

## V.—THE BARBER-SURGEONS COMPANY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

BY WILLIAM BULMER, WITH AN APPENDIX BY  
PROFESSOR NORMAN HODGSON.

The Incorporated Company of Barber-Surgeons of Newcastle upon Tyne, one of the fifteen "bye-trades" of the city, was incorporated on 10th October 1442<sup>1</sup> and still exists. For a very long period they had no hall and, it seems, no regular place of meeting but met in turn in the houses of their members or, on occasion, in the churches of St. Nicholas or All Hallows. Later, when many of the companies were allowed the use of the towers and gates of the town wall for their meetings, they met in the room above Pandon Gate. This room was removed when the town wall was re-conditioned in 1644, during the Civil War, and the Company reverted to their original custom of meeting in the houses of their members. In 1648, however, they petitioned the city corporation for a site and stone for a hall, and a site in the Manors, formerly part of the Austin Friars, was granted to them, on a lease of sixty-one years, at an annual rent of six shillings and eightpence. This site was immediately east of the Holy Jesus Hospital and extended southwards as far as Manor Chare;<sup>2</sup> it is now almost entirely covered by City Road and the railway viaduct which crosses it just east of Holy Jesus Hospital. Here the Barber-Surgeons built their first hall and laid out two garths and a garden for medicinal herbs.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Brand's *History of Newcastle* (1789), Vol. II, p. 341—"from the original ordinary".

<sup>2</sup> T. Oliver's *Survey of Newcastle* (1830).

Some eighty years later, in 1730, they decided to re-build their hall and obtained a new lease, for a further sixty-one years, from the corporation at the same rent. Bourne<sup>3</sup> thus describes the hall and its surroundings: "On the east of the same Field is the hall of the Barber Surgeons which was re-built by them in 1730. It is a very beautiful one, and not a little sumptuous; it stands upon tall *Piazas* under which is a very spacious Walk. There is before it a fine square divided into four Areas or Grass-Plats, surrounded with Gravel Walks, each of which is adorned with a Statue. The first of the two next the Hall is the figure of *Aesculapius* placed upon a tall Pedestal, upon one side of which is the Motto *Συμβούλευε μὴ τὰ ἥδιστα, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἄριστα.*<sup>4</sup> In the area opposite to this is the figure of *Hippocrates*, who bears an open book with these words upon it, *ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΑἴΜΑΤΩΝ*<sup>5</sup> and on the side of the Pedestal *ὁ βίος βραχὺς, ἡ δὲ τάχνη μακρὰ.*<sup>6</sup> These were set up in the year 1710. On the other two Grass-Platts are the figures of *Medicus Pergameus* or *Galen* and *Medicus Spagyricus* or *Paracelsus* which were erected in 1712. There are besides this Square two other Gardens for Herbs, which, together with the Hall and Garden we have been speaking of, are attended by a Gardener who lives there for the purpose."

From this description and from the drawing (plate VIII, fig. 2) we can obtain a clear idea of this unpretentious but dignified building, standing in its formal garden, its dignity enhanced by the four statues and by the Greek inscriptions on the pedestals. The house of the resident gardener mentioned by Bourne is shown on Oliver's Survey of 1830 and it still stands, re-roofed and rather forlorn, just to the east of the railway viaduct.

For over a century, although its surroundings deteriorated, the hall and its garden remained undisturbed but the exten-

<sup>3</sup> Bourne's *History of Newcastle* (1736), p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> Prescribe, not the most pleasant, but the best.

<sup>5</sup> [The book] concerning fractures.

<sup>6</sup> Life is short; art is long; the rest of the inscription, as given by Bourne, is unintelligible.

sion of the railway which followed the building of the Central Station involved their extinction in 1851. The railway companies concerned (they became the North Eastern Railway in 1854) made handsome amends to the Barber-Surgeons, building them a new hall at the top of Victoria Street, Westmorland Road,<sup>7</sup> where it still stands to-day (plate VIII, fig. 1). The Barber-Surgeons did not long enjoy the use of this building for in 1862 it was purchased from them and conveyed upon trust to the incumbent and church-wardens of St. Paul's Church, High Elswick, for use as a school, and in the following year it became St. Paul's Church of England School.

The façade of this, the third, hall of the Company is not unlike that of the hall built in the Manors in 1730 but it is in a different style, being a good example of Victorian-Palladian. It has considerable dignity and is not without a certain period charm. This can no longer be appreciated as, in 1934, further accommodation being required, the whole building, almost to roof level, was encased in brick classrooms of a utilitarian aridity which would have made even Jeremy Bentham blench and which should make us blush for our generation.

The armorials used by the Barber-Surgeons Company of Newcastle upon Tyne are the same as those of the London Company. The Barbers and Surgeons Companies of London were combined in 1541 by Act of Parliament (32 Henry VIII c.42) and a grant of arms was made to the new combined company on 2nd June 1561. This grant, however, was not approved and was set aside and a new grant made on 10th July 1569. The arms then granted, and confirmed in 1634, were: "Quarterly I and IV—*sable, a chevron between three fleams, argent.* II and III—*per pale argent and vert, a spatula in pale argent, surmounted by a rose gules charged with another argent, the first rose regally crowned, or; over all, on a cross gules, a lion passant gardant, or.* Crest—

<sup>7</sup> The foundation stone was laid on 6th January 1851.

Upon a helm, on a wreath *argent and sable, an opinicus, or. Mantling—gules doubled argent. Supporters—Two Lynxes proper, a crown or about their necks with a chain argent pendant therefrom. Motto—DE PRAESCIENTIA DEI*<sup>8</sup> (plate IX).

An *opinicus* has the body and legs of a lion, the neck, head and wings of an eagle and a camel's tail. The arms in the first and fourth quarters are those of the Barbers Company and those in the second and third quarters, of the Surgeons Company. The Motto is—"With the foreknowledge of God".

These arms were blazoned for the Barber-Surgeons of Newcastle in *The Armorial Bearings of the Incorporated Companys of Newcastle upon Tyne* (Walker and Richardson, Newcastle, 1824); they also appear upon the Company's hall of 1851 and on an incomplete carved stone panel built into the precinct wall of the hall, which has every appearance of having come from one of the earlier halls of the Company.

One notable exemplification of the arms, however, varies, intentionally or accidentally, from the arms of the London Company. On 4th September 1861 the Company presented to our Society<sup>9</sup> a glass-fronted case containing their surgical instruments, and above the top of this case the arms of the Company are carved in wood in high relief (plate X). The carving is bold, even flamboyant, in style and displays quite exceptional craftsmanship; its general appearance suggests a late seventeenth century date. This carving has recently been cleaned, and the original colours revealed.

The armorials displayed by the carving differ from those of the London Company in the following particulars. The chevrons are omitted from the first and fourth quarters and the fleams are or not argent; in the second and third quarters the field is argent not per pale argent and vert, and the white roses and the spatulas are omitted. The mantling is gules

<sup>8</sup> J. C. Welch, *Coat-Armour of London Livery Companys*, London 1914.

<sup>9</sup> Donations Book and A.A. 2 S. VI 58.

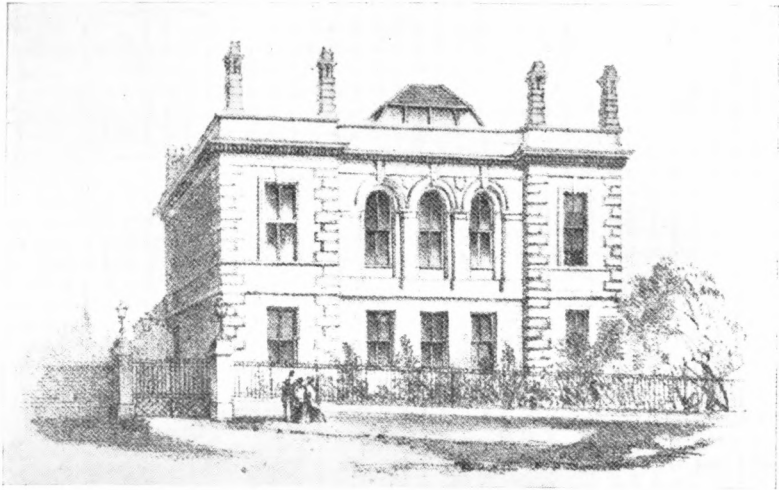


FIG. 1. THE HALL OF 1851, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMORLAND ROAD.

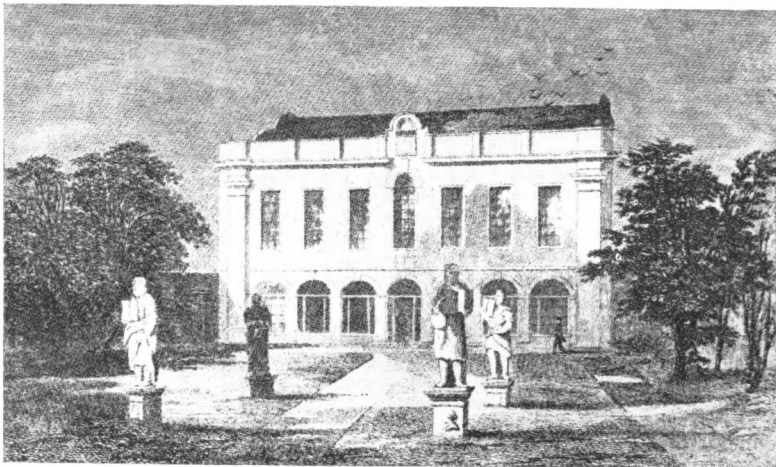


FIG. 2. THE HALL OF 1730, FORMERLY AT THE MANORS.



*THE BARBER-SURGEONS*

THE ARMS OF THE BARBER-SURGEONS COMPANY OF LONDON.  
From Wallis's *London Armory* (1677).



CARVED ARMORIALS OF THE BARBER-SURGEONS COMPANY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.





doubled ermine instead of gules doubled argent; this seems to be an obvious error as gules doubled ermine is usually confined to royal arms. The supporters are spotted sable upon gules and their chains are gold instead of silver. It should be noted that the supporters are usually "spotted of various colours" and indeed are so blazoned by Burke and Fox-Davies; but there is no mention of this in the original grant as quoted by Welch; there is no precedent for the use of bi-coloured spots.

Few of these alterations are such as a herald would make to difference one shield from another and the omission of the chevron from the Barbers arms is a radical change. It seems probable that the variation in the colours was due to the artist working from an imperfect copy of the arms and that the simplification in other respects, particularly in the complicated blazon of the roses, was due to the limitations of his medium.

#### APPENDIX.—THE INSTRUMENTS.

BY EMERITUS PROFESSOR NORMAN HODGSON.

This collection of Surgical and Dental Instruments, 29 in all, is probably the best single collection of the period, eighteenth century, in existence in this country (plate XI).

None of the instruments bear a maker's name or mark. The case in which they are housed was kept in the Hall of the Barber-Surgeons. It is a glass-fronted cupboard surmounted by the arms of the Company. In the books of the Company there are entries Instrument Case £1-2-3¼, a lock for the case 10d, painting the Case 1li. Paid the Joyner for the arms-cutting 17 shillings. The instruments are first mentioned in a minute dated January 4th 1702 which reads: Ordered that Mr. Haslipp pay the Xlvs that Robert Kells instruments are pawned for and the sd instrumts to be kept by the Stewards for the use of the Bretheren of this Company and to be always made good and delivered back by the Bro.

borrowing them in such condition as he receives them. Additions were made by purchases from a Mr. Brumwell and in London, between January 1702 and May 1703.

The regulations regarding the safe keeping and the borrowing of the instruments reads:

May XXIII jo 1704 Instrmts. The Company having bought severall instruments in the schedull hereunto annexed menconed Its order this day that the elder steward for the time being shall have always the keeping of them, and for his pains and care in lending them out; getting them in again, and keeping them cleane shall have yearly the sum of Ten shillings. And is to lend them to none but free Brothers living in Toun who are to send a note under their hands of what Instruments they will borrow with moneys to the value of them as sett doun in the schedule and upon returning them safe in Seaven days, the moneys to be returned, but if he shall not return them again safe att or before the end of seaven days then to forfeit the full value (vig) the moneys deposited. And the Stewards is to deliver them all in good order and very clean to the next Elder steward on the day of his electing or within a week after on the penalty of paying for what is lost according to the prices sett down. And if not delivered clean and in good order or refusing to lend them as above, is to forfeit his sallary for that yeares keeping of them. Stewards Jno. Hall. Th. Thompson.

When looking at the individual instruments the type of operations performed in the eighteenth century must be borne in mind. Antisepsis was unknown. Lister performed the first operation using antiseptic technique in 1865. Anaesthesia was also unknown. Operations were confined to the repair of injuries and the removal of limbs and external organs. Infection of wounds was expected and the mortality from this in cases of major amputations was as high as 50 per cent. The Brethren would themselves possess instruments for the performance of minor operations such as bleeding and the opening of abscesses.

FIG. 2. Amputation knife sharp on both edges except at the hilt and curved so as to partly encircle a limb. The saw for cutting bone is very similar to those in use to-day. The frame is heavy, the blade narrow to avoid damage to soft

tissues. The blade is  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, the whole instrument has a fine balance and would make for very quick cutting of the bone.

FIG. 1. Trepanning, the making of a hole in the skull, is one of the earliest surgical operations known and there is ample evidence to show that it was practised by primitive man in prehistoric times. A hole was scraped in the skull with the object of relieving pain in the head or epilepsy and at the same time providing an exit for the disease, demon or evil spirit. Trepanns, or trephines, in use in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A brace with three bits of different sizes, these also fit the handle shown below them. In the centre of each bit is a pin which projects a little beyond the cutting edge. This is to give a fixed point on which to circle. These pins can be removed when the circle has been cut in the bone. The rounded head of the handle can be unscrewed. This may indicate that the whole set was originally kept in a separate box.

FIG. 3. The two instruments on the left are lenticular knives used to smooth the cut edge of bone made by the trephine. The next instrument is a triangular scraper (*rougine*) for removing the *periosteum* from the bone before applying the trephine. The fourth under this number is a chisel, slightly curved, used for the amputation of fingers and toes, as was also the pincer lying in the saw. Above the pincer is a large flat needle.

FIG. 10. An elevator for lifting and removing the disc of bone cut by the trephine.

FIG. 4. Three cauteries of different shapes and sizes. These, heated, were used for many purposes, to destroy or remove tissues, to make issues or setons, to stop bleeding in wounds and amputation stumps. The same thing is done to-day by means of an electric cautery.

FIG. 6. The Greeks and Romans used forceps to remove arrow, dart or lance heads from the bodies of wounded soldiers. These four forceps of different sizes and shapes were for the extraction of bullets or foreign bodies.

FIG. 7. Top: An instrument for the removal of lead bullets. It consists of a straight tube down which a rod with a gimlet end was passed and screwed into the bullet, the tube, rod and bullet were then all withdrawn.

FIG. 7. Below: A long probe with an eye. There is another probe a quarter this length which is not on the photograph.

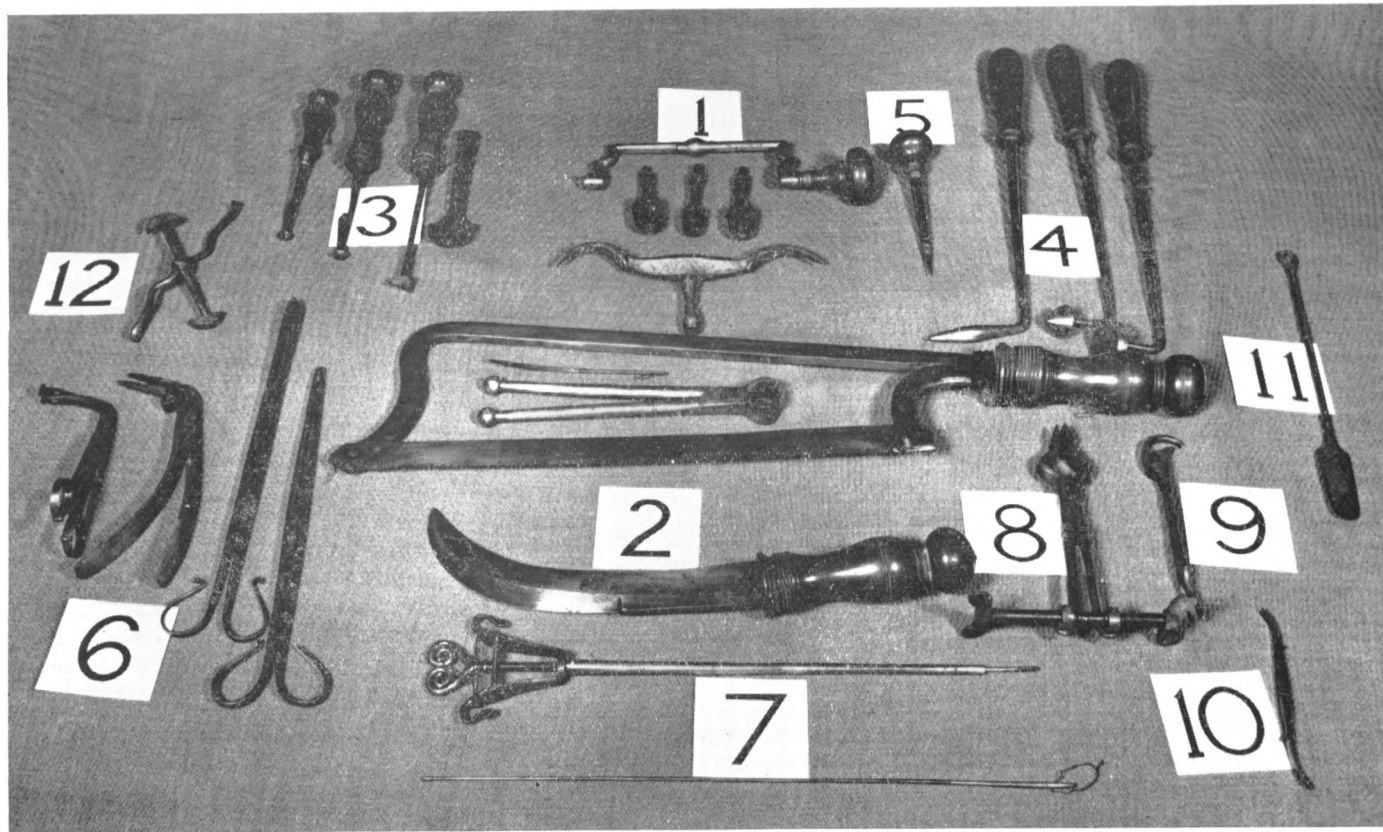
FIG. 8. A mouth gag. Closed it was forced between the teeth or gums and then opened by turning the thumb screws.

FIG. 11. A spatula for depressing the tongue. It has a long handle and could be used as a stirring rod.

FIG. 12. A double-ended pelican for the extraction of teeth. The distance between the claw and the bolster differs at the two ends to enable it to be used for teeth of different sizes.

FIG. 9. A tooth forcep called a *Douglas lever*. The end of the handle is designed for use as an elevator for tooth stumps or roots. Sir Frank Colyer, in his book *Old Instruments used for the Extraction of Teeth*, says that this instrument was first described by Alexander Monro of Edinburgh in 1742.

FIG. 5. A punch or elevator for removal of tooth stumps.



COLLECTION OF OLD SURGICAL AND DENTAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE MUSEUM OF THE SOCIETY.



