

BOOK REVIEW

100 Notable Names from General Practice *edited by Neil Metcalfe*

Paperback, 314 pages
CRC Press
December 2018

Neil Metcalfe is a General Practitioner in York who has written extensively on topics including medical history and education. This book of short biographies is the outcome of work done by medical students under his supervision and strengthened by contributions from established authors. It is not clear who made the choice of subjects.

The first section covers twenty-seven general practitioners who practised before the twentieth century. Most of them like William Rose and Edward Jenner will be familiar, but it includes others, such as Arthur Conan Doyle and William Grace, whose reputations were built elsewhere.

The names of some of those written about in the second half of the twentieth century in part two, such as Alfred Cox and Chuni Lal Katial, may not be so well-known. Part three, which deals with eighteen general practitioners who worked from 1950 to 1967, and part four with another thirty-three active within the last fifty years, contain many familiar names. The majority are included because of their involvement in the Royal College of General Practitioners and the development of General Practice as an academic speciality.

With one hundred authors, many of them undergraduates, the quality of the writing is inevitably varied but on the whole is commendably high and the density of factual information accurate. The text is well illustrated.

This book is an excellent way of introducing students to serious research in the history of medicine and getting their work published. It contains a great deal of information about the history of general practice and will be of particular value to those interested in its development from what was almost a cottage industry into an academic discipline headed by a Royal College. Some however may be put off from buying this reference book because of its price.

John MT Ford
June 2019

Published online at www.bshm.org.uk.