

Presidential Robes and Historical Zoom



Dr KG Howsam wearing the Presidential robe

K.G. Howsam

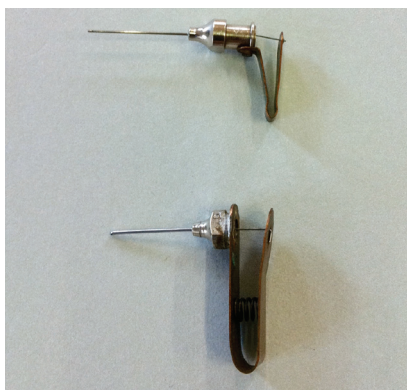
I received a pleasant surprise when Dr Bob Howsam recently called to donate the presidential robe belonging to his father Dr Ken (KG) Howsam.

When the Australian College of Ophthalmologists was formed in 1969, KG became the first Censor-in-Chief, establishing the QEC committee with advice from universities and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. His purpose was to unify the educational qualifications of College Fellows by creating a syllabus and formatting examinations as Censor-in-Chief from 1969 to 1972. He established what is now the Vocational Training Program. He became President of the College in 1987 and was awarded the College Medal in 1988. In his honour, the KG Howsam Medal was first awarded in 1991 to the candidate displaying excellence in the part two and later RACE examinations.

As an advanced trainee, I had the privilege of working in his clinic at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital (RVEEH). He served as medical director of RVEEH for many years, combining his common sense and fairness, supported only by a secretary!

At that time, industrial safety was lax and intraocular foreign bodies were common. KG devoted his career to optimising methods of localising and extracting foreign bodies. He modified Sweet's model of x-ray localisation and devised miniature snares for capturing material that could not be extracted by magnets. Fortunately, the museum has examples of his innovation.

Observing the process of foreign body removal was an experience. KG meticulously mapped the location of the foreign body using a variety of methods and then planned the route of removal. The anaesthetised patient was wheeled into theatre where the giant Haab magnet hung from a gantry and was cranked down, with the point almost touching the eye. All steel instruments were removed, leaving only a brass speculum. The switch was thrown, the magnet hummed and the eye jumped with successive pulses until the metal appeared at the wound.



Spring snares 21g for extracting IOFB

Museum History Zoom

Prior to the 2019 RANZCO Congress, the authors of historical posters for the Congress display gathered in Melbourne to present PowerPoint lectures related to their posters. These are now on the RANZCO Museum website.

This year, with the cancellation of Congress, we received some excellent presentation contributions of historical material which were the basis of a Zoom meeting.

Included was *The Life and Innovation of Elliot* who was Surgeon Superintendent of the Government Eye Hospital, which Madras founded in 1819. He developed the trephination operation for glaucoma. The excellent hospital museum is named in his honour.



Plaque from the Elliot Museum, Chennai

The Zoom meeting of the history presentations can be viewed on the Museum website under "Presentations" and the related posters will be displayed at the next Congress.

David Kaufman
Curator, RANZCO Museum