

## HISTORICAL ORTHOPAEDIC ARTEFACTS FACT SHEET No 7

### Gooch's Splint



This splint was first described about 1772 by Benjamin Gooch, who was a leading Surgeon in East Anglia.

It consists of a backing of canvas, to one surface of which strips of soft wood are glued. Thus the splint is malleable.

It was commonly used as an emergency in most fractures of the upper and lower extremities right up to modern times

Gooch's splinting has the advantage that when applied with the canvas side next to the limb it encircles the part; while it remains rigid when the wooden side is turned towards the skin.

#### Methods of Application

1. With the canvas side next to the skin or the wooden side next to the skin.
2. Rolled to the limb with the long axis of the wood pieces either along or across the long axis of the limb.

#### Mode of Action

1. When applied with the canvas side next to the skin and the wood pieces transversely round the limb, it affords rigidity in the long axis of the limb and flexibility across it.
2. When applied with the wood next to the skin, it affords rigidity in both axes of the limb.

Gooch's splintage was still being used for temporary immobilisation of injured limbs by ambulance crews as late as the 1960s. Gooch's are perhaps the most sophisticated wooden splints ever devised. The 19<sup>th</sup> century literature abounds with descriptions of many types of wooden fracture apparatus, none of which was as carefully constructed or apparently efficient as that of Gooch.

There is no modern equivalent to this device.

#### Sources

1. Eastern Daily Press, Friday July 19<sup>th</sup> 2013, p.6
2. Clement, I. Textbook on first aid and emergency nursing. Jaypee Brothers, 2012, p.141
3. Nan, AK. Undergraduate surgery. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Academic Publishers Kolkata, 2004, p 962
4. Browner, BD et al. Skeletal trauma e-book. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2 vols. Saunders-Elsevier, 2009, p 5