

13 January 2014

Media Release

Sir James Paget celebrated

The past weekend saw celebrations of the life and work of Sir James Paget, on the bicentenary of his birth in Great Yarmouth on 11th January 1814.

The event was marked by a clinical conference held at the James Paget University Hospital, named in his honour. Attendance was excellent, and the conference featured speakers of international renown discussing subjects related to the interests of Sir James. Talks included his contribution to the science of breast disease (Dick Rainsbury, past president of the Association of Breast Surgery), medical education (Professor Chris McManus, University College London), and bone disease (Professor Bill Fraser, University of East Anglia).

Professor Simon Donell (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and UEA) traced the development of orthopaedic surgery and Sue Down (James Paget University Hospital and UEA) showcased the key role played by the James Paget University Hospital in initiating national programmes of excellence including the National Mastectomy and Breast Reconstruction Audit started by Professor Jerome Pereira of the Breast Unit, and his award-winning e-learning programme for specialist clinicians based at the University of East Anglia. Professor Pereira gave further information about these courses for surgical trainees and how they are being taken up in Europe, India and Australia.

Hugh Sturzaker, retired surgeon, gave an outline of Sir James Paget's life and his many achievements. Aspects of this were covered in more detail by Professor Harold Ellis of Guy's Hospital who spoke of his great teaching abilities and research. Professor David Crossman, Dean of the University of East Anglia Medical School, gave a history of how medical education has developed

Mark Wilkinson (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and UEA) traced the history of how Pathology has changed since Sir James used just a microscope to study tissues to the present day when many other modalities are available to the modern-day pathologist.

A session focussing on the future of the NHS allowed junior medical doctors to share their visions of change and progress. This stimulating session was led by Dr Arun Gulati.

The conference concluded with a speech by Sir James Paget's great-grandson, Sir Julian, who at 92 years of age epitomised the Paget charm and eloquence for which the great man was renowned.

Following the success of the conference, a sell-out bicentenary dinner for 200 guests was held in the resplendent surroundings of the recently refurbished Assembly Room at Great Yarmouth Town Hall. Christopher Dicker proposed the health of the people and town of Great Yarmouth to which the Mayor responded. Brandon Lewis MP praised the great work being done by the James Paget University Hospital. In his reply David Wright, Chairman of the Trust, said how proud he was of the staff's achievements but that he was concerned by the financial restrictions being imposed on all hospitals.

In proposing a toast to the memory of Sir James Paget, Hugh Sturzaker said what a splendid example Sir James had set and hoped that his life and works would be an inspiration, not only to medical and nursing staff, but to everyone who lived in and around Great Yarmouth.

In response, Sir Julian Paget said how proud and honoured he and his family were with all the events put on in memory of his illustrious ancestor. Earlier in the evening he had cut a birthday cake which had been made by Mrs. Margaret Cooper.

Guests were asked to make a donation for the orchid on each table. As result of this over £280 was donated to the Louise Hamilton Centre.

The following day, Sunday 12th January, saw a Civic Service at Great Yarmouth Minster presided over by the Bishop of Norwich in which he gave a superb sermon, tracing Sir James's life and emphasising the need for patience.

Hugh Sturzaker, who had overseen the organisation of these events to celebrate the life of Sir James Paget, said "The success of the conference and dinner had exceeded my expectations and it had raised the profile of the James Paget University Hospital. There were capacity turnouts for the conference and dinner and many people had said how much they had learnt about Sir James."

'Sir James Paget: Surgeon Extraordinary and His Legacies' is on sale in WH Smith, Great Yarmouth, is available on Amazon and as an eBook. It traces the life and times of Sir James, from his upbringing in Great Yarmouth to his studies and work in London and commences with a short history of Great Yarmouth.