

## BEFORE THE NHS

### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A COUNTRY GP



CASTLEGATE  
BERWICK-ON-TWEED.

*Herriott*

As an amateur family historian, the idea of giving a presentation about the longest serving GP in Lowick interested me from a local history point of view but I soon realised that he was present during the enormous transformation of medical practice and welfare that happened in the first half of the 20th century.

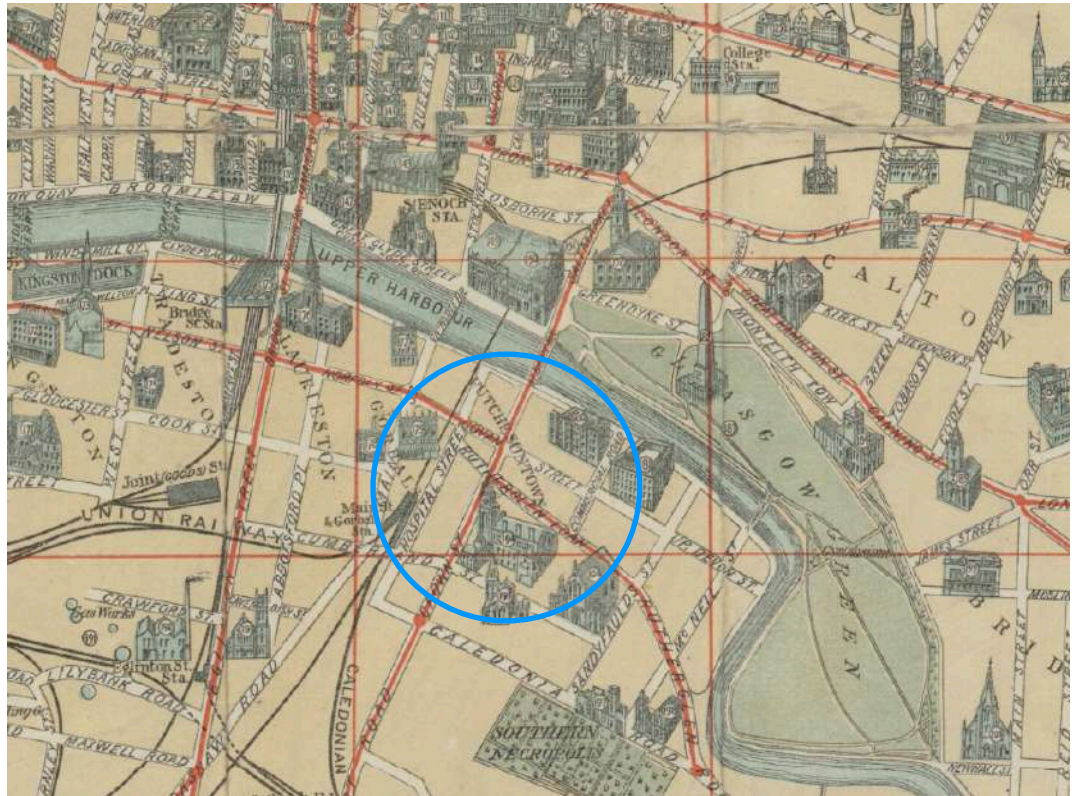
The man in question was **Dr John Elliott**. He came to Lowick in 1899 and stayed for 57 years. When he died in Berwick Infirmary in 1956 he had seen the village through two world wars and great changes in the care of the sick.

His birthplace on 21 Jan 1863, was the village of Shettleston on the outskirts of Glasgow but he grew up in an area of Glasgow called Hutchesontown; in McNeil Street just over the Clyde from the city centre in an area eventually incorporated into The Gorbals



Early 20th century view of Hutcheson's Grammar School, Crown Street





His father collected payments for a life insurance firm and by the age of 18 John was doing the same. He got married for the first time in 1887 aged 24, to Margaret Spence Robertson. He was widowed in 1887 only 2 months after marrying Margaret when she died of pneumonia and bronchitis. Her death certificate shows that she died in Aikenhead Road

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1887 DEATHS in the DISTRICT of HUTCHESONTOWN in the COUNTY of LANARK

| No. | Name and Surname.<br>Sex or Profession, and whether<br>Single, Married, or Widowed. | When and Where Died.             | Sex. | Age. | Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession<br>of Father.<br>Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother. | Cause of Death, Duration of<br>Disease, and Medical Attendant<br>by whom certified. | Signature & Qualification of Informant,<br>and Residence, if out of the House in<br>which the Death occurred. | When and where Registered,<br>and Signature of Registrar. |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|------|------|--|---|---|---|
| 007 | John Reynolds   | 1887<br>November<br>Twenty-fifth | Mr   | 54   | John Reynolds<br>Farm Labourer   | Bronchitis<br>only seen once  | Elizabeth M. Cairney<br>Daughter  | 1887<br>November 28<br>At Glasgow                         |
|     | Widow of<br>Margaret Robb   | 10th. Son. Ann.<br>22            |      |      | Harry Reynolds<br>Phil. Taylor   | As Cert. by<br>Mrs. Wilson<br>(deceased)<br>Surgeon                                 | (present)<br>James Nimmo<br>Assistant Registrar   | James Nimmo<br>Act. Registrar<br>J. N.                    |
|     |   | Thalasside Street<br>Glasgow     |      |      |  |   |   |   |
|     |   |                                  |      |      |  |   |   |   |
| 008 | Margaret Spence<br>Elliott  | 1887<br>November<br>Twenty-fifth | Sp   | 26   | James Robertson<br>Tailor (Journeyman)   | Pneumonia<br>Acute Bronchitis   | John D. Elliott<br>Widow  | 1887<br>November 28<br>At Glasgow                         |
|     | Married to<br>John Elliott  | 5 P. M. 11. 20                   |      |      | Isabella Robertson<br>Mrs. M. Hay  | As Cert. by<br>J. M. Mac<br>(deceased)<br>Surgeon                                   | (present)   | James Nimmo<br>Act. Registrar<br>J. N.                    |
|     | Life Insurance Agent  | Aithenhead Road<br>Glasgow       |      |      |  |   |   |   |
|     |   |                                  |      |      |  |   |   |   |

Glasgow had become a major centre for heavy industry and shipbuilding and the wealth it brought in the early days resulted in the building of many elegant classically styled houses and mansions.

But by the 1820s overpopulation was such a serious problem that many people were living in overcrowded and squalid conditions with poor sanitation - and many of those fine buildings were used to house a dozen or more families. By 1840s infectious diseases like Typhus and cholera were common.



Disease and pollution were the status quo.

Even breathing was injurious to health. The smog problem was so well known that cartoons appeared about it.





This was the reality.

This map shows in detail the heavy industry and railways in the area of Glasgow where she lived



Aikenhead Road is seen surrounded by steam railway tracks, there's a colliery, two iron works, brick works and several mills.

After moving back with his parents he decided, in 1891 to enrol at St Mungo's college to become a doctor.



| Name.                       | Preliminary Examination in Arts,<br>with Date thereof.   | Date of<br>Regis-<br>tration. | Place and Date of<br>commencement of Medical<br>Study, as certified by a<br>Master, or a Teacher, or an<br>Official in a<br>Medical School or Hospital. |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| EDMONDSON, James Heslam     | <i>Inter. Educ. Board Irel., Jun.<br/>Grade;</i><br><i>June, 1888.</i><br><i>R. Univ. Irel. Matric.;</i><br><i>July, 1891.</i>                       | Nov. 30                       | T. Scannell's,<br>Cork;<br>August 8, 1888.  |
| EDWARDES, John.....         | <i>Incorp. Law Soc. Prel.;</i><br><i>November, 1871.</i>   | June 11                       | Liverp. Univ. Coll.;<br>May 1.  |
| *EDWARDS, Charles Sumner    | <i>Camb. Jun. Loc.;</i><br><i>December, 1884.</i><br><i>Coll. Precep.;</i><br><i>September, 1890.</i><br><i>Glasg. Prel.;</i><br><i>April, 1891.</i> | May 1                         | Anderson. Coll. Med.<br>Sch. Glasg.;<br>October 21, 1890.   |
| EDWARDS, Gilbert Laxton     | <i>Camb. Prev.;</i><br><i>October, 1889, &amp;<br/>June, 1891.</i>   | July 31                       | Univ. Camb.;<br>October 10, 1889.   |
| ELEY, Norman William ...    | <i>Coll. Precep.;</i><br><i>September, 1890.</i>   | May 2                         | S. E. Johnson's,<br>Birmingham;<br>May 1.   |
| ELLIOTT, John.....          | <i>Fac. Phys. Surg. Glasg.;</i><br><i>October, 1891.</i>   | Oct. 22                       | St. Mungo's Coll. Glasg.;<br>October 20.  |
| *ELLIS, Arthur William .... | <i>Edin. Prel.;</i><br><i>April, 1890 &amp; 1891.</i>  | April 23                      | Univ. Edin.;<br>October 14, 1890.   |
| ELLIS, Clarence Isidore ... | <i>Camb. Jun. Loc.;</i><br><i>December, 1886.</i>  | May 4                         | Univ. Aberd.;<br>April 20.  |

He enrolled on  
the "Triple  
Qualification"  
courses

This qualification came about following the Medical Act of 1851 that required that anyone practicing Medicine should have passed recognised exams and be entered on the Medical Register. While university students graduated with MD qualification, the medical colleges were allowed to provide a new qualification called the Double and then the Triple Qualification

So rather than "MD", John Elliott was listed in the Medical Register with this long list of letters.

"Lic.R.Coll.Phys.Edn.,LicFacSurgGlasg.,Lic.R.Coll.Surg.Edin"

Medical training would have been a far cry from that of today but will have equipped him well for what was possible in those days.

He would probably  
have watched  
operations in a  
viewing  
amphitheatre like  
this



He may have got his first taste of general medicine is as a volunteer at The Medical Missionary Society.



This organisation ran two 'dispensaries' in Glasgow, one of which was very near St Mungo's college. It was founded in 1867 and if you earned less than 20/- a week you could be seen there for 1d. This was a hugely valuable source of medical care when about one in five Glaswegians died without ever seeing a doctor. In 1890 it saw 40,000 consultations including some home visits and these were provided by medical students as well as doctors and nurses

The ambulance service was in its infancy.



[Horse-drawn Ambulance Wagon in Govan](#)



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1896. MARRIAGES in the District of Blackfriars in the Burgh of Glasgow

| No. | When, Where, and How Married.   | Signatures of Parties<br>Rank or Profession, Whether Single or Widowed,<br>and Relationship (if any). | Age | Usual Reside on              | Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession<br>of Father.<br>Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.                    | If a regular Marriage, Signatures of<br>officiating Minister and Witnesses.<br>If Irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree<br>of Declarator, or Sheriff's Warrant. | When & Where Registered,<br>and Signature of Registrar. |
|-----|---|---|-----|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 123 | 1896,<br>on the Twentieth third<br>day of April<br>at 249 Gallowgate<br>Glasgow | (Signed) /<br>John Elliott<br>Medical Student   | 33  | 249<br>Gallowgate<br>Glasgow | Edward Elliott<br>Insurance agent<br>and<br>Mary Elliott<br>Mrs Ferguhar<br>(deceased)                        | (Signed) /<br>Fergus Ferguson<br>Minister   | 1896,<br>April 24 <sup>th</sup>                         |
|     | after Banns<br>according to the<br>Forms of the<br>Evangelical Union<br>Church. | (Signed) /<br>Mary Hall MacRobert<br>O.E.Y. Colour Merchant   | 33  | 249<br>Gallowgate<br>Glasgow | Thomas M <sup>c</sup> Robert<br>Butler (Minister)<br>(deceased) and<br>Mary M <sup>c</sup> Robert<br>Mrs Hall | (Signed) /<br>Thomas MacRobert<br>Minister<br>Mary Hall Gregg<br>Witness<br>James Hendry<br>Witness   | Glasgow<br>James Hall<br>Registrar.                     |
|     |   | (Widower)   |     |                              |   |   |   |
|     |   | (Spinster)  |     |                              |   |   |   |
|     |   |   |     |                              |   |   |   |

John married again in 1896 while still a student - Mary Hall MacRobert, who he eventually brought with him to live in Lowick. Her brother Thomas was a minister in the Evangelical Union Church and was one of the two ministers at the ceremony.

After graduation on Aug 2nd, 1897 he lived for a short time in Gallowgate, Glasgow before taking over the practice in Lowick. He was to stay on the Medical Register until his death in 1956. This is his entry in the 1900 Medical Directory.

| UK & Ireland, Medical Directories, 1845-1942 for John Elliott  |  |
|--|--|
| The Medical Directory > 1900   |  |
| <p>Ex-Pres. Chester Med. Soc.; Fell. Roy. Med. Chir. Soc.; Hon. Phys. Chester Gen. Infirm.; late House Surg. and Jun. Asst. Chloroformist St. Bart. Hosp., and Res. Surg. Off. Birm. Gen. Hosp. Contrib. "Choice of Anæsthetics," <i>Birm. Med. Rev.</i> 1890.</p> <p>ELLIOTT, JOHN, Lowick, Beal, Northld.—L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. Edin., L.F.P.S. Glasg. 1897; (<i>St. Mungo's Coll.</i>)</p> | <p>No.2 Auckland-pk. and<br/>*ELLIS, J<br/>worth-st. Lth<br/>L.F.P.S. Glas<br/>ELLIS, H<br/>Cornwall—L<br/>Chicago Acad<br/>throp., Anth</p> |

He rented part of The Old Drapery at 50 Main Street, Lowick. This lovely old photo from about 1900-1910 is from Robert Sinton's collection.



It gives a good idea of how Lowick looked when he arrived. The public subscription school is on the right. You can just see his house. It's the one near the far end with the windows jutting out

This later photo shows it more clearly. He had the right hand half of the property. Patients accessed the waiting room and surgery down a passageway on the right.





| 1901 England Census for John Elliott  |                      |   |  |  |                      |         |    |    |                     |             |                          |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---|--|--|----------------------|---------|----|----|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Northumberland > Lowick > District 10 |                      |   |  |  |                      |         |    |    |                     |             |                          |
| 16                                    | Dr. John Elliott     | 1 |  |  | John Elliott         | Head    | M. | 38 | Physician & Surgeon | Own account | Scotland.                |
|                                       | Mary H. Dr.          |   |  |  | Mary H. Dr.          | Wife    | M. | 38 |                     |             | Do.                      |
|                                       | Margaret W. Buchanan |   |  |  | Margaret W. Buchanan | Visitor | S. | 36 | Living on Own Means |             | Do.                      |
|                                       | Catherine Leach      |   |  |  | Catherine Leach      | Serv.   | S. | 53 | Domestic servant    |             | Northumberland East Ord. |

Here is Dr Elliott in the 1901 census with his wife, Mary and a servant, Catherine Leach, from East Ord.

|    |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     | DATE OF BIRTH OF DEPENDENTS |    | TRADE EMPLOYED |                         |     |    |
|----|----------------|---------|----|---|--------|----|-----|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|----|----------------|-------------------------|-----|----|
| 1  | 2              | 3       | 4  | 5 | 6      | 7  | 8   | 9 | 10                  | 11                          | 12 | 13             | 14                      | 15  | 16 |
| 1  | Mr. Elliott    | Head    | 48 |   | Mixed  | 74 | Mar |   | Physician & Surgeon | 451                         |    |                | Lowick, Northumberland  | 514 |    |
| 2  | Mrs. Elliott   | Wife    | 48 |   | Mixed  | 14 | Mar |   |                     |                             |    |                | Lowick, Northumberland  |     |    |
| 3  | Cecilia Morton | Servant | 28 |   | Single |    |     |   | Servant, Domestic   | 010                         |    |                | Northumberland, Buckton |     |    |
| 4  |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 5  |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 6  |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 7  |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 8  |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 9  |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 10 |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 11 |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 12 |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 13 |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 14 |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |
| 15 |                |         |    |   |        |    |     |   |                     |                             |    |                |                         |     |    |

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—  
 (1) All the names on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex columns;  
 (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 2 and 3 separately, and have compared these with the total number of persons;  
 (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Signature *J. J.*

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature *John Elliott*

Postal Address *Lowick, Northumberland*

And in 1911 he is shown living with Mary and a servant Cecilia Morton from Buckton.

Over the years he employed various women as cook or housekeeper. In 1939 Elizabeth Rule was cook and Louisa Rule, servant. Later on Mary Waters and Dorothy Patrick worked for him.

Although the village was in a beautiful rural setting he'd have found the living conditions familiar. There were the same dung heaps and poor sanitation in addition to a perpetual problem with the water supply. Infectious diseases such as Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria and Enteric Fever spread easily in the unsanitary and crowded conditions. The most common causes of death in 1906 were TB and bronchopneumonia.

to communicate with the District Council accordingly. Mr Young called attention to the sewerage from the farm buildings in Lowick village, percolating through the walls, and accumulating on the footpath, and also on the main street of the village. He moved that the attention of the Sanitary Inspector should be called to the matter, to endeavour to have the nuisance abated. This was seconded by Mr Ford, and agreed to. The Clerk was also instructed to write to the Clerk of the County Council, and thank that body for the efficient way they had improved the footpath on the north side of the main street of Lowick, and calling attention to the dangerous state of the footpath on the south side from the cement in front of Mr Forsyth's shop, and going in an easterly direction to the corner of the street running south.

This article appeared in the Berwick Advertiser in April 1897

The problem was that sewerage from farm buildings was percolating through the walls onto the path and main street.

And this is from the Glendale Rural District Council minutes. (All council minutes mentioned here were obtained from Berwick Archives).

**24<sup>th</sup> April 1902 Lowick**

Medical Officer of Health's report

Lowick was visited and the Common was found to be in an extremely filthy state. The ashpits and manure heaps which were reported on last July are still there with the exception of one or two, and several have been added. These I consider are dangerous nuisances to health especially as the warmer weather comes on. For several weeks past caravans and tents have been on the Common many with large families in them. The dirty habits of these people have now made the Common nothing better than a large privy. **This is highly dangerous to the health of the households and in the present widespread epidemic of smallpox an additional danger of bringing this disease which immediate steps should be taken to abate.**

It was resolved that the Lowick Parish Council be asked to look out for a suitable place for a manure and refuse depot.

The council eventually adopted the Commons Act of 1902 and the common was cleaned up

After a fatal case of Typhoid in 1901, the situation at Bowsden West Farm Cottages was discussed at the Parish Council

**Berwick Archives LG 1 / 3 Glendale Rural District Council. 29<sup>th</sup> April 1897 – 1902 (Meetings held at Wooler)**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 1901 Bowsden**

The Medical Officer of Health reported - The Cottages belonging to Bowsden West Farm in one of which a fatal case of typhoid has recently existed are four in number and each cottage consists of a kitchen with a small compartment, which compartment is in each case too damp to sleep in. There are ten inmates in the Cottage where the case of Typhoid Fever existed. Overcrowding and the unsanitary surroundings are sufficient to account for the disease. Pigstyes which are in a dilapidated state are situated at each end of the row of cottages and in wet weather the sewage flows from those sties and lies in front of the cottage doors. There is also a ditch by the road by the roadside into which a drain opens in front of the cottages. This drain comes from the farm steading and contains liquid manure which forms a dangerous nuisance. The farm house has no ashpit. The drain which carries the liquid manure from the Cow Byre is blocked up. The sink is situated in front of the door of the Cow Byre and not more than 4 or 5 yards from the back door of the farm house. In its present state it is a very dangerous nuisance.

An excerpt from the census from the last day of March 1901 shows the four cottages mentioned in the report and that there were 11 people living at no. 4 at the time. Henry, aged 10 was buried a few days later in Lowick churchyard on April 8th



| Administrative County                 |   | The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the |           |  |             |   |                                 |                                  |                       |                                   |         |                                  |                                  |                    |                          |    | Page 5  |    | 114 |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|-----------|--|-------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----|---|----|-----|--|--|
| Civil Parish                          |   | Ecclesiastical Parish  |           | County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District |             | Ward or Metropolitan Borough or of Urban District |                                 | Rural District                   |                       | Parliamentary Borough or Division |         | Town or Village or Hamlet        |                                  |                    |                          |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| of Lowick                             |   | of Lowick, St. John's  |           | of   |             | of Glendale                                       |                                 | of                               |                       | of Berwick-on-Tweed               |         | of Bowden West Farm              |                                  |                    |                          |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| Coln.                                 | 1   | 2  | 3         | 4  | 5           | 6   | 7                               | 8                                | 9                     | 10                                | 11      | 12                               | 13                               | 14                 | 15                       | 16 | 17  | 18 | 19  |  |  |
| No. of Inhabitants                    | ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE                            |  | HOUSES    |  | Uninhabited |   | Name and Surname of each Person | RELATION to Head of Family       | Condition of Marriage | Age last Birthday of              |         | PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION         | Employer, Worker, or Own account | If Working at Home | WHERE BORN               |    | (1) Deaf and Dumb<br>(2) Blind<br>(3) Lame<br>(4) Imbecile, feeble-minded |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  | Inhabited | Uninhabited  | Inhabited   | Uninhabited                                       |                                 |                                  |                       | Males                             | Females |                                  |                                  |                    |                          |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| 32                                    |   | West Farmhouse   | 1         |  |             |   | Isabella Young                  | Head                             | Wid                   | 75                                |         | <del>Farmer</del>                | Employer                         |                    | Northumberland, Lowick   |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | George do                       | Son                              | 5                     | 47                                |         | <del>Farmer</del>                |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Catherine do                    | Daughter                         | 5                     | 63                                |         | <del>Farmer</del>                |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Robert Scott                    | Servant                          | 5                     | 30                                |         | <del>Stockbridge Farm</del>      | Worker                           |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| 33                                    |   | do Cottage 1   | 1         |  |             |   | Alexander Johnston              | Head                             | M                     | 43                                |         | <del>Farmer</del>                | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Martha do                       | Wife                             | M                     | 42                                |         | <del>Farmer</del>                |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Robert do                       | Son                              |                       | 10                                |         | <del>Farmer</del>                |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | George do                       | do                               |                       | 5                                 |         | <del>Farmer</del>                |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Alexander do                    | do                               |                       | 5                                 |         | <del>Farmer</del>                |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| 34                                    |   | do No 2  | 1         |  |             |   | John W. Young                   | Head                             | M                     | 22                                |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | Worker                           |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Catherine do                    | Wife                             | M                     | 25                                |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Thomas do                       | Son                              |                       | 1                                 |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| 35                                    |   | do No 3  | 1         |  |             |   | Margaret Galbraith              | Head                             | S                     | 53                                |         | <del>Farm-out, High Workes</del> | Worker                           |                    | Scotland                 |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | John do                         | Brother                          | S                     | 39                                |         | <del>Farm-out, High Workes</del> |                                  |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| 36                                    |   | do No 4  | 1         |  |             |   | John Whillis                    | Head                             | M                     | 42                                |         | <del>Ploughland Farm</del>       | Worker                           |                    | Northumberland, Lowick   |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Elizabeth do                    | Wife                             | M                     | 35                                |         | <del>Ploughland Farm</del>       |                                  |                    | Scotland                 |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Jessie do                       | Daughter                         | 5                     | 20                                |         | <del>Butterfield Farm</del>      | do                               |                    | Northumberland, Cornhill |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | William do                      | Son                              | 5                     | 19                                |         | <del>Carter Rd, Glendale</del>   | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Robert do                       | Son                              | 5                     | 15                                |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | John do                         | Son                              |                       | 13                                |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Henry do                        | Son                              |                       | 11                                |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Margaret do                     | Son                              |                       | 9                                 |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Mary do                         | Daughter                         |                       | 6                                 |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Agnes do                        | Daughter                         |                       | 4                                 |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
|                                       |   |  |           |  |             |   | Thomas do                       | Son                              |                       | 2                                 |         | <del>Hind Gill Farm</del>        | do                               |                    | do do                    |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| End of the Hamlet of Bowden West Farm |   |  |           |  |             |   |                                 |                                  |                       |                                   |         |                                  |                                  |                    |                          |    |   |    |     |  |  |
| 5                                     | Total of Schedules of Houses and of Tenants with less than Five Acres |  | 5         | 0  | 0           | 0   | 4                               | Total of Males and of Females... |                       |                                   | 15      | 10                               |                                  |                    |                          |    |   |    |     |  |  |

NOTE—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

NOTE—Draw your pen through each word of the headings as are inapplicable.

In fact, Elliott's own rented property was declared unfit for habitation in 1914(!) and narrowly escaped a closing order after the landlord made repairs

### 19th November 1914, Lowick

Lowick House occupied by Dr Elliott and adjoining property. The Medical Officer of Health reported that this property was in such a state as to unfit for habitation. Clerk was instructed to write to Mr Ward on behalf of the owners and state that the question of a Closing Order would be considered at next meeting.

### 17th December 1914, Lowick

Medical Officer of Health's Report. On Wednesday December 16th I visited Lowick and examined the house occupied partly by Dr Elliott and partly by Mr Daglish. There has been nothing done to improve the house and the recent heavy rains have made matters worse.

And even as late as 1934 the following interview took place regarding his living conditions, at the public enquiry into Lowick Water Supply

July 1934, Public Inquiry into Lowick Water Supply, held in Lowick. Mr Middlemas was the Clerk to Glendale Rural District Council. Berwick Advertiser 12 July 1934

Dr J Elliot – I think the present supply is too hard. If motorists stopped washing their cars and people stopped watering their gardens, the supply would be sufficient

Mr Middlemas – Have you a WC and if not would you not like to have one?

Dr Elliott- I do not have one and would not object to having one.

Mr Middlemas – Have you a bath and if not would you not like to have one?

Dr Elliott- I do not have one and would not object but would not bath in the present water because it is too hard.

Even so, I've been told by several residents that he would take a cold bath in a tin tub every day.

When he first settled here, he had the opportunity to work alongside his predecessor, Dr James Lambie.

This report is of an inquest that was held in 1900 at High Steads into the death of a patient they had both attended

Rachael Sibbit was about 79 when her foot was accidentally scalded with boiling water. Both doctors attended her. The inquest decided that her death a few months later was due to old age but may have been accelerated by the accident. She is buried in St Anne's churchyard in Ancroft.

Morpeth Herald 01 September 1900

Page 2 of 8 Article: WILUDSHIW'S SALT.

1 D. Dodds, 2 T. W. Clarke. Foliage  
1 T. W. Clarke, 2 E. Holland. Fuchsia  
1 D. Dodds, 2 G. W. Haldon, 3 T. W. Clarke.  
um Plants, 1 D. Dodds, 2 W. Rutherford, 3  
lla. Dahlia Blooms, 1 J. Kirtley, 2 J.  
er, 3 J. Swan. Rose Blooms, 1 W. Stoker,  
lordon, 3 J. Lowther. Cut Flowers, 1 J.  
2 T. W. Clarke, 3 E. Scott. Carnations and  
1 J. Swann, 2 C. Wheatley, 3 J. Kirtley.  
lled and feathered), 1 D. Dodds, 2 J.  
Kirtley. Marigolds, 1 D. Dodds, 2 J.  
Kirtley. Pelargoniums, 1 D. Dodds, 2  
ppard, 3 E. Scott.  
rt.—Black Grapes, 1 W. Roberts, 2 E.  
rd. White Grapes, 1 W. Roberts, 2 E.  
rd. Melons, 1 C. Scott, 2 T. Beach.  
s, 1 T. W. Clarke, 2 T. Beach. Apricots, 1  
ppard, 2 T. W. Clarke. Baking Apples, 1 G.  
2 T. Beach. Dessert Apples, 1 E. Holland,  
Roberts. Pears, 1 G. Scott, 2 T. Beach.  
berries, 1 G. Scott, 2 H. Laverick.

THE SPORTS.

## OLD AGE DEATH FROM AN OLD INJURY.

On Saturday, Mr. Chas. Percy, coroner for Northumberland, held an inquest at the High Steads, Lowick, on the body of Rachael Sibbit, 79 years of age.—George Tunnah deposed that he was a labourer at High Steads. The deceased in January last got a scalded foot, and had been ill ever since. He lived with her, and was putting her clothes on one morning when he accidentally caught the kettle, and the water scalded her foot. Dr. Lambie and Dr. Elliott attended her.—Dr. John Elliott stated that on the 14th January he was called in to see the deceased, whom he found to be suffering from a superficially scalded foot and ankle, and shock. She died on Thursday, the 23rd inst., from old age, although he thought her death was accelerated by the accident.—A verdict was found in accordance with the medical testimony.

Dr Lambie merits a few words here. He was very well respected locally and in 1891 after 20 years of service his patients had a whip-round and organised a dinner and presentation for him. The presentation was at the Public Subscription School in Lowick, where they gave him a bookcase, a rather nice clock and a bag containing 67 sovereigns.

Later, after dinner at the Commercial pub in Lowick he made a speech in which he spoke poetically about his work here. He describes his journeys to Holy Island; something Elliott will have done many times.



There is no sphere of human exertion but may have some difficulties. Those of the rural practitioner are considerable.

The long distances to travel on rough roads, sometimes on bridle paths, and in inclement weather, and the journeys frequently in the darkness of night are trying and wearisome enough.

But when, as on the way to Holy Island, where we travel on a sea bed when the tide is out, it is in dark nights "eerie" and very dangerous.

The first few years I travelled there the phosphorescence of the sea water was brilliant. Riding home at night the water still fetlock deep on the sands, I watched each foot of the horse splashing there, and the mass of light - like burnished silver gleamed like fine festoons around its limbs.

I remember a lady telling me that when she took a basin of sea water into a dark apartment and agitated its surface, she could see objects around it by its light.

Strange to say, all that glorious illumination of the water which "circles round the saint's domain", hath now for some 12 or 15 years entirely disappeared.

Many years later an article written for Dr Elliott's 93rd birthday tells us that he did his rounds in a fierce storm one day in 1916 and is said to have walked over the frozen sea from Beal to Holy Island and that in all he managed to walk 26 miles in 12 hours "without having a bite to eat" as he attended to patients throughout his district.

At no time did he own a car. Most consultations in those days were by home visits, which of course was useful for helping to keep infectious disease out of the surgery waiting room.

He would arrive on horseback, on foot or later on by horse and trap carrying an assortment of drugs and dressings as well as diagnostic instruments and reagents all contained in the proverbial Doctor's Bag.

The original Gladstone bag wasn't originally designed for doctors but it turned out to be ideal for those home visits, and being metal framed and made from sturdy leather it could open out fully without danger of tipping over.

The doctor's bag circa 1910



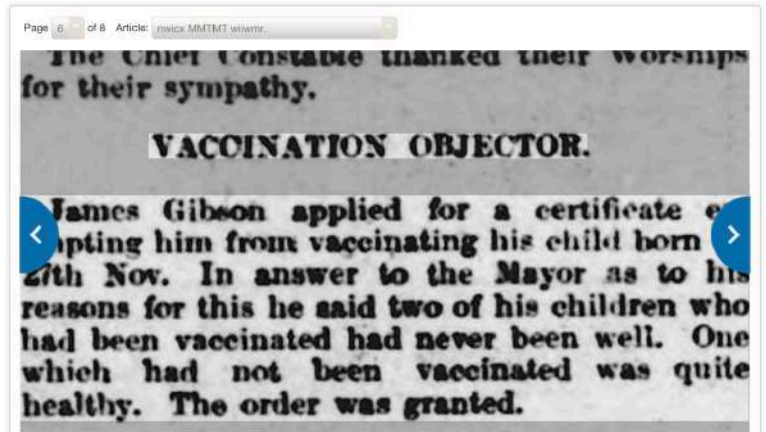
These are some of the items that he might have been expected to carry in the very early days; equipment at its most basic.

Given a sample of the patient's urine, he could test for diabetes using Benedicts reagent and kidney problems with acetic acid. He might have also carried Smallpox vaccine.

Smallpox vaccination had been made compulsory in 1853 And refusal could mean having to answer to the Mayor.

Stethoscope  
Thermometer  
Metal tongue depressor  
Torch  
Ophthalmoscope  
Auriscope  
Test tubes and Benedicts reagent for diabetes testing  
Acetic acid to test for proteinuria  
Syringe and needles in methylated spirit  
Scalpels  
Chloroform  
Dressings

The Berwick Advertiser 02 March 1917

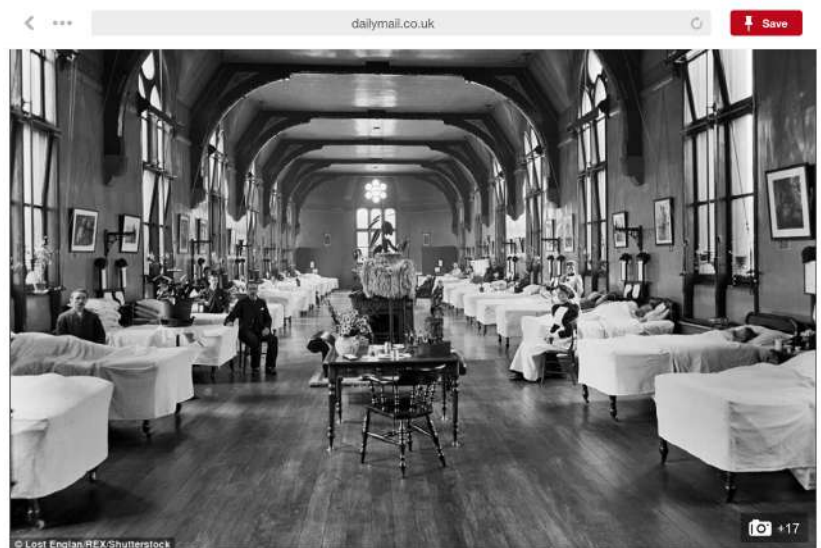


Around the beginning of the century most sick people were looked after by their family or neighbours. Often someone might develop a reputation for their knowledge of traditional home remedies - and common sense.

Few working-class people paid for their own medical treatment, with charity and the Poor Law helping the poorest. Others outside that system struggled to afford treatment.

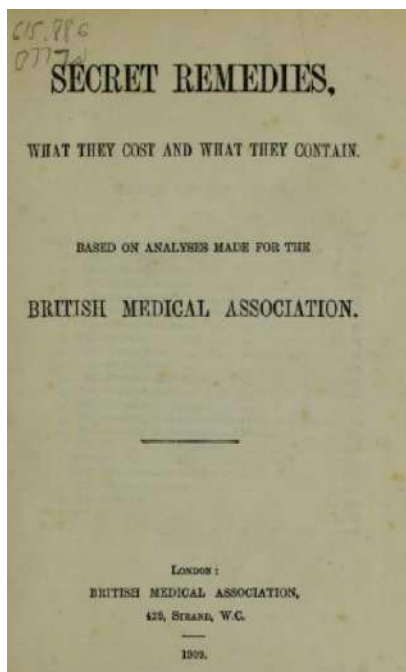
In time, municipal hospitals administered by town councils developed from Poor Law hospitals and treated the chronically sick, infirm and elderly.

The Infirmary in Leeds was ahead of the pack. ahead of the pack. This photo of a spotless hospital ward was taken in 1895.



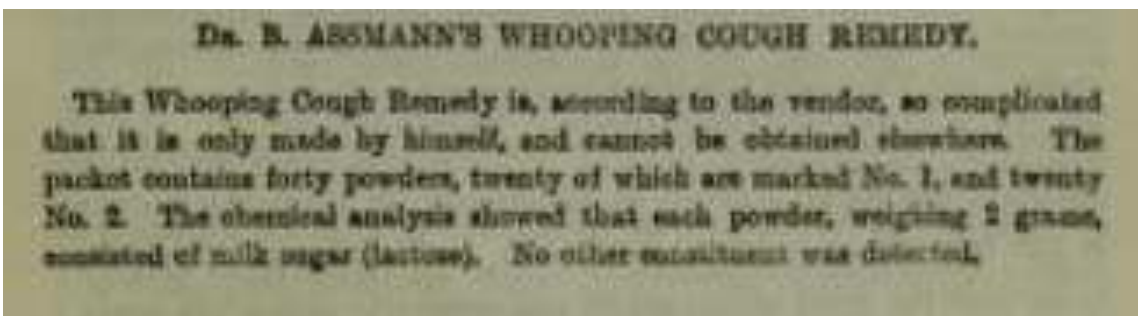
An interior view of ward six at the Leeds General Infirmary in 1895





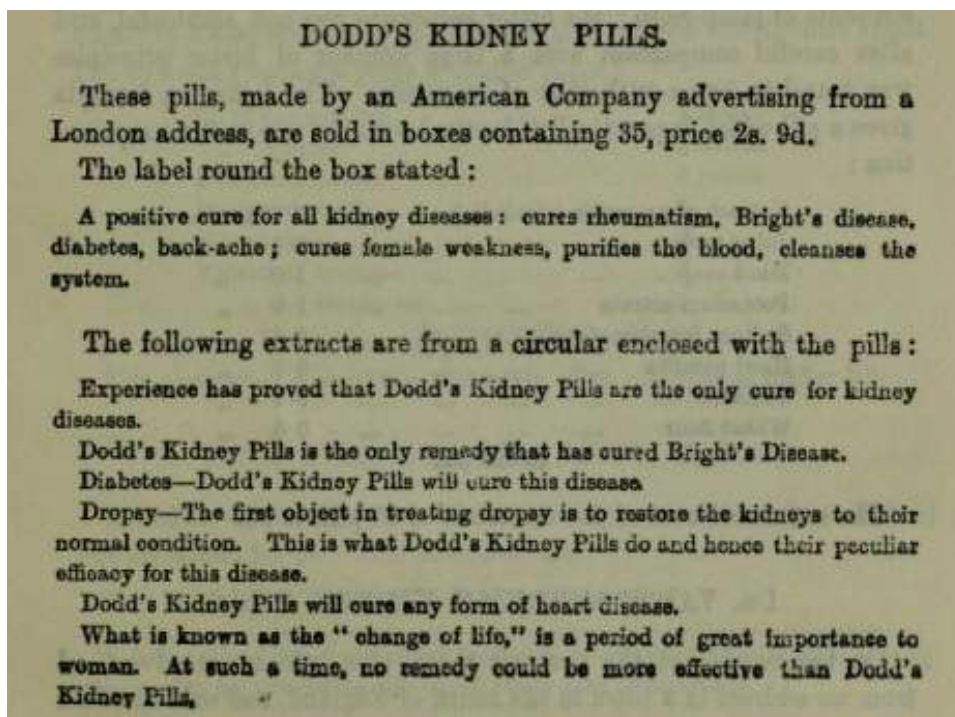
An increasing number of patent medicines with amazing claims were sold as an alternative to calling the doctor.

The BMA decided to investigate them and the results were published in "Secret Remedies", where analysis of the products exposed the false claims made for them



This cure for whooping cough claimed that the formula was so complicated that no-one else made it.

It contained nothing but lactose powder.



The maker of Dodd's Kidney Pills claimed that they would cure diabetes, rheumatism, kidney disease, symptoms of menopause and any form of heart disease.

It contained the following:

|  |      |             |
|--|------|-------------|
| Extract of cascarrilla (alcoholic).... | .... | 0.15 grain, |
| Jalap resin                            | .... | 0.3 "       |
| Hard soap....                          | .... | 1.0 "       |
| Potassium nitrate                      | .... | 1.0 "       |
| Sodium bicarbonate                     | .... | 0.85 "      |
| Hard paraffin                          | .... | 0.5 "       |
| Turmeric ....                          | .... | 0.3 "       |
| Wheat flour                            | .... | 0.8 "       |
| In one pill.                           |      |             |

Cascarilla powder is powdered eggshell sometimes used in Voodoo magic, and Jalap resin, from a plant root, gets the intestines moving.

In 1901 the MOH published a report on infant mortality in this area. The cleaner air here compared to that in towns contributed to lower infant mortality, but the greatest problem, apart from sanitary conditions, was a scarcity of cows milk. The old system where a family might keep a cow to supply milk had all but died out.

Health and welfare began to improve around the turn of the century and two events were at least partly responsible

**The 2nd Boer War.** At the time, the test of fitness for potential army recruits was to be able to run 100yds with a rifle, and a surprisingly large number failed the test.

The war itself knocked British confidence as it took 450,000 British troops to defeat 35,000 - while taking 3 years to do it.

**The rugby series in 1903 against the Springboks, Australia and New Zealand.**

The British were beaten by nearly all the teams they played and since it was played mainly by the more elite classes, the government now feared that they were witnessing a decline among men of all classes including those future officers on the rugby field

Basically, the idea of British 'superiority' which was thought to be the reason for the Empire's success was being challenged. And so a commission was set up. It concluded that 37% of applicants examined had been rejected as unfit, and if you included the applicants who were even too unfit to be examined, the percentage was close to 60%

As a result reforms were to be made in the care of infants and children both at home and in school. Nutritional training would be given to mothers and

#### **The Committee on Physical Deterioration, 1903.**

They investigated the reasons why so many army recruits were rejected on the grounds of ill health.

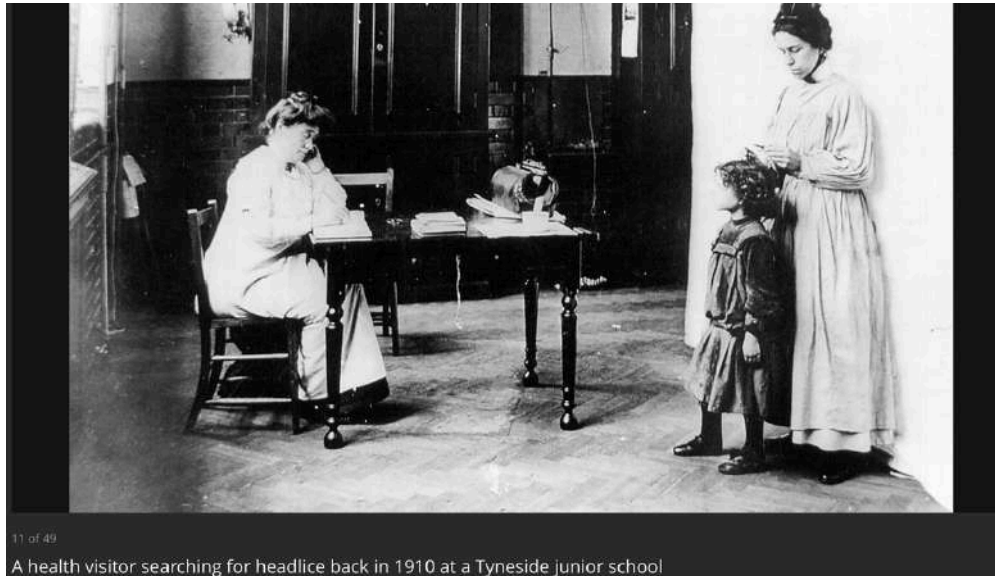
Following this, reforms were made in infant and childcare

Including:

- Medical inspections of children in schools
- Free school meals for the very poor
- Training in mothering skills and domestic hygiene
- Nutritional reform - 1 in 3 children malnourished
- The Schools Medical Inspection Service was set up



education in childcare, school meals and school medical inspections were introduced.



The "nit nurse"

The Midwives Act of 1902 had already been passed at a time when the profession was often brought into disrepute, especially in the city. They were untrained, unqualified and uncertified. Anyone could practice midwifery, often as a second job. In theory, from now on, midwives would have to be qualified and have a certificate in midwifery.

Sadly, despite advances in medical science, the expectation of life for the average male in 1911 was 49.

### The National Insurance Act (1911)



#### Sixpenny doctor

The National Health Insurance Act (1911) meant doctors had to provide basic medical services for workers. 'Sixpenny doctors' were paid by the state for each patient on their panel. Patients still paid for home visits, doctors charging different rates depending on the economic circumstances of families.

Only 40% of the population were covered, with only one panel doctor to every 1700 people insured.

Great for the working man, this system largely excluded women and children, and patients still paid for home visits, doctors charging different rates depending on how much they could afford. Doctors in rural practices were a lot poorer than those in the cities.

With no chemist in the village Elliott would dispense medicines himself and leave them at Pringles shop for collection where you would "leave a shilling in the pot".

Hospital stays had to be paid for even if you were put in one of the isolation hospitals.

There were also a multitude of schemes run by donations or philanthropists but still primary healthcare was something most could not afford.

When the doctor did visit it was treated as a special occasion in some households

*'The fuss that was made in the house, when the doctor was called; it was a big event. It was something you paid for and so something you appreciated. The patient was scrubbed within an inch of his life, and new sheets were put on the bed and everything was ironed, stiffened.'*

Charles Mercer, born 1929

Quite often here wasn't much the doctor could do. Aspirin in various colours might have to suffice.

*'When we did house calls we carried cardboard boxes of medications. After the consultation we handed them out to the patients. We were given three different colours of aspirin tablets: white, yellow and green. And the idea was that the patient would say, - No, these white ones hadn't done me any good, doctor. So you left them a bottle of green ones and the next week perhaps they might say, - Oh these are a lot better.'*

Dr Tom Miller, born 1927



Dr Elliott also offered dentistry - or tooth pulling. This is a picture of him demonstrating his skills



By the 1930s, X-rays were in general use and the military were early converts because they helped in the removal of bullets or shrapnel and got soldiers back on the battlefield. Also, army recruits were X-rayed for chest diseases such as TB and it was in the 1940s that mass civilian screening for TB began.

Dr Elliott had been appointed Medical Officer of Health and Vaccination Officer for Norham & Islandshire in March 1900, soon after he arrived. . His catchment area included Ancroft, Fenwick, Kylvoe and Holy Island.

In 1904 he was elected to Lowick Parish Council where he made some interesting contributions, for example:

In 1905 he proposed to the parish council that every house with a private tap in the village should have a water meter.

And in 1910 he asked the Parish Council to lay out part of Lowick Common as a bowling green for which rent would be paid if used.

There has been some confusion about his war record. It has been thought locally that he was either in the Army or Navy in WW1, and newspaper articles confusingly mention a time in the navy, but I've found no record of enlistment at any time.

He was 51 in 1914. Below is an example of a 'Sick Quarters' record from Ancestry

| UK, Navy Lists, 1888-1970 for John Elliott  |   |
|---|---|
| 1912, August  |   |
| 567a  | SICK QUARTERS.  |
| <p>GREENOCK—Claud W. Marshall, Esq., M.B.<br/> GREYSTONES—William Stewart Ross, Esq., M.B.<br/> GRIMBY, NEW CLEE, AND CLEETHORPES—George S. Stephenson, Esq., M.D. (Address—Manor House.)<br/> GUERNSEY—Conrad De L. Carey, Esq., M.B.<br/> GURNARDS HEAD (see Penzance)<br/> GWEDDRE—Vacant.<br/> GWITHIAN DETACHMENT—Zachary B. Mudge, Esq. [Pernleigh, Hayle, Cornwall.]<br/> HALLSANDS (see TORROSS).<br/> HAPPISBURGH—Charles F. Rudd, Esq. [Stalham, Norfolk.]<br/> HARTLEPOOL with its DETACHMENTS—Thomas G. Ainsley, Esq., M.D. (Address—Greylands, Victoria Road, West Hartlepool.<br/> HARWICH—E. F. Syrett, Esq., M.D. (Dovercourt).<br/> HASTINGS—James B. Manlove, Esq. [Greylands, London Road, St. Leonard's-on-sea.]<br/> HAVEN HOLE—Cosmo Grant, Esq., M.B. [Ravenswood, Thundersly, Essex.]<br/> HAYLING BRIDGE—Alexander S. Norman, Esq. [West Street House, Havant.]<br/> HAYLING ISLAND—Albert E. May, Esq. [Chandos, S. Hayling]<br/> HELDFORD PASSAGE—Montague W. Roe, Esq. [Constantine, Penryn, Cornwall.]<br/> HELENS BAY (see Bangor).<br/> HELMSDALE—P. O. Jollie, Esq.<br/> HELVICK HEAD (WATERFORD)—William H. Crean, Esq. [Ringville, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.]<br/> HESSLE (see Hull).<br/> HOBBS HOLE AND FRISTON—John Braithwaite, Esq., M.B. [Stafford House, Boston, Lincs.]<br/> HOLMPTON (see Basington).<br/> HOLYHEAD—John L. Owens, Esq.<br/> HOLY ISLAND—John Elliott, Esq. [Lowick, Beal, Northumberland.]<br/> HORNSEA AND ALDBOROUGH—Henry D. Johns, Esq., M.B.<br/> HOPE COVE (see Prawle).<br/> HOVE—Charles S. Simpson, Esq.</p> | <p>ILFRACOMBE, CROYDE, MORTHOE, AND COMBE MARTIN—Charles W. E. Toller, Esq., M.D.<br/> INCH (see Ballycotton).<br/> INGOLDSMILLS (see Skagness).<br/> INNISBOFIN—John McDonald, Esq. [Rossville, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal.]<br/> INNISCORNE AND PULLOCHENY—Henry M. Scott, Esq. [Castle Holme, Enniscrone, Ballina, Co. Sligo.]<br/> INNISSMORE—William A. Sandys, Esq., M.B. [The Crescent, Galway.]<br/> INVERGORDON—James A. Somerville, Esq., M.B.<br/> INVERNESS—J. M. Moir, Esq., M.D.<br/> IPSWICH—Frank F. Ward, Esq., M.B.<br/> JERSEY—Philip J. Brayn, Esq.<br/> JOHNHAVEN AND GOURDON—Charles Aymer, Esq., M.B. [21, King Street, Berris, Kincardineshire.]<br/> JURY'S GAP, GALLOWAY, DENGEMARSH AND DUNGENESS—John A. Proctor, Esq. [The Paddock, Lydd, Kent.]<br/> KEEL AND KEEM—Thomas Henry Croly, Esq. [Dugort, Achill, Westport, Co. Mayo.]<br/> KESSELINGLAND (see Lowestoft).<br/> KILCREDANE AND KILLALA DETACHMENTS—John M. Studdert, Esq. [Rakona Lodge, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare.]<br/> KILCUMMIN (see Ross).<br/> KILKEE—Patrick C. Hickey, Esq., M.D.<br/> KILKEEL (see Annalong).<br/> KILLALA (see Kileredane).<br/> KILLINGHOLME, SKITTER POINT AND STALLINGBORO—George B. Middlemist, Esq., M.B. [Killy, Brocklesby, Lincs.]<br/> KILLLOUGH (see Ardglass).<br/> KILLYBEGS—John J. Walsh, Esq., M.B.<br/> KILMICHAE (see Arklow).<br/> KILMORE—Denis Hassett, Esq. [Bridgetown, Co. Wexford.]<br/> KINGSFATE (see Ramsgate).<br/> KINGSTON (see Mothecombe).<br/> KINGSTON-ON-SEA AND SOUTHWICH—Charles B.</p> |

It appears that from 1903 until 1923 he served the Admiralty as a Civil Officer and is on the Royal Navy "Sick Lists" or "Sick Quarters Lists" for Holy Island.

To find out more about what this means I asked the historian at the Royal Navy Medical Archives who didn't really know, but she could only suggest that he was obliged to be available if medical help was needed by the Royal Navy Coastguard there. He may have attended rescued sailors or fishermen, and on occasion certify death.

His wife, Mary had left Lowick some time between 1918 and 1928.

Her death certificate shows that she died in 1928 of pneumonia at her brother's Congregational Manse in Ayrshire. They hadn't divorced and she still gave her address as "The Surgery" Lowick.

| 1928. DEATHS in the Parish of <u>Lowick</u> in the County of <u>Ayr</u> |  | (1.)   | (2.)      | (3.)                      | (4.)   | (5.)   | (6.)   |
|---|--|--|-----------|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| No.   | Name and Surname.<br>Rank or Profession, and whether<br>Single, Married, or Widowed. | When and Where Died.   | Sex.      | Age.                      | Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession<br>of Father.<br>Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.   | Cause of Death, Duration of<br>Disease, and Medical Attendant<br>by whom certified.              | Signature & Qualification of Informant<br>and Residence, if out of the House<br>in which the Death occurred. |
| 34  | <u>John</u><br><u>Robertson</u>  | <u>1928.</u><br><u>November</u><br><u>11th</u><br><u>H. 20 m. A. 11.1</u>  | <u>F.</u> | <u>81</u><br><u>Years</u> | <u>John Ritchison</u><br><u>Handloom Weaver</u><br><u>(deceased)</u><br><u>Janet Ritchison</u><br><u>Wife of John</u><br><u>(deceased)</u> | <u>Apoplexy</u><br><u>4 days</u><br><u>Dr. J. H. H. H.</u>                                       | <u>Robert Ritchison</u><br><u>Low</u><br><u>Presb.</u>   |
|   | <u>Wife of Robert</u><br><u>Robertson, Coal</u><br><u>Miner.</u>                     | <u>Brown Buildings</u><br><u>Lowick</u>  |           |                           |  | <u>Leucemia</u><br><u>as cert. by</u><br><u>John H. H. H.</u>                                    | <u>Pantheus, Drybridge</u>   |
|   |  |  |           |                           |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |           |                           |  |  |  |
| 35  | <u>Mary Hall</u><br><u>Elliott</u>   | <u>1928.</u><br><u>December</u><br><u>Twenty-ninth</u><br><u>9.10 m. P. 11</u>   | <u>F.</u> | <u>66</u><br><u>Years</u> | <u>Thomas MacRobert</u><br><u>Master Baker</u><br><u>(deceased)</u><br><u>Mary MacRobert</u><br><u>Wife of John</u><br><u>(deceased)</u>   | <u>Labour</u><br><u>Pneumonia</u><br><u>4 days</u><br><u>as cert. by</u><br><u>John H. H. H.</u> | <u>Thomas H. MacRobert</u><br><u>Highway</u><br><u>10 University</u><br><u>Glasgow</u>                       |
|   | <u>Wife of John</u><br><u>Elliott, Physician</u>                                     | <u>Congregational Manse</u><br><u>Lowick</u><br><u>(opposite residence of</u><br><u>Robertson, Lowick,</u><br><u>Northumberland)</u> |           |                           |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |           |                           |  |  |  |
|   |  |  |           |                           |  |  |  |

Besides his practice, John Elliott was much involved in the social activities of the parish. Particularly football.

In this news cutting from 8th May 1908 he presided over an evening in the Drill Hall for the Lowick & District Football league. He was donor of the Elliott Challenge Cup which he presented that evening to Fenwick Villa.

## FOOTBALL.

### LOWICK & DISTRICT LEAGUE.

#### FENWICK VILLA V REST OF LEAGUE.

Saturday last was the climax to a most successful season on the part of Fenwick Villa, when they played a team selected from the rest of the league. The game was played at Lowick, and an interesting game ended in a victory for the champions by four goals to nil. For the League D Hill (Ford) and C Roberts and Jack Scott (Lowick Rovers) were the pick.

In the evening a "smoker" was held in the Drill Hall, a company of about fifty being presided over by Dr Elliott, the president of the league and donor of the cup. Mr Elliott of Fenwick occupying the vice-chair. After the loyal toast had been duly honoured the evening was given over to harmony. At an interval in the proceedings Dr Elliott presented the challenge cup and medals to the winners of the league, Fenwick Villa, and in the course of his remarks said he thought the league should be extended, which would cause more interest to be taken in the tournament. Mr Ord, secretary, replied on behalf of the club. The league secretary and treasurer were also each presented with a medal. The proceedings were then continued until about 10.30, when votes of thanks (with musical honours) to the president and vice-president brought a most enjoyable evening to a close.



And here he is at the club's headquarters, the White Swan, 10 yrs later as honorary president.

Berwick, October 2, 1919.  
Lowick and District Invitation Football League is arranging play for Dr Elliott's Challenge Cup. Headquarters are at White Swan, Lowick. Dr John Elliott, Lowick, is Hon. President; Mr David Hodge, Hon. Secy.; and Mr John Appleby, Hon. Treas. Competing Clubs are Lowick Rovers, Haggerston A, Holy Island, Scremerston, Fenwick Villa, Milfield United. Referees are Messrs D. Hodge, Lowick; T. Ryding, Scremerston Schoolhouse; J. Thompson, Scremerston Old Colliery; and J. Seoular, Fenham Gate House, Beal. Two representatives from each invited Club form the League Committee. Winners, who hold Challenge Cup, and get medals, will meet team selected from remaining Clubs in the League, to play at Lowick when Cup is presented. Prompter hopes Lowick and District League will meet with great success. A North Northumberland Football Correspondent says "he would not be surprised if Scremerston won the Cup for the 1st year."

He seems to have adopted country pursuits too. He's standing outside the entrance to the practice at the side of what is now 50 Main Street, Behind him is the passageway leading from the street.



Another newspaper report, in 1910, describes a concert party that he organised in Bowsden Schoolroom in aid of children's sports. Among the performances were, two sketches by the so called "Lowick negro troupe", trained by Elliott, who we are told, caused much amusement.

**BOWSDEN.**  
Concert.—The annual concert to help to provide funds for the children's sports in summer, was held in the Schoolroom on Friday evening. Fortunately, considering the weather recently experienced, the night was fine, and the room was filled to its utmost capacity. The party was provided by Dr Elliott, Lowick, and certainly gave every satisfaction, every item being well received, and encores were the order of the day. The programme was varied as will be seen by a glance at it, and each performer did so well that it would be invidious to particularise. The two sketches by Lowick negro troupe caused much amusement, and were certainly well given, reflecting much credit both upon the actors and their trainer, Dr Elliott. Mr W. Moffet made an excellent chairman, and at the close proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the various performers which was enthusiastically given. A similar compliment was paid to the chairman on the motion of Dr Elliot. After the concert a most enjoyable dance was held, much of the enjoyment being due to the excellent music provided by Messrs T. Gordon and W. Lyall, Lowick, Gallagher, Laverock, Law, and Scott, Buckton, violins; and Mr M. Foster, piano. Messrs R. Matthewson and W. Fairbairn ably officiated as M.C.'s. The following is the programme:—

He was Scoutmaster too, but ran into trouble with the council in October 1914 for encouraging scouts to skip school and help the coastguards in Bamburgh in defence duty. "This is a bit strong" the article says, when the boys have rendered invaluable service to the country in crisis.

Dr Elliott, Scoutmaster of the Lowick Boy Scouts, has received a letter from Mr J. Lough, Berwick, who has been instructed by the County Education Committee to write informing Dr Elliott to see that no boy under the age of 13 is absent from school as a boy scout. If this request is not complied with legal proceedings are likely to be taken against the parents. This is a bit strong writes a correspondent, after the invaluable service these boys have rendered at Bamburgh helping the coastguards in defence duty. Our country being involved in a crisis unequalled in the world's history, at such a time could not some concessions have been made. No one wants to see any of the boys' education neglected, but it must be frankly admitted they are receiving education when fulfilling their duties as scouts. It is to be hoped if these boys can be of any assistance whatever in the hour of need, that the education committee will see their way clear to help the boys and also the Empire.

Berwick Advertiser 20 March 1914

Page 3 of 8 Article: AN OROFT.

This clipping is about another concert he organised in the Public Subscription School in aid of Lowick Boy Scouts - featuring interestingly, "The Lowick Orchestra."

to the Churchwardens about the matter. This was seconded by Mr Oswald and carried unanimously.

**LOWICK.**

**Scouts' Concert.**—A most successful concert was held in the Public Subscription School on Tuesday evening last in aid of the Lowick Boy Scouts. The weather conditions were on their best behaviour, consequently the school was taxed to its utmost capacity, every available space being occupied. Dr Elliott, who began the movement and also acts as Scoutmaster, took the chair, but, unfortunately, he had to leave early, duties necessitating him doing so. Rev. D. R. Wishart ably filled the breach, performing his duties with great success. The programme submitted was of a varied and interesting nature, giving the audience over two hours' enjoyment. The Lowick orchestra kindly gave their services and the pieces they played were very much appreciated by all. Mrs Moody and Mrs Duff sang soprano songs very sweetly. Mr Dooley again delighted the listeners with his comic songs. The boy scouts gave a number of items, including songs, tableaux, ambulance drill and boxing exhibitions. The latter caused great amusement.



Later, he seems to have concentrated more on First Aid training and in 1934 he gave a talk in the Council School which was described as a most interesting and instructive lecture on Physiology of the Body as part of a series of weekly talks.

And in wartime 1940 he ran courses in Holburn and Lowick that led to a certificate in First Aid.

Misses Patrick for the use of the hall, to Mrs Scott and Mrs Hobson for "refreshing" the company, and to Mrs V. Foreman, who kindly

First-aid classes have been started at Lowick and Holburn, and at both centres students are beginning to look forward to the final examinations. Dr. Elliott, Lowick, is the instructor at both centres. Lowick class comprises:— Messrs G. W. Fairbairn, W. Appleby, W. Sim, J. Atkinson, J. Steel, C. Sanderson, W. Thompson, J. Patterson, W. Moffat, W. Jackson, J. Hope, R. Wilson and W. Nichol. The Holburn class is a mixed one, and includes:—Mrs Durman, Mrs Tinn, Miss Sleight, Miss Tate, Misses Watson, R. Avery, W.

A report on a court appearance in Berwick gives some more insight into his life in Lowick. In April 1935 at the age of 72, he was called to the witness stand regarding a court case against a James Foreman.

In answer to Supt. Spratt, witness said that defendant had no drink in front of him.

John Elliott, medical practitioner, Lowick, said he was sitting in the White Swan bar when Foreman came in and sat down. After sitting for a short time he started to play dominoes with witness and other two. It was only then that witness noticed that he had had any drink at all. "He had bent down to look for a lost domino when the policeman came in," said witness, "and then Mr Steel came forward and advised Mr Foreman to go home. He was not served with any liquor at all in the White Swan."

Supt. Spratt—Did you consider him drunk? —Well, it is rather difficult to say when a man is drunk. I certainly did not see any liquor on him at all till he started to play dominoes.

Supt. Spratt—Did you take him by the arm to lead him home—I took him by the arm, but not to lead him home.

Supt. Spratt—Is it a fact that you have come here to say that he was not served with any drink in case there was a charge against the licence holder?—No.

Did you come to say that he was sober?—No.

Nor to say he was drunk?—No.

Why did you take his arm to go down the village? Because he was drunk?—No; to lead myself.

Did you deduct that he was drunk?—No.

He was in the White Swan one night when Mr Foreman came in, having been refused service at another pub, and joined him in a game of dominoes. Foreman was just looking on the floor for a lost domino when a policeman walked in and spotted that Foreman was inebriated. It seems that Elliott attempted to rescue the situation, took Foreman by the arm and led him out of the pub. When questioned in court Elliott maintained that he couldn't say one way or the other if the man was drunk.

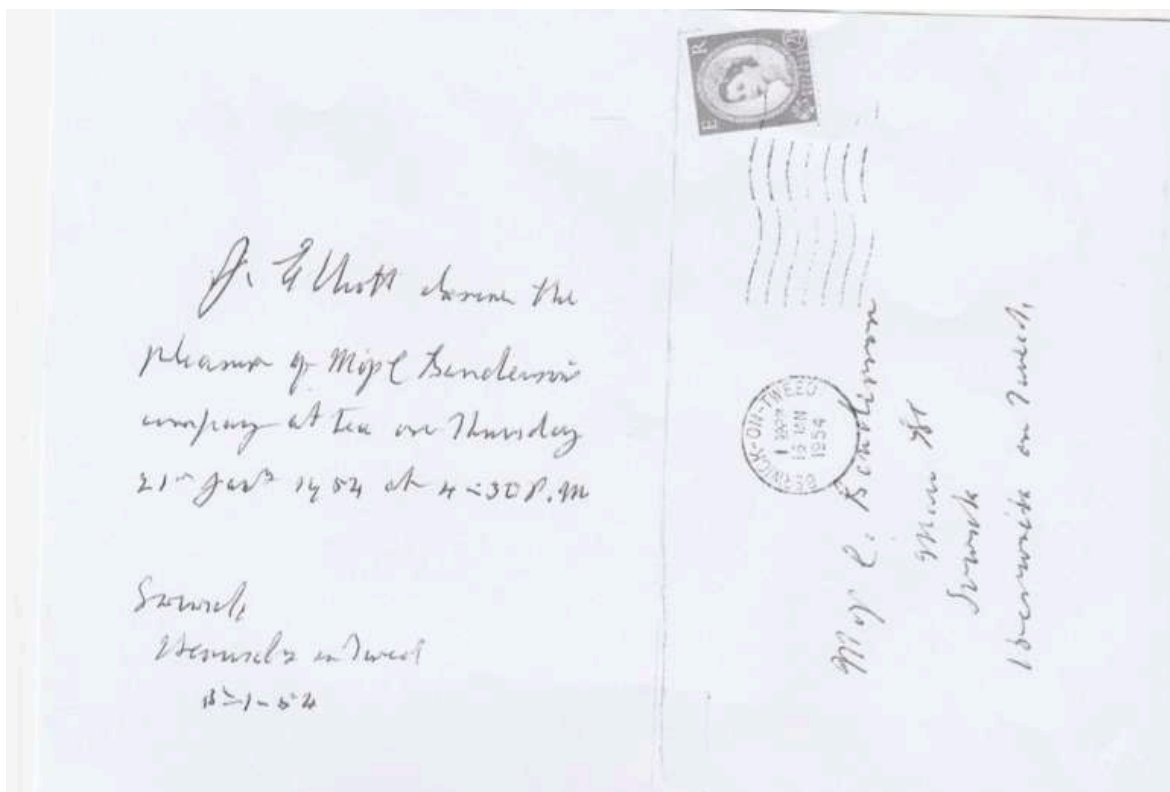
In any case, Foreman was found guilty of being unlawfully drunk and fined 10s

Few people remember him now. I am grateful to the late Tony Carr who was delivered by him in 1928 and Henry Hall, for digging deep for memories of him and special thanks to Kathleen Glen who was able to supply more details from her own memories and collection at home.

Henry's description of him in his later years is of a large broad man about 5' 10" with a bushy white beard. He liked telling jokes and might stop you in the street with "Have you heard the one about...."

Kathleen Glen told me that she and her mum lived next door to him when she was a child. He would have been in his 80s. She remembers him as a stout man with a trilby hat, white moustache and white hair. He had a black & white curly coated collie called Jack that he would walk every day. He also liked a glass or two of whiskey.

This letter survives from when she was 13, inviting her to a birthday party



Miss Rule, the housekeeper would make 'exotic' cakes and jellies along with sandwiches and scones.



Every Christmas there would be a knock on the door at 9am with presents from "Father Christmas" and at New Year he might invite them to tea with the Rule sisters, to share fruit cake that was sent to him from friends in Canada.

In his later years his patients tended to drift away to more up-to-date GPs in nearby villages but he remained on the Medical Register until his death and was still seeing patients on Holy Island in his 80s.

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## the beach.

### WATER BREAKS A 53-YEAR-OLD RECORD

**F**OR 53 years Dr J. Elliot of Lowick has been making regular trips to his patients on Holy Island and has never failed to get across. But on Wednesday he was forced to turn back to Beal shore because of the depth of a fresh-water stream which swirled over the sands.

Mr Selby Allison, the driver of the taxi, told the *Advertiser*: "I managed to get from the Island to the mainland, but when I went back over with Dr Elliot I found the water was too deep. The doctor turned back and I made three further unsuccessful attempts and finally had to be towed by a lorry which, because of its height, was able to cross without flooding the engine."

The position at the Lough crossing has been steadily getting worse since the Goswick Lough was diverted two years ago into the Brock Mill Lough. It is always at its worst during periods of heavy rain.

People coming from the Island to work on the mainland are meantime being transported in wagons. The position was unimproved this morning and the taxis were still unable to make the journey.

Unless the situation eases the drivers will be faced with a real problem at Easter and may not be able to get the expected holiday-makers across.

Kathleen told me that a chap called Selby Allison would take him there in an old Ford with dodgy brakes and we have a confirmation of that in a little clipping from The Berwick Advertiser of March 1951.

It describes how Selby was unable to take him to the Island for the first time in 53 years because a stream from Goswick Lough had flooded the sands. He would have been 87 yrs old at the time.

# 92 Years of age, Doctor aims to carry on another three years

DOCTOR JOHN ELLIOTT, of Lowick, hopes to continue his practice in the North Northumberland village for another three years. If he does, he will have achieved his ambition of being village doctor for a period of 60 years.

Doctor Elliott was awarded his Royal Scottish Diploma in 1897, and the following year he came to Lowick, where he has remained ever since. On Saturday, he received many congratulatory messages as he attained his 92nd birthday, and he claims to be the



DR. JOHN ELLIOTT

oldest practising doctor in the country.

He has maintained a weekly run to Holy Island, and 40 years ago he was able to walk over the frozen sea from Beal during one of the most severe storms of the century.

That day he walked 26 miles in 12 hours without having a bite of food as he attended to patients throughout his district.

During his 57 years in Lowick he has taken an active part in the social life of the village. He was, for many years, Scoutmaster of the local troop of Boy Scouts, and he also organised the sports which used to be a popular feature of the summer season.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF COLDSTREAM BRITISH LEGION

THE annual general meeting of Coldstream Branch, British Legion, was held in the Club Room on Wednesday evening, when the chairman, Mr Albert Richardson, presided over a small attendance of members.

After "Silent Tribute" had been observed, the chairman made reference to the fact that one of their members, Mr Alex Smailes, was shortly leaving Coldstream to take up an appointment in New Zealand and he wished for him bon voyage and God speed.

Mr Richardson paid compliment to the work on behalf of the Branch by Messrs J. Brown and T. Mood, who had carried out the respective duties of hon. secretary and hon. treasurer. He also referred to the untiring work of Mr A. K. Stavert, who had officiated as their representative at the Border Area meetings and also at the conference at Inverness with much acceptance to the Branch.

Presenting the secretarial report, Mr Brown said that the membership of the Branch now stood at 170, and in presenting his report, Mr T. Mood, hon. treasurer, said that the Branch showed a very creditable balance financially.

Lt.-Col. G. E. Wilson, who was warmly welcomed to the meeting by the chairman, was elected as president of the Branch and also nominated as an active vice-president for the Border Area, British Legion.

The chairman intimated that, owing to his many other commitments, Mr Brown did not wish re-election as hon. secretary, and it was eventually agreed that the committee be given powers to appoint an hon. secretary.

All the other office-bearers and committees were re-elected, and the names of Messrs W. Burns, Geo. Hope and J. Brown were added to the general committee and Mr P. Livingstone to the sports committee. Mr A. K. Stavert was re-elected as area representative.

It was agreed that the annual dinner should be held, and a strong appeal for new members was made by the chairman.

A detailed report on the conference at Inverness was given by Mr Stavert, who was cordially thanked on the call of Mr Richardson.

The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

He was honoured in 1955 for his long service with a dinner and presentation where he said he hoped to keep going until 60 years had been served, but died in Berwick Infirmary in 1956, just 3 years short.



# Death of Lowick doctor, oldest in Britain

**DOCTOR JOHN ELLIOTT**, of Lowick, who, at the age of 93 was the oldest practising doctor in Britain, died in Berwick Infirmary on Thursday. He was a well-known figure throughout North Northumberland and his passing severs a link with the days when doctors used to walk 20 and 30 miles a day to attend to patients.

A native of Glasgow, where he was educated, Dr Elliott gained his Royal Scottish diploma in 1897, and the following year he came to Lowick to take up a practice there. He was to continue for 58 years, and even after a serious illness last year he continued to attend to the needs of the people of Lowick and district.

One of the areas which he visited was Holy Island, and long before motor cars made their appearance he walked from the village to the Island and back again. In 1917, during a very severe winter, he was one of a handful of men who walked across the frozen sea to help the Islanders.

In Lowick he was a popular doctor and he took a keen interest in the welfare of the village. He was an ex-Scoutmaster and organiser of village sports meetings.

In the first world war, Dr Elliott served with the Army, and when the second war came round he again offered his services. But, because of his age, they were turned down.

Northumberland County Council had, for more than 20 years, annually ex-

tended the doctor's period of service as the Lowick district medical officer.

The funeral took place at Lowick Churchyard on Tuesday when there was a large number of mourners.



**LATE DR J. ELLIOTT**

## OBITUARY

### Mr R. H. Aird

Mr Robert H. Aird, hairdresser in Berwick and Duns for 62 years, died in

If you go into Lowick churchyard and look to the graves on the right hand side about 20yds from the main gate, you should find his very simple gravestone.

