A Tribute to Frederic Wood-Jones
by
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Frederic Wood Jones (1879-1954)

Man’s foot is all his own it is unlike any other foot. It is the most distinctive human part of the whole of his anatomical makeup.

It is a human specialization and whether he be proud of it or not, it is his hallmark and so long as Man has been Man and so long as he remains Man it is by his feet that he will be known from all other members of the animal kingdom.

It is his feet that confer upon him his only real distinction and provide his only valid claim to human status.

So goes what is perhaps the most eloquent tribute ever written about the human foot. As students in the surgical class of Dr. Henri Duvries in 1960, we would often hear our professor refer to Frederic Wood Jones as, “Not only a master anatomist and illustrator, but a magnificent writer!”. He was right on all counts, Wood Jones career speaks of a
modern day Renassaince Man, a man who was a physician, anatomist, embryologist, antropologist, naturalist, archeologist, researcher, curator, teacher, public speaker, writer and illustrator. In the true sense of a Renassaince Man, he was outstanding in all of the professions that he practiced.

Wood Jones was born in London, England on January 23, 1879. As a school boy he showed great enthusiasm for natural history. In 1897 he entered the London Hospital Medical college. He became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1904, however, he found the practice of medicine “cramped and small” when compared to biology. Under the influence of Sir Arthur Keith, an anatomist and professor of great standing, he shifted his interest to anatomy and natural history.


Wood Jones’ reputation as a teacher and public speaker is legendary. His ability to explain his subject matter well was perhaps his greatest gift. “He never considered an anatomical structure in isolation from its function in the living animal”.

As podiatric medical students we learned about Wood Jones not only from Dr. DuVries, but also through his classic book, “Structure and Function as Seen in the Foot”.

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![Image of Wood Jones' book: Structure and Function as Seen in the Foot](image-url)
It is arguably the best anatomical book ever written about the human foot. The book is well structured, beautifully illustrated and contains the beautiful lyrical prose that is so evident in the “Man’s foot is all his own …” passage quoted above.

In my particular case, what really attracted me to his work was his simple, yet elegant, pen and ink illustrations. With a few strokes of his pen, Wood Jones could show the essence of an anatomical structure, as can be seen in the illustration below:

![Anatomical Illustration](image)

Take a close look, the drawing is so simple yet there is so much information packed in this illustration. Could you get a clearer picture of the Tibialis Posterior as it attaches to the bones of the foot? It was his understanding of how anatomical structures function and their relationship to one another, as well as his ability to illustrate the fundamentals of an anatomical structure in a clear, precise and simple manner that made him such a powerful teacher.

As a podiatric medical student and budding medical illustrator, I would spend a great deal of time admiring and studying his drawings and learning from them. I treasure my copy of “Structure and Function as Seen in the Foot”.
Here are a few Wood Jones illustrations for you to enjoy:
Fig. 85.—The peroneal muscles of the right leg.
Bibliography:

Duvries, Henri: Personal communication 1960


*A Note to the Reader:
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Please make sure to include your address

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