

Gertrude Herzfeld FRCSEd: Album

Reference and contact details: GB779 RCSEd

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Title:

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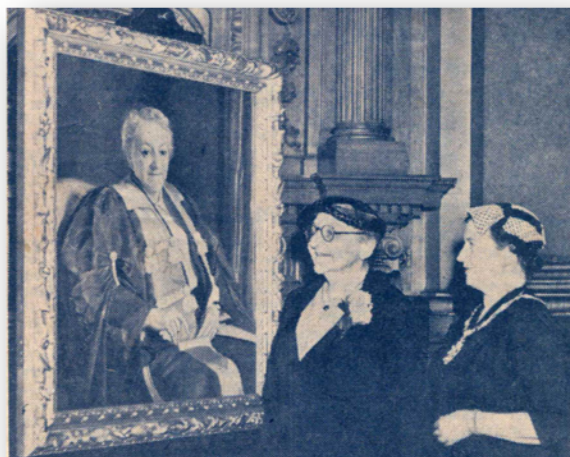
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Administrative/Biographical History:

Gertrude Herzfeld (1890-1981) FRCSEd was the first female Fellow to "take her seat" in College. She was born and educated in London, her parents having emigrated from Austria. After qualifying MBChB in Edinburgh in 1914, she became the first woman House Surgeon to Sir Harold Stiles at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Chalmers Hospital. In 1917 she became a surgeon at the RAMC Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot and from 1917 to 1919 was senior House Surgeon at Bolton Infirmary. In 1920, she was the first woman to be appointed honorary Assistant Surgeon to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh, and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons - the second woman to be admitted.

In 1925, on the resignation of Sir John Fraser, she and Norman Dott were together appointed as Surgeons to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. From 1920 until she retired in 1955, she was Assistant Surgeon and then Surgeon to Bruntsfield Hospital (the Edinburgh Hospital for Women and Children).

She was the first practising woman surgeon in Scotland. In those days, paediatric surgery embraced the whole range of plastic, orthopaedic, abdominal and neonatal work and included the treatment of burns and trauma. At the same time she undertook a wide range of general and gynaecological surgery at Bruntsfield Hospital.

She helped to found the Edinburgh School of Chiropody and the Edinburgh Orthopaedic Clinic and was medical adviser to the Edinburgh Cripple Aid Society and the Trefoil School for Physically Handicapped Children.

Her early difficulties in a male dominated world led her to promote the cause of women in medicine and she became President of the Medical Women's Federation. She joined the British Medical Association in 1915 and was Chairman of the Edinburgh Division from 1960-1962.

During her long retirement, she kept up her interest in music and travel and took up gardening and painting, becoming an Honorary Vice-President of the Scottish Society of Women Artists.

A portrait of Miss Herzfeld, oil on canvas, by Sir William Hutchison, is on display in the College and the picture above is of the occasion when the portrait was unveiled.