



HISTORY OF OUR ORGANISATION'S ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCES (1945–2017)

PART 1: EARLY CONFERENCES (1947–1951)

The national conference is the showcase for any professional organisation and is an important membership benefit, promoting unity and dissemination of research, new developments, policies and ideas. Over the next three issues of *Podiatry Now* we will be looking at the highlights of the history of our national conference in words and pictures, beginning this month with the early years

INFORMATION

The authors, two former conference chairs and members of the conference committee themselves, have undertaken a literature search to bring together a summary of the history of the Society of Chiropodists (and Podiatrists)/College of Podiatry annual conferences [1945-2018].

The information for this article was obtained from the College of Podiatry's own journal archives for that period - *The Chiropodist* [1946-1987], later known as the *Journal of British Podiatric Medicine* [1988-1997], and *Podiatry Now* [1998-present].




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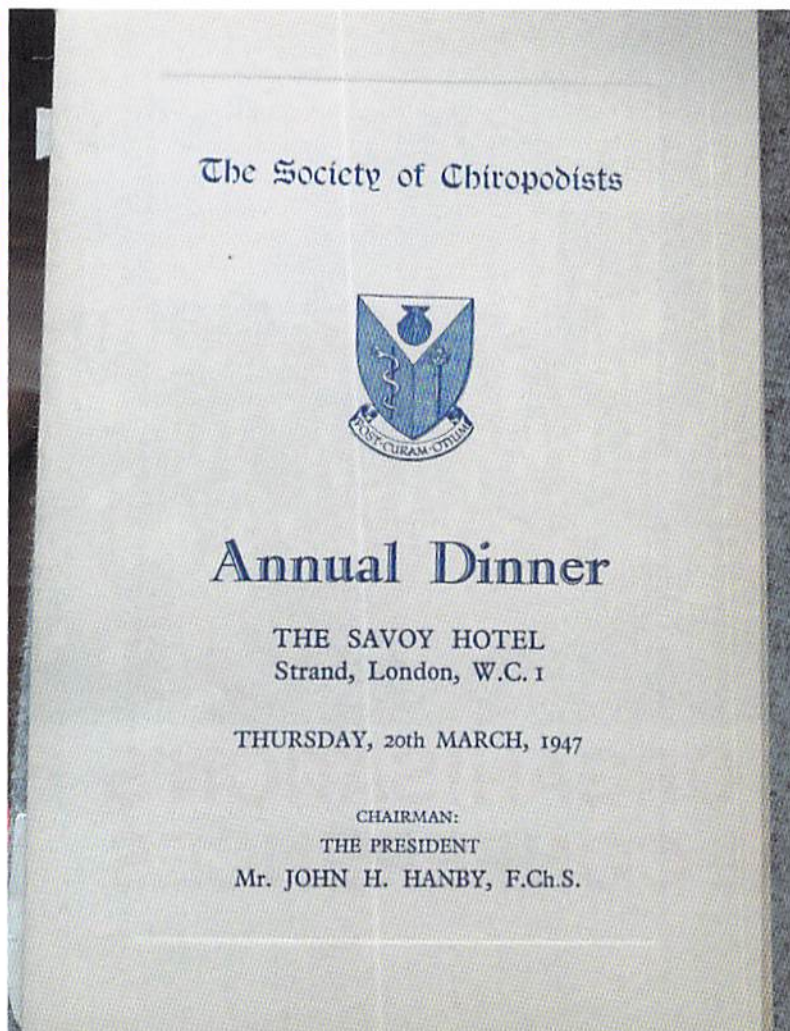
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The Society of Chiropodists was formed after the end of World War II, in late 1945, following the amalgamation of five separate chiropody associations which had been in existence for many years previously. Presumably, at this time there was a lot of post-war reorganisation to be undertaken and so it was not until December 1946 that the idea of a conference was announced by the President, John Hanby. The hopes and aspirations of this new organisation were high, reflected in an editorial published in 1947: *'The meeting is a symbol because it represents the great process of unification that the past few years have witnessed among the members of our profession'*.

The first Annual Convention was held in London, 20-22 March 1947, at the Friends House opposite Euston Station, which is still in existence today. It was officially opened by Sir Hugh Lett, the President of the British Medical Association. The programme included exclusively medical speakers. The 



cost of attending was 10 shillings and 6 pence, and 5 shillings for students at recognised schools. Today, we are accustomed to seeing a large exhibition at our conferences, with 80 plus exhibitors attending. In 1947, there were just nine exhibitors.

To accompany the convention, a formal dinner was arranged at the Savoy Hotel in London. Dignitaries from the Royal College of Surgeons and British Medical Association were cordially invited along, as was the President of the Board of Registration of Medical Auxiliaries (broadly equivalent to the Health Care



and Professions Council, today). The cost of the dinner was a hefty one pound and 10 shillings (around £60 in today's money). Unfortunately, the dinner did not take place for the 400 who had booked, as there was a flash strike by the waiters at the hotel. As a result, the event was cancelled at short notice.

The second convention was held a year later at the same venue but, surprisingly, was free to attend. The membership requested more 'chiropractic': *'Members who have attended conventions of past years must feel indebted to those eminent medical men who have willingly responded to invitations to address us at our chief gathering. But it has been felt by many that the convention is a great opportunity to stimulate enthusiasm and widen our outlook in our own strictly professional work; therefore, it has been decided to devote the majority of lectures to the subject of chiropractic.'* Consequently, eminent members of the time delivered lectures, including 'causes of dorsal lesions on the toes' and 'remedial strapping'. Members could visit the Royal College of Surgeons to view anatomical



Above: Clockwise from Left. Menu cover of the ill-fated 1947 annual dinner.

Friend's House, London, the venue of the first Annual Convention in 1947.

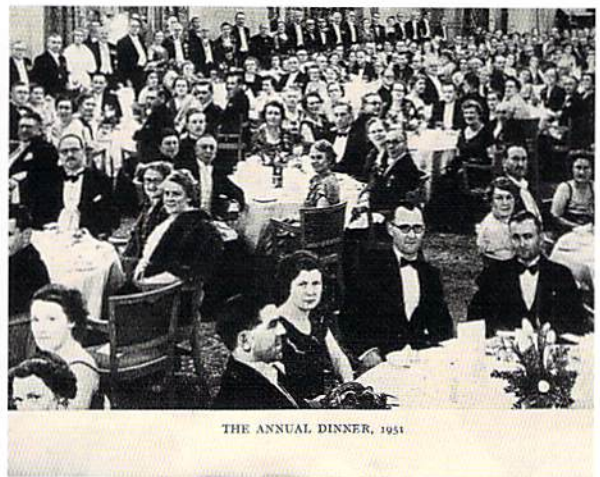
The Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, venue for the third Annual Convention.

Left. Sir Hugh Lett, who officially opened the Inaugural Convention in 1947.

specimens, and a range of films was shown dealing with various surgical techniques connected with orthopaedics and dermatology. Delegates were also invited to visit the factories of some of the suppliers.

The convention dinner at the Savoy did go ahead on this occasion and was oversubscribed with more than 300 attending. However, rationing and Government restrictions were still in place, so the planned banquet had to be downgraded to a buffet supper.

In 1949, the convention left London and was hosted in Edinburgh, at the Assembly Rooms in George Street. This was in response to a call for the convention to alternate between London and other cities to ensure maximum attendance. The meeting attracted over 400 delegates. For the first time, colour films were shown on the practice and technique of chiropractic, unusually produced by a surgeon. In addition to a number of medical lectures, Franklin Charlesworth discussed chiropractic biomechanics, saying that the field would be of immense value for the future of the profession.



Dancing
until midnight with
TOMMY de ROSA and his band

| | |
|------------|------------|
| WALTZ | QUICK-STEP |
| QUICK-STEP | WALTZ |
| FOX-TROT | FOX-TROT |
| WALTZ | VALETA |
| FOX-TROT | QUICK-STEP |
| TANGO | WALTZ |
| QUICK-STEP | SAMBA |
| WALTZ | FOX-TROT |
| FOX-TROT | QUICK-STEP |

Despite a bid from the Blackpool and Fylde branch to host the conference, it returned to The Friends House, London, in June 1950, and Manchester was approved by Council for the 1952 convention at the same time. The following year (1951), the convention was again held in London but moved to April in response to members' wishes and concerns about cost.

On looking at the early lecture topics and lecturers, a gradual shift in the new organisation from 'medical' lectures by eminent surgeons and physicians to more profession-specific topics and demonstrations delivered by members is evident. Moreover, the consistent topics appear to have been focused on children's feet, dermatology and orthopaedics, with a growing trend towards chiropodial mechanics. The integration and

Above: Clockwise from Top Left. John H Hanby OBE, President 1945-1951

Delegates at the annual dinner, 1951.

The Savoy Hotel, London.

Excerpt from the annual dinner menu, 1950.

inclusion of instructional films for members was a cutting-edge development for the time. ■

NEXT MONTH

CONFERENCES 1952-1989