JJRM website – draft Biographical Chapters

**Early Life [1876-93]**

John James Rickard Macleod was born on 6th September 1876 in the manse at Clunie near Dunkeld in Perthshire. Arriving on the eve of their first wedding anniversary, he was the first child of Free Church minister, the Reverend Robert Macleod and his wife, Jane. Around his third birthday, the family moved to Keith in Banffshire where his father served the Free Church congregation for 4 years while living in the church manse.

In 1883, at the age of 7, his family moved to Aberdeen. The Rev Macleod, a native of Caithness, had previously graduated MA from the University of Aberdeen and had studied Divinity at the Free Church College in Alford Place. He returned to the city to become minister at the John Knox Free Church in Gerrard Street which was to remain his charge – albeit in an imposing new granite building from 1895 – for over thirty years until he retired to Edinburgh in 1915.

The Macleod family lived initially at 86 Rosemount Place (now Belmuir House) throughout the time that JJR, usually known as Jack, attended Aberdeen Grammar School (1884-93) down Esslemont Avenue. In 1895, in the middle of his university studies, the Macleod family moved to a larger, newly built house named ‘Dunkeith’ (now 15 Kings Gate).

**University Education [1893-98]**

He entered the University of Aberdeen as an undergraduate in October 1893 having passed the University Preliminary Examination two weeks earlier. He excelled throughout the course (newly extended to five years) winning many prizes, including the Matthews Duncan medal in obstetrics that had been endowed by the highly distinguished medical practitioner James Matthews Duncan who, like Macleod, had been educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and the University of Aberdeen.

Macleod did his academic medical studies at Marischal College (before the front section of the current quadrangle was built at the start of last century) and in Aberdeen’s hospital facilities of the day. In the mid-1890s there was a recently opened Maternity Unit in nearby Barnett’s Close, out-patients were seen at the Public Dispensary across in Guestrow, infectious diseases were managed at the City Hospital in Urquhart Road, the Children’s Hospital was in Castle Terrace and the main Infirmary, with medical and surgical facilities, was at Woolmanhill. Macleod graduated MB ChB with Honourable Distinction in 1898.

**The Young Physiologist 1898-1903**

He competed successfully for the Anderson Scholarship which funded a year’s research in the Physiologische Insitut in Leipzig. He then returned to work in Aberdeen for a time, before moving to the London Hospital Medical College in October 1900, first as demonstrator in physiology and later lecturer in the emerging field of biochemistry. Over three years he published research on a variety of areas in the emerging field of clinical chemistry and was additionally appointed as Chemist to the Pathological Institute at the London Hospital. He was also developing what were to become major interests in teaching, including the publication of textbooks.