

Sir Andrew Horne

Born: 1856
President: 1908-1910
Died: 1924

Sir Andrew Horne was, without doubt, one of the leaders in obstetrics and gynaecology in Dublin in the last decade of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. He was born in Ballinasloe, County Galway where his family were prosperous and respected merchants. His initial schooling was at the local classic school and he then completed his education at Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare. He joined the Carmichael School of Medicine in Dublin and during his studentship in the Rotunda was greatly influenced by the then Master, Sir Arthur Macan (qv). Horne attended both St Vincent's and the Mater Hospitals as dresser, and in 1881 he passed the College's Membership examination. This was the start of his long association with the College.

Horne was attracted to obstetrics and became Assistant Master in the Rotunda. Following that appointment, he decided to gain experience in Europe and studied at the Krankenhaus Hospital in Vienna. Here he became interested in aseptic techniques and in the prevention of pelvic infection; and he also gained considerable surgical experience.

Horne married in 1884 and commenced practice in obstetrics and gynaecology at 28 Harcourt Street. He was, however, constantly drawn to the Rotunda and in 1888 applied for the Mastership, but was beaten by William Smyly (qv). Horne and Smyly remained friends and consulted frequently about difficult cases. This was an early example of the collegiality of which the Dublin maternity hospitals are justly proud. Horne became a Member of the Dublin Obstetric Society, which had been founded in 1838 by Evory Kennedy (qv). This developed into the obstetric section of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, with Horne becoming President of the section in 1911.

In 1884 Dr Rowe founded a small maternity Hospital in Holles Street to look after the poor women in the south-east of the city. This hospital, however, failed and had to close. Ten years later in 1894 Patrick Barry, who had failed to be elected Master of the Coombe, joined with Horne and they became joint Masters of the new National Maternity Hospital. In addition to looking after maternity patients one of the objectives of the hospital was to establish gynaecological beds for diseases peculiar to women. The new hospital prospered and in 1903 was granted a Royal Charter by King Edward VII. The hospital became extremely busy with both obstetric and gynaecological cases. In 1901, Horne carried out the first caesarean section in the hospital.



In medical practice Horne was well ahead of his time in stressing the importance of both antiseptic and aseptic techniques in surgery. His publications and presentations discussed ectopic pregnancy, removal of abdominal tumours, cervical cancer, pyosalpinx and mastitis. He had a genuine interest in women's health and became an active member of the Women's National Health Association and the Dublin Babies Club.

Horne had a long association with, and interest in, the College. Following his return from Vienna he was elected a Fellow in 1885, and was appointed an examiner in midwifery the same year. He held the office of Censor (1888-90, 1894-96), Vice-President (1894-96) and was elected President in 1908. He used his influence in the College to enhance the reputation of the National Maternity Hospital by ensuring the examinations in midwifery and the Membership were held in the hospital. In 1913, he received a knighthood in recognition of his services to the College and to the National Maternity Hospital. It was Horne who, with Bethel Solomons (qv), fostered the relationship between obstetrics and the College, a relationship that has proved enduring. There is a story told that, in 1923, at a College meeting to discuss electing female Members to Fellowship, Horne spoke strongly against the motion and urged the Fellows 'not only to reject the motion unanimously, but unanimously with a large majority'. Horne was, however, unsuccessful in his objections and the first female Fellow was elected the following year.

Like Solomons, Horne was mentioned by James Joyce, this time in *Ulysses*. There is a section in *Ulysses*, the Oxon and the Sun, with the maternity hospital famously being called the House of Horne. Horne family tradition has it that in 1904 Andrew Horne turned Joyce, then a medical student, out of the National Maternity Hospital for making an offensive remark to a patient. As a result, Horne never read *Ulysses*.

In addition to his medical work Horne was a good golfer, a gifted pianist and a prominent member of a dining club, the Phagocytes Club. He was really interested in the care of children and was a founder member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

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