I had given up practice, so presumably had the time and was therefore the natural selection. Rather than let the project fall through, I agreed to accept this duty knowing full well that I would fall very short of what a desirable editor should be, since writing is not my favourite occupation. Also, although I did have the time, it was not the right sort of time, for my new way of life meant much travelling both at home and abroad. Like a paper chase, printers' copies followed me all over the place. Between his many business duties, my husband acted as proof reader.

Fund raising for the up-keep of the Journal was the biggest problem. Our membership being still pathetically small, we could not attract local advertisers to any extent and anyhow, there were not many suitable ones in existence then in this country. With such a small membership, the society's income was naturally also small. The allowance from headquarters to the Journal's coffers could only be but meagre. Miss Henderson, a Transvaal member, made a generous donation. But of course, we needed much more money. Having attempted one hurdle towards the Medical Bill, I was in fine form for attempting another in the effort to establish a Journal. My young brother most opportunely had decided to take an advertising apprenticeship in London. After some sisterly persuasion, he called on various medical-electrical firms there on our behalf. The result was so successful that we were able with the total funds (which included small monetary gifts to the Journal from the branches), to keep going for four years. During the whole of this time, I acted as editor and in fact, did all the chores in connection with the Journal, for during that time there was no committee. After that, regretfully, I had to resign from this office, which I had come to regard very affectionately as well as all my other activities for the Society. The amount of travelling involved, made it quite impossible for me to continue this work.

However, it is pleasant to relate that these travels had unwittingly served some little useful purpose to the Society, in that it enabled me to call on members then so widely scattered, to obtain and give news. Also, I could call on potential members and in this way, a few much needed ones were added. At that time, the Society had only three

(continued on page 11).

STUDENTS COLUMN

WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY.

Final Examination B.Sc. Physiotherapy, 1959.

Miss L. M. Björkman, Miss D. J. Dunsdon, Miss P. H. Dwyer, Miss M. A. Howie, Miss Y. R. Huddle, Miss J. M. Jeffrey, Miss B. A. J. Liebenberg, Miss H. F. Lyle, Miss H. J. Steens.

Final Examination Diploma of Physiotherapy Education.

Miss V. Cochran; Miss Crewe-Brown.

Wither Wits.

We would like to congratulate the successful graduates who passed the final B.Sc. Physiotherapy examination in November, 1959.

News of these girls is that Lena Björkman we hear is engaged to be married and plans her wedding in the near future. She is at present on the staff of the Boksburg-Benoni Hospital. Delyse Dunsdon and Joan Jeffrey have posts at the General Hospital, Johannesburg and Pat Dwyer and Yvonne Huddle are at Baragwanath. Margaret Howie was married at the end of January and we understand is to join the "Vaughan Gavin Petterson" firm in Johannesburg. Helen Steens now engaged has gone to the Cape and is working at the Carl Bremmer Hospital. Joy Liebenberg has returned to her home town Bulawayo and Helen Lyle has an appointment on the staff at the Far East Rand Hospital. "Wits" wishes them all good luck for the future.

Student News:

We start the new year with 16 students in Final Year and 20 students in Third Year.

Our first Final Examinations for the teacher's course is being held early in February, 1960.

The Wits Staff had a surprise visit from Moyra Kemp (Odgers 1953). She was on a six weeks visit to Johannesburg in company with her husband. She told us she is working full-time at the Park Royal Infirmary in Cardiff. She had news for Mrs. Taylor of all her old friends on the teaching staff there. She also gave us the news of the arrival of Christopher, son of Marilyn Davies (née Howe) who is a near neighbour of Moyra's in Cardiff.

Virginia Ashbury writes to tell us she is now in Canada gaining valuable experience and sends good wishes to all her friends and colleagues in the Union.

We send our greetings to those graduates (namely) Pam Denny, Maureen Purvis and Rosemary McRae who are shortly to visit Europe and wish them "Good Luck".

(Continued from Page 3)

branches: Transvaal, Cape and Natal. The Orange Free State was once numerically too small to form a Branch and members there once classified as ex-territorial. How wonderful and almost unbelievable to me it seems, that nowadays there are so many branches. How gratifying that Physiotherapy has gained its due recognition.

Working for the Society meant for me, an association with the boundlessly enthusiastic, the late Alec Kirstein. Also with the late Miss Gladys Troughton, without whose immense personality, I sometimes felt that the Association might not have made the grade in the splendid manner it did. They were two unforgettable people and my life was all the richer for knowing them. They worked for the Society from its inception until the end of their days. There were other stout hearted personalities who gave invaluable service and with whom it has been my privilege to be associated.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate you on the new look you have given to the old Society and from the bottom of my heart, I hope that it may continue from strength to strength.

Staff News:

The students and staff are all happy to welcome Mrs. Carol Cunningham back in their midst. She has agreed to help us out twice a week and is back as usual on the wards.

PRETORIA HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF PHYSIOTHERAPY.

School News.

Examination Results:

1st Year.

Fifteen students were successful in the 1st year Diploma Examinations, four gained distinctions in Anatomy; Keen, B. G.; Knox, N. L.; Maneschwitz, A.; Schulenburg, E. M., and seven distinctions in Physiology: Campbell, J.; de Klerk, M. W.; Ferreira, M. J. M.; Keen, B. G.; Knox, N. L.; Mitchell, M. J. S.; Schulenburg, E. M.

2nd Year.

Sixteen students were successful in the 2nd year Diploma Examinations. One gained a distinction in Kinesiology: Coetzee, J. A.; and three gained distinctions in Pathology, Roberts, E. J. R.; Schweickerdt, M. M.; Tönsing, E. D.

Final Year.

Nineteen students were successful in the 3rd year Final Diploma Examinations.

Miss J. E. Lawrance and Miss M. R. Cousins gained a second class pass and Miss J. E. Lawrance a distinction in Pathology.

Second Class (in order of merit):

Lawrance, J. E.; Cousins, M. R.

Third Class (in alphabetical order):

Blake, P. F.; Boomkamp, M.; Douglas, C. E.; du Preez, G.; Ellwood, M. A.; Gibbs, D. A.; Glick, T.; Grobler, E. H.; Hallam, B. M.; Humphris, N. M.; Mulder, H. B.; Pienaar, E.; Sloman, R. R.; van Wyk, M. J.; Welsh, J. M.; Wood, J. R.; Wulfes, M. D.; Redman, W.

The presentation of Diploma Certificates will take place in the School Hall at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 19th, 1960. Dr. H. J. Hugo, Director of Hospital Services will take the chair and the Guest Speaker will be Miss J. Blair, M.C.S.P., Senior Lecturer, Physiotherapy Department, Witwatersrand University.

All old students of the Pretoria Hospital School of Physiotherapy are welcome.

Staff:

The School is delighted to welcome back on the staff, Miss B. Winter, M.C.S.P., who has recently returned from England, where she has been working at St. Thomas' Hospital, London.

We offer her our congratulations on gaining the Teacher's Certificate of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy of Great Britain.

The School is missing the help of Miss E. M. Meredith, M.C.S.P., who left at the end of the year and is returning to England in March, we wish her 'Bon Voyage'.

Miss M. Roper, M.C.S.P.:

The School was very pleased to welcome Miss Roper, the Principal of the School of Physiotherapy, Cape Town, when she was up here for the November examinations.

She very kindly gave a short talk to the second year students and encouraged them to work hard during their years of training.

Old Students:

Miss Bodoano, Principal of the Physiotherapy School, would be grateful if all old students would send in their names and present addresses so that an 'Old Students' Association can be formed.