

THE LINDSAY CLUB

OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER NO.3

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849

With its third number our Occasional Newsletter seems to have become a regular annual feature.

It records the events and activities of the past year, outlines the plans for the future, offers an open forum for short items of interest on dental history and includes a bibliography of books and articles on dental history published during the past year.

You will read on the following pages shortened versions of the year's lectures given to the Club by prominent members of the profession, and I should like to say that the lecture-demonstration to be given by Mr. Frank Horrocks on 17th November 1977 on the development of the optical microscope promises to be of outstanding interest.

We hope you will enjoy browsing through these pages and that you will find both its contents and our Club's activities of such interest that you will wish to continue your membership or, if you are not yet a member, to join us. An application for membership or renewal of membership will be found on the last page of the Newsletter.

I. VINSKI, Chairman.

COMMITTEE 1977-78

Chairman : I. Vinski, L.D.S.R.C.S.

Hon. Sec. : E.M. Spencer, M.B.E., B.A., A.L.A.

Hon. Treas.: J.D. Walter, D.D.S., F.D.S.R.C.S.

Committee : R.A. Cohen, L.D.S., F.F.D.R.C.S. (Irel.)

J.A. Donaldson, B.A., F.D.S.

F.T. Horrocks, L.D.S.R.C.S.

HONOURS AWARDED TO LINDSAY CLUB MEMBERS

It is with great pleasure that we offer congratulations to the following members of the Club :-

To Mrs. Margaret W. Menzies Campbell, M.B., Ch.B., on whom the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh conferred the Honorary Fellowship in Dental Surgery on Friday, June 10th 1977. She was elected to this honour in recognition of her contribution to the study of the history of dental surgery and of her services in relation to the establishment in the Museum of the College of the Menzies Campbell Dental Collection. She is the first woman to whom the Honorary Fellowship has been awarded (Dr. Lilian Lindsay died before it could be conferred on her) and she is the first person not a member of the dental profession, as well as the first member of the medical profession, to receive it.

To Mr. R.A. Cohen and Mr. J.E. McAuley, who have been unanimously elected to Life Membership of the British Dental Association. Both are founder-members of the Lindsay Club and have served on its committee in several capacities, and they are engaged in producing the Centenary History of the Association, Mr. Cohen being the Chairman of the Working Group. They have given stalwart and lengthy service to their Branches and it is good that their contributions have been recognised in this way.

To Miss E.M. Spencer, Hon. Secretary of the Lindsay Club, who was awarded an M.B.E. in the New Year's Honours List for her work as Librarian of the British Dental Association. The Investiture ceremony took place at Buckingham Palace on 23rd March, and the award was made by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Miss Spencer is the first dental librarian to be so honoured.

LESLIE JAMES GODDEN, O.B.E., F.D.S.

Members will already be aware that the Club has lost one of its most loyal members with the death of Leslie Godden on 9th July 1977. Present at the inaugural meeting in October 1962, he was elected a committee member of the Lindsay Club and in that capacity he served until elected Chairman in 1967, an office held for two years. In 1965, Leslie Godden gave a paper to the Club entitled Some Aspects of the History of the British Dental Journal. He was usually present at meetings, and will be much missed both for his kindly personality and for his informed and witty contributions to the discussions.

LINDSAY CLUB MEETINGS, 1976 - 1977

The 41st meeting of the Club was also the Annual General Meeting at which new Officers were elected and the Treasurer reported a current balance of £150 in the funds. Dr. F.E.R. de Maar was welcomed as an Honorary Member, this status having been conferred on him during the Club's visit to the Netherlands. Memories of this happy and instructive week-end were revived by a magnificent series of slides selected from those taken by Dr. Ben Davis in the course of our travels, enabling those who had stayed at home to share in the contents of the museums, the Dutch landscape and beautiful buildings, and the meetings and convivial occasions which helped to make the four days so enjoyable.

At the 42nd meeting of the Club held on 31st March 1977, Professor Bertram Cohen presented a paper on James Sim Wallace. This is printed in fuller detail elsewhere in the Newsletter, but it caused great interest and considerable discussion. Although Sim Wallace's experimental methods left much to be desired in that they lacked accuracy, patience and method, and although he believed in his own infallibility to such an extent that he did not amend his misconceptions nor expand his knowledge, nevertheless his theories were truly preventive in their objective.

The 43rd meeting took place in Aberdeen on July 1st 1977 during the Annual Conference, when Dr. Margaret Menzies Campbell described her days as a medical student from 1912 to 1918 and her first experiences as a house surgeon thereafter. This paper is also reproduced in greater detail elsewhere, but it delighted the audience by its liveliness and its vivid recollections of customs, people and events which illustrated the social history of the period.

JAMES SIM WALLACE, BY PROFESSOR BERTRAM COHEN

(Summary of a paper given to the Lindsay Club, 31st March 1977.)

James Sim Wallace was born in 1869 at Eastwood in Renfrewshire, the son of a Glasgow dentist, and was educated at the University of Glasgow where he gained a B.Sc. and a medical qualification by the age of 21. After several voyages

as a ship's doctor, he studied dentistry at the Royal Dental Hospital and the National Dental Hospital, qualifying L.D.S. in 1895 and thereafter practising in Kingston in Surrey. Many years later a thesis on The Cause and Prevention of Decay in Teeth gained him a D.Sc. at the University of Glasgow, and this subject dominated his considerable list of publications over the next 50 years. He lectured at the London Hospital and at King's College Hospital, and was awarded the Cartwright Prize in 1925 and the John Tomes Prize in 1921. He was a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and of the American College of Dentists.

When close attention is paid to Sim Wallace's experiments, it becomes clear that he was a poor experimenter, neither patient, not accurate, nor methodical in the compilation and interpretation of his data, even to the extent of rendering the experiment itself valueless. The early lack of success in his experiments may have given him a distaste for further work of this kind, for he did not publish any experiments after his early studies of diet and caries in monkeys' teeth, and he wrote in 1929 disapproving of animal and even of laboratory experimentation, claiming that brain work and thought are able to outstrip the most lavishly equipped laboratories.

His antipathy to experimentation was inflamed by the heavy reliance placed upon experimental findings by his arch-enemies, the Mellanbys. Time has often shown Wallace's criticisms of their work to be justified, but they were based on emotion more than reason. Because the Medical Research Council's Dental Committee supported Lady Mellanby's work, those who opposed her views opposed the Council too. Other dentists in clinical practice decried her suggestions that cod liver oil be used as a caries preventive, that nutritional deficiencies were responsible for caries, and that rickets and caries were associated.

Professor Cohen's disillusionment with Sim Wallace was not founded on his subject's undoubted vanity, acrimony, dogmatism and tetchiness, but on his obsession with his own infallibility which prevented his amending his misconceptions and expanding his knowledge. For 50 years his message remained substantially unaltered, and he paid no attention to two discoveries of the utmost importance made during his life by other workers - the effect of fluorides on the teeth, and the identification of *Streptococcus mutans* in the initiation of dental caries. There is no indication that either aroused his interest or gained his attention, even though the work on fluorides could have supported his ideas against the Mellanby theory. Sim Wallace's conception of plaque was partially correct,

but then he described it as protecting the enamel; experiments would have revealed his error. He asserted the value of apple to end a meal, because of its detergent action, which has since been proved, by means available to Sim Wallace, to be unable to remove adherent plaque from the teeth.

Lilian Lindsay was generous in her praise of Sim Wallace as one of the first scientific proponents of preventive dentistry. His theories, however conjectural and lacking in scientific proof, were truly preventive in their objective and no harm could befall patients who observed his principles, provided that they were not deluded into imagining that detergent foods were the entire answer. Had Sim Wallace directed his energies to a search for new knowledge in regard to caries, rather than to the demolition of his opponents, he would have earned an even more important place in history.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF UNIVERSITY AND EARLY DAYS OF PRACTICE,
1912 - 1920

By Dr. Margaret W. Menzies Campbell, F.D.S.

Summary of a paper given to the Lindsay Club at Aberdeen,
1st July 1977.

In October 1912, Mrs. Menzies Campbell, then Miss Margaret Williamson aged 19, entered St. Andrews University to study medicine. She described her lodging (known as a bunk) and her red academic dress with trencher (mortar-board) bearing a tassel of colour appropriate to her year. St. Andrews was a small university of 500 students in three colleges; its association with Dundee Royal Infirmary enabled medical degrees to be granted. Some of the traditions of St. Andrews were described, such as the Sunday procession after University Chapel to the end of the pier, and the singing of the Gaudeamus.

At the time there was great formality amongst the students, all except close friends being addressed as Miss or Mr., and no-one being addressed unless first introduced. Lectures occupied the mornings, practical classes the afternoon and as Saturdays often brought botanical or zoological expeditions, there was no time for games. Of the numerous active societies, the Town Students' Association for Women met on Saturday evenings to enjoy sing-songs or dances.

Some of the professors and lecturers were recalled to mind : James Colquhoun Irvine, a genius at Chemistry and a lucid lecturer; D'Arcy Thomson who held the Chair of Zoology for 63 years in either Dundee or St. Andrews; Percy Herring, the physiologist.

In 1914, having passed their second professional examination, medical students resumed their studies in Dundee, doing clinical work as well as lectures and practical work. Though women shared the same classes on exactly equal terms with men, women had a separate entrance and rooms from men in the Union. The academic staff at Dundee included Professor David McEwan for surgery, Professor Sutherland for pathology and Mr. Anderson for fractures. Mr. David Greig, a fine operator, lectured in clinical subjects, A.M. Stalker was Professor of Medicine, and Professor J.A.C. Kynoch taught midwifery and gynaecology. Because of the absence at the War of many of the medical staff, students had more practical experience than was customary, taking cases for the house physicians and surgeons. For short periods Mrs. Menzies Campbell was locum house officer in different wards, and during the summer of 1916 was asked to look after the hospice belonging to the Bruntshfield Hospital for Women in Edinburgh.

She played a part in Dundee University activities as a member of several committees and as co-editor of the Magazine, and she was the moving spirit behind the formation of the Dundee University Medical Society and its first president.

At her third attempt, she passed her final examination in May 1918 and by the payment of £5 to the General Medical Council was free to practise anywhere in the British Isles. Most of the newly-qualified became house physicians or surgeons or were assistants to general practitioners, in order to widen their knowledge; she became locum house surgeon in the General Hospital in Darlington, her home town, then in August 1918 joined the Doncaster Royal Infirmary as house surgeon for £250 per annum, where the visiting physicians and surgeons were local practitioners who undertook hospital work on a voluntary basis, each being on call for a week.

Out-patients, ward rounds and the changing of dressings occupied the first part of each morning, and minor surgical operations were done on specified days; tonsils and adenoids were enucleated, abscesses opened and ears syringed. Although only 22 years had elapsed since Röntgen's discovery of x-rays,

the hospital had an x-ray machine which, as there was no trained radiographer, the house surgeon had to operate. She also administered anaesthetics and took her turn at operating. On one occasion a child arrived with toothache, but having never seen a tooth extracted, she had the gum painted with iodine and on her next visit home learnt from her family dentist how to extract teeth.

The influenza epidemic, which had been mild at first, reached its second and third peaks in November 1918 and in January/February 1919; beds occupied even the x-ray room. Bronchopneumonia was the usual complication, occurring on the fifth or sixth day. The honorary staff found themselves so busy with their own practices that the young house surgeon performed operations on strangulated hernias, did mastoidectomies and appendectomies, and sometimes also anaesthetised the patient first and supervised the subsequent level of anaesthesia. She recalled having to deal with a ruptured ectopic gestation very early on a Sunday morning, and operating on a soldier for a strangulated hernia when fog prevented his reaching the military hospital at Leeds.

By the end of March 1919, she had a hundred successful major operations to her credit and innumerable minor ones, but during an appendectomy the patient died, and she had to attend her first and only inquest arising from a death on the table. Because the general practitioner, who had been daily visiting the patient, knew he should have sent her to hospital sooner, and because he had consistently refused on previous occasions to act as anaesthetist, she was absolved from blame. She continued at Doncaster until the end of November 1919, then after three months' recuperation at home joined the practice of her aunt, Dr. Marion Gilchrist, the first woman to graduate in medicine from any Scottish university. Within five years she had married Dr. J. Menzies Campbell, and as was customary retired from medicine.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS BY THE BDA MUSEUM

THE period since notes on recent acquisitions were last prepared for a Lindsay Club newsletter has been notable for the accession, by gift or purchase of a number of items for which the Honorary Curator has been seeking for several years.

Two of these desiderata have been generously provided by Mr. R.A. Cohen. The first is an example of a china group, a fairing, representing a bear performing a dental operation. The other item is a primitive key with a removable cross-bar. Opinions differ whether removable cross-bars of this sort were intended as elevators or were screwdrivers to fit the screw which made it possible to reverse the claw - probably, they were used for both purposes. Mr. Cohen has also given a bone toothbrush case and a china toothbrush pot.

A fascinating and unusual gift brought in by Mr. E.R. Crerar, the Scottish Secretary, B.D.A., was the inventory record book of a West of Scotland practice for a period of some twelve years between the mid 1890's and the early 1900's. This has provided an insight into the 'furnishing' of a practice of those days and it is astonishing (and almost laughable) how closely the list of items in the surgery matches the items to be seen in a photograph of a late 19th century Scottish surgery in the Museum photograph collection although it is quite certain that book and photograph do not refer to the same premises.

Two more toothpaste pot lids have been purchased (John Gosnell and W. Woods). The museum has possessed a Gosnell sample pot for 40 years and successive curators have been anxious to find one of the more normal sized pot lids to exhibit beside it.

Repeatedly over the years, an attempt has been made to acquire a baby's coral teether, rattle and whistle. Many have been examined but have either been found imperfect and therefore not acceptable for the museum or at a price which could not be met. Very recently, a small example was obtained for a reasonable price from an antique dealer in Somerset.

The remarkable dentist, Macdonald of Manchester, was recalled to memory by the gift of one of his wooden denture boxes with a picture on it of a Manchester street scene, by Mr. R.T. Garner who also gave a wooden screw gag and a mechanical amalgamator for No.2 slip-joint.

A large collection of surgery items, hand piece and engine parts, probes for cone sockets, handles, various small instrument points, porcelain teeth and other useful items were received from Mr. A.E. Adeline and another collection of surgical and conservative instruments was received from the executors of Mr. S. Blairman. In these two useful collections were items which were new to the B.D.A. Museum, items that could be used to replace existing specimens which were not in such good condition and a small number of articles which duplicated

specimens already held. These are being (or have been) disposed of, with the donors' agreement, to one or other of the dental historical museums which are being formed in dental schools and elsewhere. Mr. E.E. Wookey who has made many important and useful gifts in the past brought in another of his 'surprise parcels' which, as usual, contained historical material that the Honorary Curator was very glad to have.

A very useful addition to the, as yet small, collection of radiographic accessories in the museum was a Bolin Bisecting X-Ray Angulator presented by Mr. R.S. Bodenham.

Shortly before the last notes on recent acquisitions were prepared (but the gift was not included in it) an early McKesson nitrous-oxide and oxygen apparatus was presented by Mr. D.L. Albert. This represented a stage in the development of the McKesson apparatus which was new to the museum. Its gift was a reminder that the museum still lacks examples of some anaesthetic apparatus which it would be useful to have so as to record systematically the development of dental anaesthetic apparatus during the past century. The Honorary Curator would, for instance, be very pleased to learn of the whereabouts of a Guy-Ross apparatus that the Museum might have for this purpose.

TWO IMPORTANT ACCESSIONS TO THE RARE BOOK COLLECTION

Mr. R.A. Cohen has been a generous donor to the library for many years, and in the past twelve months has made several gifts to the Rare Book Collection, two of which merit a special mention.

Johann Heurn (or Jan van Heurne) of Utrecht lived from 1543 to 1601, and his book De Morbis Oculorum, Aurium, Nasi, Dentium et Oris, was published posthumously in 1602 by the author's son Otto. Heurn had been the first Professor of Medicine at Leyden University. His book is a compilation drawn from the works of previous authors and illustrates the reliance still placed at that date on the views of authors like Vesalius. Chapter 11 deals with diseases of the teeth and mouth, and is analysed in Guerini's History of Dentistry on pages 212-214, where Guerini points out that dental surgery proper is ignored while various means of therapy are recommended for toothache, depending on its cause, without critical appraisal of their efficacy. Thus purgatives, revulsives, local narcotic or resolvent medicaments may all be used; blood-letting was a favourite therapeutic method, the veins not only of the arm but

also of the tongue, gums, lips and ears being opened. A drop of oil of vitriol applied to a carious tooth causes the loss of the tooth after a few days, or alternatively, vitriol kills the worms in carious teeth, curing the decay and making the nerve insensitive. There is no consideration of the antipathy of these two opinions. Oil of vitriol diluted with other liquids is advised for removing tartar from the teeth.

Heurn wrote other works of which two are bound in this volume : De Morbis qui in singulis partibus humani capitis insidere consueverunt, 1594, and De Morbis Pectoris, 1602, also published posthumously by Otto Heurn.

Lorenz Heister (1683-1758) is the author of the other book presented by Mr. Cohen. He was a famous surgeon born in Frankfurt who studied in Germany and Amsterdam and who was appointed Professor at the University of Altorf in Nuremberg after spending two summers with the Dutch troops fighting the French in Flanders in order to watch the methods of the German, English and Dutch surgeons who attended them. He realised the need for a convenient manual of surgery, and so wrote his General System of Surgery, first in German (1718), then in a Latin translation (1739) and then in English (1742). The two-volume Latin edition was already in the B.D.A. Library's collection, and through Mr. Cohen's gift, the English translation is now also represented, in its 8th edition published in 1768.

Several chapters in the second part of the book describe treatment of the mouth and teeth. Hare-lip and oral cancer are the subjects of chapters 75 and 76, and chapter 77 opens the section on surgical operations on the teeth by indicating how to open clenched teeth and jaws. Succeeding chapters describe the cleaning of discoloured teeth and the treatment of toothache and caries, which if superficial is removed with a needle or toothpick and the cavity filled with white wax or mastic or in the case of molars by lead or gold; if caries is deep and causing pain, oil of cloves or cinnamon or guaiacum or a few drops of spirit of vitriol are used to relieve the pain. Should pain persist, Heister advises cauterisation before filling with lead or gold, and extraction if this also fails. Irregular teeth are filed to prevent their damaging the oral tissues, or are extracted. Extraction instruments are illustrated in a folding plate and the method of their use is described in chapter 82. Heister refers to Fauchard's extraction techniques and also to his advice on artificial teeth, but he mentions the fabrication of removable dentures consisting of one or more teeth made from ivory, bone or hippopotamus tusk. He recommends the lancing of the gums in teething or in the eruption of third molars, and he allocates one chapter to epulis and one to abscesses of the gums. Another section describes operations on the tongue.

It is a privilege to have these books in the Rare Book Collection, and gratitude is due to Mr. Cohen, now and in the future, for his kindness in presenting these copies to the Library.

BOOK REVIEWS

LÖFGREN, A.B. Academic Dissertations ... in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland 1907 - 1975. Göteborg, Acta Odontologica Scandinavica, Suppt.73, 1976

Dr. Löfgren has collected together a list of dissertations on dental subjects, arranged according to country and then chronologically, which provides an invaluable conspectus of nearly 70 years of dental research. Over 300 dissertations for doctorates in odontology are listed, showing the changes in the subjects chosen for investigation by dental researchers, and how they have made use of more elaborate chemical and physical methods as time has passed.

Dental historians will give this book an additional welcome for the notes it offers on the origins of the Scandinavian dental schools, and for the comments on the introduction of doctorates in dentistry in the Scandinavian countries.

FASTLICHT, S. Tooth Mutilation and Dentistry in Pre-Columbian Mexico. Berlin, Die Quintessenz, 1976 p.164

Dental historians and scholars of Mexican culture have learnt much from Dr. Fastlicht's many papers describing his research into dental work among the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica. This splendid volume has brought together accounts of many aspects of his research and interpretations, and illustrates the fine dental inlays of jade, turquoise and other stones which are a feature of pre-Columbian dentistry. The colour plates are of a high standard. Dr. Fastlicht reports and comments on data on oral health in early writings, and in this English edition analyses the dentitions of recently-discovered pre-Columbian skulls which are of interest to the dental profession in providing information about dental morphology and anomalies, and evidence for theories of the migrations of ancient peoples to the American continent. There is an extensive bibliography

BRITISH DENTAL ASSOCIATION LIBRARY

Accessions to Rare Books

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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS IN DENTAL HISTORY

1976 - 1977

I - GENERAL

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DENTAL HISTORY UNIT

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM DENTAL SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 1975/76

Staff

Mr. G.H. Bennett Edwards, a retired general dental practitioner, was appointed an Honorary Research Associate by the University and joined the Unit to undertake further work on the local aspects of the history of the British Dental Association.

Projects

1. Research into the life and work of William Robertson has been completed and a paper by R.A. Cohen, E.A. Marsland and Christine Hillam was published in the British Dental Journal, 142, 1977 pp 64-69 and pp 99-102. The biographical research undertaken by Christine Hillam has unearthed much previously unknown information regarding late 18th and early 19th century practitioners.
2. Mr. R.A. Cohen has completed a short study on "Tim Bobbin" (John Collier) and his four dental prints. These are among the best known dental prints and have been frequently reprinted. A paper was read in March 1976 at a meeting of the Lindsay Club in the Netherlands and at a meeting of the Manchester Bibliographical Society in March 1977. The paper is to be rewritten in a form suitable for publication.
3. Work on the detailed history of the Central Counties Branch of the British Dental Association by Mr. C.H. Bennett Edwards is continuing and almost complete.
4. The transcription of the letters of Charles Dumergue to Matthew Boulton is continuing, as is the study of the life and works of Joseph Fox.
5. A paper by Christine Hillam entitled "Some primary sources for the biography of English provincial dentists" has been accepted for publication by the British Dental Journal. It deals in detail with such sources as newspapers, trade directories, professional journals, parish registers etc., emphasising that because of the relatively recent organisation of the dental profession researches must range widely over primary source material.

6. Work has started on compiling a complete list of pre-registration dentists whose names appear in trade directories. The list for Birmingham and Worcestershire is now finished. The results are being transferred to punch cards by the Community Dentistry Unit of the University of Birmingham and in the future it will be possible to extract with ease all references to a name, address or date. A note is also being made of dentists' other occupations. The preparation of a list for the whole country will be a long term project. It is envisaged that this will be of interest to dental, pharmaceutical, medical and local historians and genealogists. Before this project was begun, a preliminary survey of the distribution of dentists (as compared with surgeons, physicians and chemists) in the West Midlands was undertaken. This revealed that in 1860 dentists were to be found only in towns with very sizeable populations, although dental treatment of a rudimentary nature should have been available to most of the population.
7. Research is being conducted into the social origins of dentists in Birmingham and Worcester. The previous trades of 18th and 19th century dentists in the towns and, where possible, the trade of their fathers, are being investigated.
8. The Unit mounted a display entitled "Operators on the Teeth" in December 1975 at the Conversazione to mark the 150th anniversary of the Birmingham Medical School. The exhibit consisted of twenty colour reproductions of prints of dental interest, showing dentists at work from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries. Considerable interest was aroused by the display, which also included a number of instruments and carved ivory dentures.
9. Staff of the Unit have been again concerned in the undergraduate teaching programme and four lectures have been given.

Scheme of Work 1976/77

1. A study of the dental prints of the Cruikshanks is being undertaken. This will be on the lines of the "Tim Bobbin" paper.
2. Work on Joseph Fox and Charles Dumergue will continue.
3. Work will continue on the indexing of the minutes of the committees of the Birmingham Dental Hospital (1880-1948). At present the information is in the form of a card index. It is to be typed and a number of copies made available.

4. Christine Hillam has completed a detailed study of James Blair, an 18th century Leicester practitioner, and a paper entitled "James Blair (1747-1817) Provincial Dentist" has been accepted for publication by Medical History. It examines the pattern of his practice and attempts to place him in his contemporary context.
5. The names of the dentists have been extracted from the 1851 census of Birmingham, in a study of dentistry in the city in that year. The social and geographical origins of the dentists are to be investigated concurrently with studies of the Bott family, dental practitioners in Nottingham and Birmingham in the 18th and 19th centuries. George Bott senior was the provincial counterpart of Ruspini, being a prolific producer of dental products, a noted practitioner, a trainer of other dentists and a founder of charities.

DENTISTRY AT THE ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE

J.D. Walter

The Ontario Science Centre is formed by a series of interconnecting pavilions arranged upon a hillside in suburban Toronto. The barrage of single jet fountains announced that the visitor is in for a cultural experience, but this experience is far from a routine exercise.

The whys and wherefores of all manner of chemical, physical, mechanical and biological phenomena await the enquiring finger. Finger not mind? The answer lies in involvement. There are few static exhibits but at the push of a button, the turn of a handle (or rather more physical effort) one can learn how a hydrofoil works, just how efficient a post mill really was or confirm a suspected tone-deafness.

Predictably the Banting and Best laboratory figures largely in the medical science section and tucked in its shadow is a small but significant dental exhibit. The historical tableau, a surgery/laboratory layout, would be small beer for a Lindsay Club member - especially a veteran of the Netherlands tour - but the remainder of the exhibit is as no other dental museum, let alone general collection.

The nature of plaque and the necessity for its control form the basis of a static display and two tape-slide programmes. The whole bias of the exhibit is very much towards prevention and research, a gnotobiotic rat unit. featuring prominently. One could say that here was the ideal nucleus for a B.D.A. Conference or Dental School Clinical Day display. To step down from the euphoric to the realistic, perhaps this is why the imagination of the general public did not seem to be captured : what was on show seemed to be taken at a pretty steady trot by the lay viewer, in contrast to the effect of other displays. An exhibit to digest if set a particular project, perhaps. A pity; something less esoteric might have generated more appeal.

Miss Jessie Dobson, lately Curator of the Hunterian Collection at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and a member of the Lindsay Club, gave an Arnott Demonstration at the College on 13th July which her fellow-members may be interested to read, and a synopsis follows. The title of the demonstration was :

Richard Owen - the greatest naturalist of his day

Richard Owen has been sadly neglected, partly because there is no good biography of him. He was a man who took advantage of chance events as they presented themselves. While at the University of Edinburgh he was advised to do medicine in London, and while studying at St. Bartholomew's Hospital he was encouraged by John Abernethy to apply for the post of assistant to William Clift at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, for the particular purpose of cataloguing the Hunterian Collection. This meant that he had to repeat some of Hunter's dissections in order to identify the exhibits, using animals from the Zoological Society for comparison. Finding that some of these were undescribed, Owen's little spare time was spent in writing monographs, many of which were published in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society. He was an exact and meticulous artist who illustrated his monographs himself, and many of his drawings are preserved at the Natural History Museum.

One of Owen's studies was of the platypus (*Ornithorhynchus paradoxus*), an example of which had been sent to him by George Bennett. The platypus had first been described by George Shaw in 1799, and it was regarded as an example of Buffon's remark that whatever Nature found it possible to make actually existed. There had been considerable speculation on the mode of reproduction of the platypus, an early description of the peculiarities of its anatomy illustrated by William Clift having been published by Everard Home in 1802. In 1832 Owen had a paper read at the Royal Society on the mammary glands of the platypus and its reproductive organs. It was his belief that the platypus was probably oviviviparous, and this idea was expressed in a paper describing the eggs of the platypus which was given in 1834. In 1865 Owen had a letter from Dr. John Nicholson in Australia who had witnessed a platypus laying eggs, and it was finally confirmed that they reproduce in this way when in 1884 William Caldwell cabled to the British Association, meeting in Montreal, that the platypus did indeed lay eggs.

Various controversial monsters made their appearance in the 19th century. On 28th December 1848 there was in the Illustrated London News a picture of a 'sea serpent' seen by the captain and six crew members of H.M.S. *Daedalus*. The public pestered Owen for the true identification of this creature which he was inclined to believe to be a giant seal; on another occasion he identified as a whale swimming on its back an animal sketched by Captain Nolloth in H.M.S. *Plumper*, the lower jaw protruding just above the surface. A creature sent to the Museum of Edinburgh University by an Orkney fisherman, at first thought to be an undescribed animal, was found to be a basking shark, identification being dependent on two vertebrae acquired for the Royal College of Surgeons' Museum by Everard Home. Bones identified by Owen in 1847 as bird bones from a kind of moorhen as big as a goose and given the name *Notornis* were so proved when two examples were found alive. In 1948 several others were found, and the species is now protected. Even foot-prints in certain rocks in Saxony were submitted to Owen's scrutiny, which he recognised as similar to prints known in Cheshire and Warwickshire and suggested that they were made by a long-legged lizard or a very large toad; the animal was first named the *Cheirotherum* ('hand-beast') but later was found to be the *Labyrinthodon*, closely allied to the Batrachian family.

Owen had considerable influence on others, especially students of medicine, natural history and geology. Henry Wentworth Acland, a student at St. George's to whom Owen suggested the use of the microscope, and later Regius Professor of Medicine, established at Christ Church Oxford a collection of anatomical and physiological specimens based upon the Hunterian Collection. St. George Mivart took an interest in the theories of evolution of the period and because of his writings was expelled from the Roman Catholic Church; his religious beliefs and scientific work were at variance with each other, and his book, Genesis of Species, 1871, was placed on the Index Expurgatorius. These were only two of the many whom Owen influenced, inspired and encouraged.

In the British Dental Journal of 5th April 1977, an interesting letter was published on the School Dentists' Society, founded in 1898. Its author, Wilfred Leigh Breese, has kindly enlarged upon his memories to provide the following reminiscences based upon his father's writings and his own recollections.

THE EARLY SCHOOL DENTAL CLINICS

by W. Leigh Breese

My father used to go to the Jewish orphanage in Norwood every Sunday morning for about 30 years, and to a big orphanage in Elder Road nearby, each caring for about 500 children. He happened to do an inspection of the Jewish children at the time of the Passover when unleavened bread was eaten, and was struck by the varying amount of residue clinging to the children's teeth; some were completely free of debris, and he coined the phrase the 'self-cleansing action of the mouth'. These children had mouths with no dental irregularity, perfect occlusion and the all-important lovely gloss on the enamel; when a visiting American colleague saw them, he exclaimed 'Why - they shine!' Looking up his records, my father noted that these children were caries-free and had been so at several previous inspections, while the children who retained the debris of the unleavened bread had many fillings and needed more.

It was my father's experience with these orphanage children that led Mr. C.E. Wallis, then assistant medical officer to the London County Council, to invite him to open and work in the first school dental clinic in London which was housed at the St. George's Dispensary in Surrey Row, Blackfriars, where Dr. L. Haden Guest, later an M.P. and later still Lord Haden Guest, was the medical officer. At the clinic the street door opened directly into the waiting room, above which was a dental surgery and a recovery room. The iron chair, enamelled black, had a short, squat seat and a straight back; even the headrest was a horizontal bar of solid metal. The medical officer and dispenser each had a small room on the ground floor. Early conservation was primitive. For deciduous teeth copper amalgam was used; for anterior fillings gutta-percha, supplied in small diamond shapes, was warmed and smoothed into the cavities.

I need not dwell on the dreadful condition of the mouths of the elementary school children who attended for treatment. There was a marked contrast with those who were in institutions like the Jewish and other orphanages where the diet was the same for all and there were no tuck shops. The most gratifying aspect of this early children's dentistry was to see the happy faces of some parents who said how much better their children were since they had had their septic teeth extracted. The emphasis had to be on removing sepsis, as none of the children had ever been to a dentist. Parents often had to be converted to the value of dental care, for many were prejudiced against it, and success with one child whose health improved after treatment frequently resulted in other children from the same family attending the clinic.

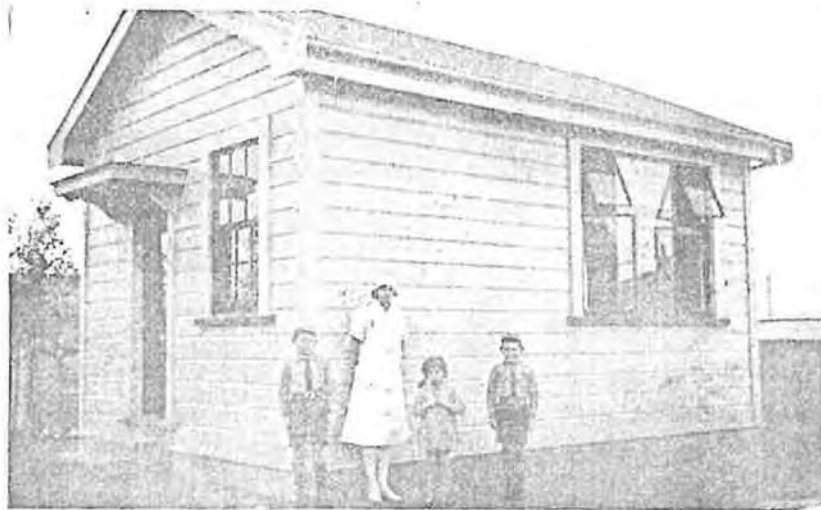
To start with the clinic was opened after school hours from 4.30 pm twice a week. One school only was selected which was near at hand, and the clinic nurse went to the school to collect the children whose parents had consented to their being treated; she rarely arrived at the clinic with the numbers she had started out with, for one or two managed to slip away while crossing the wide road. Cases of the most deplorable poverty, as evidenced by the very inadequate foot-wear and clothing of many of the children, were by no means uncommon, and it seemed futile, if not cruel, to press upon the mother of a child whose bare toes were protruding from its boots the need for dental cleanliness, with the advice to purchase a toothbrush.

Here are two true stories from the Blackfriars Clinic. A large elderly woman who had brought her grandson for treatment said 'Treat 'im carefully, Sir, he's not a natural child'.



Photo by F. G. Barker

A Typical School Dental Clinic.



A TYPICAL SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC.

'What do you mean?' asked the dentist. 'He's a Caesarian' came the reply. The second tale is of a woman who insisted on talking politics at the time of a local election; she said 'Me and my husband don't agree about it - he's a Conservatory and I'm in Labour.'

I can remember the names of many of the colleagues who were school dentists in the earliest days - A.E. Baker, George Thomson, Grantley Smith, R. Denison Pedley, Rupert Cumine, C.E. Wallis, C. Doswell Wallis, Evelyn Sprawson and W.G. Senior, and later on came J.F. Pilbeam, Reginald Chase, K.C.B. Webster, S.K. Donaldson and A. Gordon Taylor. The salary of the dental officer in Kettering where Bryan Wood worked was £40.10.0 for forty half-days. He wrote that in a discussion on school clinics, one of the speakers said he would not advise the use of a electric engine, the objection being that it would frighten the children, and Wood went on to say that from his own experience in private practice he had no hesitation in saying that he thought the fear entirely unfounded, and for his own part he heartily wished his Authority would provide an electric engine.

Vernon Knowles was a pioneer in Reading, where no fees were charged when the family income was less than 24/- a week, and where refusals of treatment averaged 50%. In London the maximum fee was 1/- and this was reduced to 1d in necessitous cases. The problem of persuading parents to accept treatment for their children was solved in part by Frank Harrison who had started a clinic in Sheffield. He would get parents to come to the clinic on a Saturday morning and would show them with the aid of a chart what treatment was needed, and give them a copy of 'Our Teeth' by Denison Pedley and himself; the results were good and about 75% accepted the treatment recommended.

Dr. Robert Weaver was a frequent attender at the School Dentists' Society meetings, where he described his investigations in North and South Shields where a much smaller incidence of caries was found in the naturally fluoridated water area of South Shields compared with the North Shields area.

Col. (later Sir) T.A. Hunter, the Director of the New Zealand Dental Service, which was largely staffed by 'dental nurses', was an important visitor to the clinic from overseas. He was a firm believer in Sim Wallace's views on the causation of dental caries. The majority of members of the School Dentists' Society

also supported these views and were totally opposed to the work of Mrs. Mellanby and to her vitamin-deficient theory. One must remember that Sir Wallace propounded his ideas over 60 years ago, since when much scientific work had been done not to discredit his views, but to add to them in the light of newer knowledge.

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