

## **THE HISTORY OF THE WELSH NATIONAL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TO 1931**

Dr Alun Roberts

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De Courcey's Manor, Pentyrch, Cardiff

This talk, given at De Courcey's Manor, Pentyrch on 29 October 2005 was one of three celebrating the recent merger of the University of Wales College of Medicine with Cardiff University. Dr Roberts' talk covered the previous period during which the medical school had been constitutionally part of what was at the time known as University College, Cardiff, between 1893 and 1931. Four main themes were addressed, when and why medical education began in Wales; the process whereby the school evolved from being a preclinical institution to becoming, in 1921, what was termed a 'full medical school' also providing clinical instruction, in association with the Cardiff Royal Infirmary; increasing tensions between the academic authorities in the college and the school and the clinical staff at the Infirmary eventually leading to the total suspension of clinical teaching for the 1928/9 session; and the constitutional position of the medical school following the report of the Royal Commission on University Education in Wales (1918) which recommended that the medical school should separate from University College, Cardiff to become an independent constituent college of the University of Wales. This recommendation caused dissention between University College, Cardiff and the University throughout the 1920s, eventually leading to a compromise in 1931 whereby the preclinical departments remained within the College, the clinical departments becoming a new institution within the University of Wales, known as the Welsh National School of Medicine. It is perhaps hardly surprising that a senior government adviser once ruefully observed: 'Agreement is a very rare quality in South Wales'.