

John Chiene

(1842-1923)

Sportsman & PRCSEd



Reference and contact details: GB779 RCSEd GD/10

Location: RS R5

Title: John Chiene (1843-1923)

Dates of Creation: 1870-1908

Held at: The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

Name of Creator: John Chiene

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Administrative/Biographical History:

Professor John Chiene, MD (1843-1923), surgeon, was born in Edinburgh, the son of a chartered accountant. He was educated at Edinburgh Academy and Edinburgh University, and also studied medicine in Paris, Berlin and Vienna during 1860. He graduated MD with Honours from Edinburgh in 1865. Chiene then became a House Surgeon for James Syme, and demonstrated in Anatomy under John Goodsir. 'Honest John' Chiene held the post of Professor of Surgery at Edinburgh University from 1882-1909. He instituted a small laboratory at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh for the examination of pathological and bacteriological specimens and was a pioneer of the Edinburgh Ambulance Service. During the Boer War he was consulting surgeon to HM Forces in South Africa. He excelled at cricket and rugby and was the first President of the Scottish Rugby Union and presented the Chiene Cup to the Royal College's Golf Club. Professor Chiene was President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh 1897-1899.

GD/10/1-18 Letters and testimonials

GD/10/19-20 Copies, notes and Chiene's leather notecase

GD10/1

1870, May 5th

Letter to Dr Chiene from Joseph Lister desiring that Chiene attend his lectures not as a student, but as a "distinguished stranger" since Dr Chiene is now a colleague in lecturing in surgery.

GD10/2

1871, August 22nd

Testimonial presented by Joseph Lister in favour of John Chiene in his candidature for the post of Assistant Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. Also note enclosed from Lister apologising for the delay in sending the testimonial. [2 sheets]

GD10/3

1882, June 10th

Testimonial presented by Joseph Lister in favour of John Chiene in his candidature for the Chair of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh.

GD10/4

1882, June 13th

Testimonial presented by Sir James Paget in favour of John Chiene in his candidature for the Chair of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh.

GD10/5

1882, July 7th

Letter to John Chiene from Louis Pasteur acknowledging the application of Chiene for the Chair of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh and presenting a testimonial in favour of his candidature.

GD10/6

1884, April 3rd

Letter to John Chiene from Louis Pasteur accepting his invitation to dinner on 16th April.

GD10/7

1884, April 8th

Letter to John Chiene from Louis Pasteur accepting on behalf of M. Rene Vallery Radot his invitation to dinner on 16th April.

GD10/8

1894, May 29th

Letter to John Chiene from Sir James Paget, thanking him and his wife for their congratulations and present on Sir James and Lady Paget's Golden Wedding day.

GD10/9

1896, February 9th

Letter to John Chiene from Joseph Lister seeking his assistance in the promotion of a monument to be erected to Pasteur in Paris.

GD10/10

1898, June 27th

Letter to John Chiene from Lord Lister applauding the Council "in letting the prize be, as in previous cases, in the form of money" and hoping that Chiene has recovered from his severe cold.

GD10/11

1899, December 17th

Letter from Lord Lister to John Chiene accompanying his thanks to Council and expressing his pleasure at receiving "this gratifying award" (The Liston Victoria Jubilee Prize for his work on Surgery) during Chiene's presidency. He suggests that the prize should perhaps be given in the form of money as this may be the most acceptable if future recipients are to be younger men.

GD10/12

1900, August 26th

Letter to John Chiene from General Archibald Hunter thanking him for his assistance while he was visiting South Africa and remarking "the knowledge that serious cases of wounds are receiving all the attention which the best skill in the world can suggest is a source of strength and comfort."

GD10/13

1901, July 24th

Letter to John Chiene from Lord Roberts expressing his disappointment that he was unable to meet him when Chiene was visiting Pretoria and requesting in Chiene's view the medical situation in Johannesburg. Roberts authorises him to give any assistance he may to the Hollander Surgeons in attendance on the Boers on St Helena. [2 sheets]

GD10/14

1901, July 8th

Letter to John Chiene from Joseph Lister congratulating him on his safe return from South Africa and on the award of the C.B. and informing him of the plans being made to celebrate the eightieth birthday of Virchow.

GD10/15

1907, October 19th

Letter to John Chiene from Joseph Lister stating that it was in the summer of 1875 that he visited Italy and Germany and in the autumn of 1876 that he was in America. He alludes to his health which "is in truth very infirm."

GD10/16

1908, May 5th

Letter to John Chiene from Joseph Lister referring to his preparation of catgut and disputing the theory that the use of carbolic acid on the wound has any harmful or toxic side-effects. He states that the spray is preferable to washing the wound with carbolic acid as it causes less irritation and consequently necessitates less drainage. He criticises "People who attribute faults in their results to defects in the means used when they are really the consequence of their not using earnest intelligent vigilance against septic contamination by themselves." Lister also suggests that Mr Syme's clinical lectures published in the Lancet, 1854-5, and illustrated by Lister who was then his house surgeon, would afford ample subject for comment in lectures by Chiene. [2 sheets]

GD10/17

1951, November 29th

Letter from the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [Walter Mercer] to Mrs Chiene, 11 Magdala Crescent, Edinburgh [John Chiene's widow] conveying the sympathy of the College on the death of her husband.

GD10/18

1951, November 30th

Letter from Mrs Chiene, widow of John Chiene, to Professor Mercer, thanking him for his sympathetic letter on behalf of the College..." glad to think he [Chiene] was busy and happy till the last hour of his life..."

GD10/19

A file of sheets of paper that are

- a) copies of letters GD10/1-16 and
- b) assorted typed notes intended for exhibiting the letters, probably in the RCSEd museum or library, in the 1950s[?]

GD10/20

1880? Brown envelope containing Chiene's leather notecase, with description.