



THE NAGIN PARBHOO HISTORY OF ANAESTHESIA MUSEUM

The museum housed in the University of Cape Town (UCT) Department of Anaesthesia boasts the finest collection of early anaesthesia apparatus in Africa with artefacts dating back to 1847 – only one year after the historic first public demonstration by Morton of the efficacy of ether to provide anaesthesia in Boston in October 1846. The museum is acknowledged as the official South African Society of Anaesthesiology (SASA) Museum and has a section devoted to the History of the Society including a display dedicated to the successful hosting by SASA of the 14th World Congress of Anaesthesiology, in Cape Town in 2008.

Artefacts include:

- Anaesthetic and Analgesia delivery systems designed by - Murphy (1847), Esmarch (1877), Shimmelbusch (1897), Hewitt (1901), Vernon Harcourt (1901), Ombrédanne (1908), Boyle (1917 - 1933), Junkers (1867) & later modifications, Shipway (1916), Pinson's 'ether bomb' (1926), McKesson (1920 & 1930), De Caux (1930), King Thermanester (1936).
- There is a large collection of vaporizers including the Copper Kettle, Rowbotham inhaler, Fluotecs' Mark 1-6, Goldman's vinesthene and halothane vaporizers & the Dräger Vapor Halothan vaporizer (1960).
- The collection of ventilators includes examples of a Bird Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 7a, 8; Manley; Cyclator; Dräger Iron Lung model E52, and an Emerson Cuirass ventilator.
- Battlefield resuscitators include a Krieselman resuscitator (1943) and a USSR model manufactured in 1963 and a Ambubag made for use in chemical warfare.
- Anaesthetic machines and monitors used at Groote Schuur Hospital between 1940 and 1984.
- A recent discovery was the presence in the museum of a prototype "LMA" developed by Beverly Leech in Canada in 1936.
- Anaesthetic equipment designed by South African anaesthetists - including the Taurus Blood warmer named after Professor Bull, the Cape Town and Stellenbosch breathing circuits for paediatric anaesthesia, the Samson neonatal resuscitator, Humphrey ADE breathing system, and the Miller Maxima breathing system.

History of the Collection

The collection began in earnest in 1956 when the then Head of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Department, Dr CS Jones, together with the first archivist and founder member of the SA Society of Anaesthetists (SASA) Dr Jack Abelsohn realized that they possessed early anaesthesia equipment worthy of preserving' The following year Dr Lindsay van der Spuy donated a considerable amount of equipment of historical interest, much of it the property of two early anaesthetic pioneers in S.A. viz. the first 'specialist anaesthetist' in South Africa, Dr Bampfylde Daniel, and Dr Royden Muir who emigrated to Cape Town from New Zealand after WW1. Both practitioners taught anaesthesia to medical students at UCT. After Arthur Bull became Head of Department in 1969, the equipment that had been collected was mounted, catalogued and displayed in showcases in the Department of Anaesthesia at the UCT Medical School.

Professor Bull's successor, Professor Gaisford Harrison continued the search for historic equipment and in 1987 appointed the then SASA Archivist, Dr Naginal Parbhoo as Honorary Curator of the Museum. Dr Parbhoo visited many hospitals in the Cape seeking out more items of anaesthetic interest. In 1993 after the appointment of Professor Michael James as HOD and the move to the new Groote Schuur Hospital, Nagin designed and sought sponsorship for manufacture of eight oak and glass display cabinets in which the bulk of the collection was housed. In recognition of his efforts, Professor James named the museum, "The Nagin Parbhoo History of



Anaesthesia Museum”.

In 2009 Dr Parbhoo died after a long fight with leukaemia and Associate Professor Peter Gordon was appointed Hon. SASA Archivist (serving until 2019) and Hon. Curator of the Museum. Under his leadership many new items have been acquired, and the number of display cabinets has been doubled.

Visits to the Museum

The museum forms part of an active department and visitors wishing to do so are welcome. Appointments can be made by telephoning the Department Secretary Mrs. C Wyngaart at +27 21 404-5004.