

Shenton's Line

Dr David H A Jones

Anglesey

When Roentgen discovered X-rays in 1895, Edward William Hine Shenton (1872-1955) was a medical student at Guy's Hospital. He and a fellow student, AHB Kirkman, embraced the emerging specialty and, by 1899, established a skiagraphic service in the accident ward. Kirkman went to the Boer War and Shenton remained to create the Radiology Department at Guy's.

Within a few years of the discovery of X-rays, still a medical student, he developed an X-ray department, established a systematic approach to radiology and produced perhaps the earliest important archive of musculo-skeletal disorders, his Day Book for 1900

The first description of Shenton's line was a presentation to The British Electrotherapeutic Society in 1902. His diagnostic line is formed by the outlines of the upper margin of the obturator foramen and inner margin of the neck of the femur. These lines, if connected mentally, form an arch which is disturbed by dislocations, fractures and arthropathy.

What is probably Shenton's only surviving picture of his line is in his monograph, 'Disease in Bone' (1911).

His obituary endorses his many talents and kindly nature and charts a full and active life. For services during the Great War he was awarded the Red Cross gold medal. He retired in 1950, aged 78.

Shenton was also a talented violinist, singer, composer and actor. He was gifted with good hands. He made violins and, at the other end of the scale, built a 10-ton yacht in the grounds of his home. Latterly, he was an authority on roses.

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