

Edwin Hurry Fenwick

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In this series of articles I am going to show you some of the exhibits contained in the BAUS Virtual Museum of the History of Urology which is part of the BAUS website (www.baus.org.uk).

In the last article I said I would tell you about a world famous pioneer in urology, Edwin Hurry Fenwick (Figure 1) and I have been joined by Jonathan Noël, a urology trainee with an interest in Fenwick.

Edwin Hurry Fenwick was born in 1856 in North Shields, Tyne and Wear. He was one of eight children to Dr Samuel and Mrs Amy Fenwick. He received his medical training and qualified from the London Hospital Medical College in 1880. On securing his Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS), he travelled to Germany for further surgical training under tutors such as Bernard Von Langenbeck and Karl Thiersch.

clumsy cooling water jacket and was not widely adopted. The addition of Thomas Edison's incandescent lamp to Nitze & Leiter's cystoscope very much improved its usefulness. Both designs of the instruments were presented by Fenwick to the Medical Society of London in 1888, and he declared the merits of this 'electric light' as a diagnostic tool over 'blind' digital exploration. Fenwick did much to popularise the cystoscope in Great Britain.

He retired from St Peter's and London Hospital in 1903 and 1910, respectively, and was appointed Emeritus Professor of Urology at the London Hospital. However, with the coming of the First World War, he returned to clinical work at the London Hospital as a Lieutenant Colonel, commanding the hospital's military section and Bethnal Green Military Hospital.

Although the Territorial Medical Service had been mobilised on the outbreak of war the four London

Territorial General Hospitals were not ready to receive casualties when on 30th August 1914, 100 wounded men arrived rather unexpectedly, at Waterloo station. Fenwick immediately took some London Hospital medical students there to treat them. When Mr EW Morris, the Chairman of the London Hospital, heard of this he contacted Lord Salmon, a member of the London Hospital's House Committee and incidentally, Chairman of Lyons Tea, who mobilised 14 Lyons & Co horse drawn delivery vans to transport the wounded to the hospital. More wounded arrived from France and by the following

morning Fenwick had admitted 300 (Figure 2). His war service was recognised by the award of a CBE in 1919.

After the war, the International Association of Urology (of which Fenwick was on the provisional committee) was replaced by Société Internationale d'Urologie with Fenwick a President of Honour indicating the international recognition he received. Fenwick's contribution to British urology is acknowledged every year with the award at BAUS of the St Peter's Medal (his name is inscribed along with Freyer and Thomson-Walker).

Fenwick died in Bedford Gardens, London in 1944. He should be remembered as one of the greatest promoters of the cystoscope in this country.

In the next few articles I will be looking at the most famous urological operation in history.

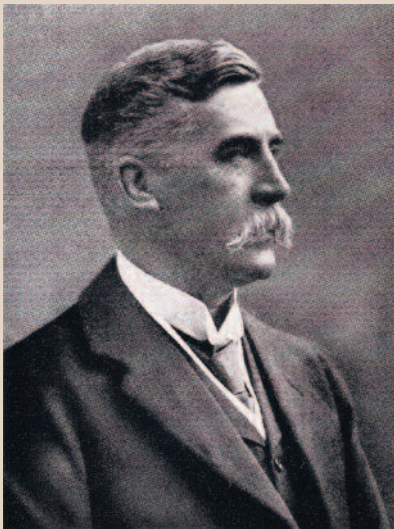


Figure 1 (above): Edwin Hurry Fenwick.

Figure 2 (right): 'The First Wounded at The London Hospital, 1914' by John Lavery, painted c 1914, oil on canvas, 62 x 75cm. Courtesy of The Royal London Hospital Archives.

From 1882 onwards, he returned home, forging his path up the ladder to become a surgical registrar, assistant surgeon and finally full surgeon to the London Hospital and also to St Peter's Hospital for the Stone, in addition to running a private practice near his residence on Savile Row. His personal life was also blooming, when in 1886 he married his cousin Annie Fenwick, daughter of Captain John Fenwick of Wimbledon.

Fenwick lived in an opportune time where medical specialisations and associated technology were progressing exponentially. His time in Germany would have likely exposed him to the original Nitze-Leiter cystoscope. Introduced to England by Sir Henry Thompson in 1880, the instrument had an illuminating heated platinum loop with a somewhat