

CHARLES PAGET LAPAGE (1879-1947). Ch.B., M.D. (Manchester), F.R.C.P. (Eng.). - President of the British Paediatric Association.

“Lapage was a unique character, and one will always remember his arrival at hospital in an airmen’s helmet as a precaution against draught in his car and his remarkable upright quick walk down the corridor to his ward, hugging a sheaf of papers.”

British Medical Journal (1947).

Early in his career, Charles Paget Lapage (1879-1947) [Epsom College 1894-1896] became interested in the diseases of children. He was the son of Dr C. C. Lapage, a practitioner of Nantwich, Cheshire, and father of Ronald Paget Lapage [Epsom College 1930-1933], Charles Ransome Lapage [Epsom College 1931-1935], and Dr Stephen Paget Lapage [Epsom College 1936-1941]. He received his medical training at Owen’s College, now the University of Manchester, and graduated M.B., Ch.B. in 1902, winning the John Henry Agnew Prize and the Henry Ashby Memorial Scholarship for the study of paediatrics. He was then appointed resident medical officer at the Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital, and then to the special children’s wards at St Marys Hospital, Manchester. Lapage’s teaching experience began when he was medical registrar at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and medical tutor to the Hulme Hall of residence. In 1905 he was awarded the M.D. with commendation, having put forward a thesis on mentally retarded children, at that time grouped under the title ‘feeble-minded.’ Following the death of Dr Henry Ashby, Senior Physician at Manchester Children’s Hospital, Charles Lapage was appointed honorary physician at that hospital in 1908, and subsequently to St Mary’s Hospital, Manchester, where he took charge of the children’s wards. His interest in mental incapacity in children continued with the publication of his book *Feeble-mindedness in Children of School Age* in 1911, with a second edition in 1920. This book was at the time the standard work on this emotive subject. He inaugurated and ran a clinic at the Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital for the diagnosis and treatment of children with mental and speech defects by non-medical teachers with special qualifications, and this was one of the first clinics of its kind in this country.



Before the First World War, Charles Lapage was a Captain in the University Territorial Training Corps and he was soon appointed as its commanding officer. During the war he served with the 2nd Western General Hospital and, in 1918, went abroad as a major in the R.A.M.C. with the 57th General Hospital to France, where he was mentioned in dispatches. After the War he established himself as one of Manchester’s foremost paediatricians. At the University of Manchester he was appointed Lecturer on Diseases of Children in 1909, and Reader in Diseases of Children from 1931-1947. He was President of the Manchester Medical Society and of the Section of Diseases of Children of the Royal Society of Medicine. He was one of the original members of the British Paediatric Association and it was said that he had never missed a meeting. His membership culminated in his election as its President in 1929 and, in 1932, he was appointed Vice-President of the Section of Diseases of Children at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association. As a student, Charles Lapage was a prominent runner and rugby footballer. He listed the recreations of his middle life as walking in the mountains, golf, swimming and tennis. Indeed, he cultivated his taste for strenuous exercise to the end of his life and he was proud of his achievement of climbing every peak over 2,500 feet in England and Wales at the age of 65. In 1945, a paediatric prize was founded at the University of Manchester in Lapage’s memory.