

THE LINDSAY CLUB

OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER No.1

OCTOBER, 1975

The Committee of the Lindsay Club has been aware for some time that several members for various reasons are not able to participate fully in the Club's activities. It is hoped that this Newsletter will prove to be of interest to all members of the Club, but especially to those who because of the distance from London do not find it easy to attend our meetings. It might well serve as a means of communication between members who do not often meet personally.

The value and interest of dental history is not generally appreciated by many practitioners, especially by the younger members of the profession. The more limited the horizon of a discipline the more exacting the practice of it can become. One of the aims of the Lindsay Club is to encourage research in dental history, and this need not mean undertaking a lengthy academic exercise. Many of us come across some incident related to the background of the profession, which if explored a little further would produce an interesting vignette.

It is intended to publish the Newsletter each year but to do so the Committee would like the help of all members. The Hon. Secretary, Miss Muriel Spencer, would be very glad to receive any dental items of interest for inclusion in another issue. In a similar context we should be only too pleased to know of any suitable subject, speaker or even venue for future meetings of the Club.

During the thirteen years since the formation of the Lindsay Club we have sadly lost some members, and happily welcomed newcomers, but as a society still young we always need new members. Please do not ever miss an opportunity to persuade a colleague to join us.

J.E. McAuley,
CHAIRMAN.

Let us now praise Famous Men

Two eminent founder-members of the Lindsay Club have died during the year, Dr. J. Menzies Campbell on 27th June 1974 aged 87 and Sir Zachary Cope, M.S., on 28th December 1974 aged 93. References to their obituary notices are given below.

Sir Zachary delivered the inaugural address of the Lindsay Club on 18th October 1962. His title, The Tomes Tradition, led him to speak of Sir John and Sir Charles Tomes and their noteworthy successors Howard Mummary, Sir Frank Colyer and W. Warwick James, disciples not only in scientific research and dental practice but also in the integrity they displayed in their lives.

Menzies Campbell's deep interest in dental history is known the world over, and his publications are constantly consulted by students of historical questions. The bequests of his collection of instruments to the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and of his books to the Royal College of Surgeons of England ensure the perpetuation of his name.

Obituary notices

Dr. J. Menzies Campbell

Brit.dent.J., 1974, 137, 108-110

Bull.Hist.Dent., 1974, 22, 71-82 (includes a bibliography)

J.roy.Coll.Surg.Edin., 1974, 19, 395

Oral Surg., 1974, 38, 708-709

Sir Zachary Cope

Ann.roy.Coll.Surg., 1975, 56, 276-277

Brit.dent.J., 1975, 138, 116

Brit.med.J., 1975, 1, 98-99

Lancet, 1975, 1, 115

The Museum

Recent Acquisitions

The B.D.J. dated August 5, 1975, contained one of the occasional acknowledgements of recent gifts to the Museum, published on behalf of the Library and Museum Committee. Members of the Lindsay Club might be interested to have further detail about some of these recent acquisitions.

Three of the donors in the present list have been very generous to the Museum over many years, namely, Mr. Graham Stewart, Mr. John Lee and Dr. C. Bowdler Henry. Mr. Stewart brought in a gold and vulcanite denture which provided an interesting illustration of the use of porcelain gum sections and a specimen of gold foil, in its original packing, made and distributed by one of the best known suppliers of precious metals to the German dental profession, the firm of Wohlrab, originally established in Bremen but later removed to Leipzig. As the Museum did not possess, among its large collection of instrument cabinets, a typical student's cabinet, Mr. Graham Stewart was asked last year if he could find one; this he was able to do and when he recently delivered it, it was found to contain many interesting instruments and appliances left there by its owner. The gifts from Mr. John Lee included a D.M.Co reservoir spittoon of a type that the Hon Curator has sought for some years, a suspension type engine, a hotplate for warming dental rubber (which has been included in the "denture base" exhibit) and a number of forceps and other instruments. Dr. Bowdler Henry's latest collection of gifts contained some very fine examples of technicians' craftsmanship and many items relating to oral surgery and orthodontics, all of which it is hoped to incorporate in the relevant displays. Dentures made of elephant ivory are rare, possibly because it was more expensive and more difficult to work than other forms of ivory and the Museum for many years has only possessed one specimen. It has now received another, given by Mr. T. Evans, a Senior Technician at University College Hospital.

A denture case received through a dentist from Mrs. H.P. Peto to a member of whose family it belonged, is chiefly of interest because it contains the name and practice address of a 19th century practitioner. Two hygienators, now out of fashion, were received from Mr. Sawyer and Mr. Pratt. A screw gag presented by Mr. E.R. Crerar was of a type new to the Collection and, so far, its inventor or designer has not been identified.

A dental advertisement from a Cornish newspaper bearing a date in 1910 was brought in by Mr. R.V. Tait. Mr. C.H.E. Tatham, who has also made a number of gifts to the Museum in the past, sent in an old box of sterules which has been included in one of the displays.

The most attractive gift which has been received in recent months, as far as appearance is concerned, has been a gold and enamel past president's badge of the Devon and Cornwall Branch of the Incorporated Dental Society, presented by Mrs. V. Gardner, to whose husband (for many years a prominent member of the Council of the I.D.S.) it belonged. Members of the Lindsay Club will remember the wooden dental chair (resembling Owen's chair in style) which came from the dental surgery installed in Buckingham Palace in the time of Edward VII and which the B.D.A. Museum has possessed for many years. A foot engine, from the same surgery, has recently been received as a gift from Mr. E.A. Dennison who retired some years ago from the post of Chief Technician at the Eastman Dental Hospital.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF DENTAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS,

1974 - 1975

I : GENERAL

BURNS, C.R. (1974) The evolution of professional ethics in American dentistry. Bull.Hist.Dent., 22, 59-70

DENTON, G.B. (1974) The writing of dental history. J.Amer.dent.Ass., 88, 1347-1354

HOFFMAN-AXTHELM, W. (1974) The writing of dental history: a commentary. J.Amer.dent.Ass., 88, 1355-1357

LEVINE, S. (1974) Early Australian dental literature - prior to 1900. Aust.dent.J., 19, 349-358

TESCIONE, P.A. (1974) Dentistry and postage stamps. Bull.Hist.Dent., 22, 83-91

WALTER, J.D. (1975) The problems facing the historical research worker. Brit.dent.J., 138, 401-403

II : PEOPLE AND PLACES

- COHEN, R.A. (1975) The chapel of St. Apolline, Guernsey.
Brit.dent.J., 138, 147-148
- HINE, M.K. (1974) The dental problems of Abraham Lincoln.
Bull.Hist.Dent., 22, 1-8
- LÖFGREN, A.B. (1974) Biographies and autobiographies of dentists. Bull.Hist.Dent., 22, 18-30
- McAULEY, J.E. (1974) Charles Valadier: a forgotten pioneer in the treatment of jaw injuries. Proc.roy.Soc.Med., 67, 785-789
- STINE, J.H. (1975) Rediscovery of a letter written by George Washington to his dentist John Greenwood.
J.Amer.dent.Ass., 90, 315

III : EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

- CHERRY, C., GIBBONS, M. and RONAYNE, J. (1974) The origins of the air-turbine handpiece. Brit.dent.J., 136, 469-472
- COHEN, R.A. (1975) Messers Wedgwood and porcelain dentures correspondence 1800 - 1815. I: De Chemant, Thomas Byerley and others, 1800 - 1812; II: Joseph Fox, Thomas Byerley and Robert Blake, 1810 - 1815. Brit.dent.J., 139, 27-31; 69-71
- DOMS, W.F. (1974) A short history of endodontics.
Bull.Hist.Dent., 22, 101-106
- GLENNER, R.A. (1974) Components of the dental unit.
J.Amer.dent.Ass., 89, 1012-1023
- GLENNER, R.A. (1975) 80 years of dental radiography.
J.Amer.dent.Ass., 90, 549-563
- MARRY, L.B. (1974) The bridge of Vaison-la-Romaine: a prosthesis of the Renaissance? Bull.Hist.Dent., 22, 9-17
- NIXON, G.S. (1975) Development of the dental chair.
Dent.Update, 2, 70-73
- WARD, G. (1974) Fauchard's palatal obturator. Brit.dent.J., 137, 287-288

The Dental History Unit of the Dental School, University of Birmingham

Lectures on the History of Dentistry were first given in the School by R.A. Cohen at the invitation of the late Professor A.B. McGregor in 1962. One lecture was given annually. The lecture was recognised and made official by the **Senate** of the University in 1965, the lecturer receiving the title of Honorary Part-time Lecturer in the History of Dentistry. In 1968 Mr. Cohen was invited to attend the School for two sessions per week to undertake research in the History of Dentistry, and in 1970 he was appointed Senior Research Fellow in Dental History. The Wellcome Trustees made available a generous grant, to be paid annually for three years. This was renewed in 1974 for a further period. He is currently engaged on the completion of a paper on Joseph Fox, the first dentist at Guy's Hospital, and the transcription of a large number of letters written by Charles Dumergue, who held the Royal Appointment during several reigns, to Matthew Boulton, the Birmingham industrialist. These letters, the property of the Birmingham Assay Office which was founded by Boulton, are at present deposited in the Birmingham Reference Library, which has kindly provided photocopies of the whole series.

G.H. Bennett Edwards was appointed an Honorary Research Associate in 1973, and from that date he has been working on an extended history of the Central Counties Branch of the British Dental Association.

Mrs. Christine Hillam was attached unofficially to the Unit in 1972. Her first task, completed in 1973, was the translation of three Latin theses:

1. A medical disputation on toothache. B.Kisselebach, Basle, 1660.
2. Dissertation on aphtha. J.A.Putman, Leyden, 1747.
3. Studies on the evolution of mammalian teeth. I.Raschkow, Breslau, 1835.

A small number of these translations have been duplicated and deposited in selected major libraries. They may be consulted in the library of the British Dental Association.

In 1974 Mrs. Hillam was appointed Part-time Research Associate supported by a grant from the Wellcome Trustees. For the Old Students' Day in April 1975 she organised a historical exhibit with the theme The Theories of Caries and Treatment up to the end of the 19th century, which created much interest. It consisted of portraits, manuscript material, diagrams, instruments and two tape-slide programmes. She has recently completed the indexing of the minute books of the Birmingham Dental Hospital in preparation for the publication of a complete history of the hospital, the oldest in the British Isles, and is currently engaged on final detailed biographical work for a study of the life and work of William Robertson, of Birmingham, together with the development of indexed files on historical subjects. William Robertson was the subject of a preliminary paper by R.A. Cohen given before the Lindsay Club on June 9th 1971.

The aims of the Unit are as follows:

1. Student instruction.
2. Preparation of historical material for members of staff.
3. Preservation and indexing of manuscript material.
4. Conservation of the Museum, which contains a particularly fine collection of carved ivory dentures.
5. Co-operation with the Librarian in the acquisition of rare books.
6. Publication of original historical papers.

At present three lectures are given annually:

1. From 1962 to Final Year students.
2. From 1969 to Post Graduate students taking the Diploma in Dental Health.
3. From 1970 to Second Year students.

Since 1962 the following papers by R.A.Cohen have been published from the Unit:

1. Notes on the identification, description and dating of ivory dentures. Brit. dent. J. 1962, 113, 257.
2. Documents concerning Dr. William Johnston, Physician of Warwick. Trans. Birm. Arch. Soc. 1962, 78, 55.
3. Rare books in the B.D.A. library. Brit. dent. J. 1965, 118, 280.
4. The development of dental histology in Britain. Brit. dent. J. 1966, 121, 59.
5. The study of dental history. (With J.A. Donaldson) Int. dent. J. 1967, 17, 134.
6. The Talma family. Brit. dent. J. 1969, 126, 319.
7. Lilian Lindsay 1871-1960. Brit. dent. J. 1971, 131, 121.
8. The Chapel of Saint Apolline, Guernsey. Proc. XXIII Int. Cong. Hist. Med. 1974, 2, 939. Reprinted in Brit. dent. J. 1975, 138, 147.
9. Messers Wedgwood and porcelain dentures, correspondence 1800-1815. Brit. dent. J. 1975, 139, 27 and 69.

LILIAN LINDSAY

Copies of the booklet, Lilian Lindsay 1871-1960, are still available. The booklet contains a biography of Dr. Lindsay by Mr. R.A. Cohen, a bibliography of her more important writings and a list of the honours and distinctions conferred upon her.

The Constitution of the Club and a list of members is appended, and papers presented at the meetings of the Club until 1972 are listed, with references to the periodical source for those that have been published.

Members and other interested in the booklet may obtain copies from the Librarian of the British Dental Association. Orders should be accompanied by a cheque for 40p, payable to the Lindsay Club.

RECENT MEETINGS OF THE LINDSAY CLUB

Since not all Members were able to attend the meetings addressed by Professor John Boyes and Dr. J.D. Walter, and these papers cannot be published in full as we should like, we are presenting them here as they appear in the Minutes of the Club.

The Meeting of 15th April 1974: Professor John Boyes on

The Brothers Nasmyth

Professor Boyes recounted the background of Robert and Alexander Nasmyth, tracing the ramifications of the two main branches of the family, both of which had descendents in Edinburgh, and either of which might have been the brothers' antecedents. Alexander was the fifth child of Charles and Anne Nasmyth and was born on 13th April 1789; Robert was their seventh child and was born on 7th November 1791.

Robert Nasmyth after attending Edinburgh High School was indentured as a pupil with John Barclay, surgeon and teacher of anatomy, and later studied dentistry with John Fuller in Hatton Garden, London. In 1811, returning to Edinburgh, he set up practice at 10 George Street and later at 21 St. Andrew's Square. He married Mary Lockhart and they had eleven children, of whom Robert followed his father as a surgeon and dentist, and after a few years in America set up practice in London at 41 Brook Street. In 1823 Robert Senior was admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and also became Dentist to George IV, to William IV in 1830, and to Queen Victoria in 1837. Robert Nasmyth had various publications to his credit, including a description of the splint known as Gunning's splint which he designed. He became President of the Odonto-Chirurgical Society of Scotland and was held in honour in his later years. He died on 12th May 1870.

Alexander Nasmyth was brought up by his father's brother and his wife, who were childless. The uncle was a paper-maker and stationer whose business collapsed in 1823; the nephew decided to train as a dentist under his brother Robert. He also studied under Audibran how to make porcelain teeth. In 1831 he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and in 1832 was elected a fellow of the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society of London. At some time in the intervening years Alexander had become a successful West End practitioner, qualified in surgery, using his leisure to investigate the minute structure of the teeth, and he read his paper on the enamel cuticle to the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society in 1837. His histological work led to a public dispute with Richard Owen over the priority of the research on dentine upon which both men were engaged. Prince Albert, interested in Alexander Nasmyth's work, appointed him as his dentist after his marriage to Queen Victoria, who in her turn chose him as dentist in 1844; thus both brothers had royal appointments simultaneously, the one in Scotland, the other in England. In 1846 Alexander had a stroke which paralysed him. Edwin Saunders took over his practice and Alexander and his wife Marion moved to their country house at Great Malvern where he died on 4th August 1848.

The Meeting of 2nd June 1975: Dr. J.D. Walter on

A Discussion of some historical Aspects of the Palatal Prosthesis

Dr. Walter explained that the term 'palatal prosthesis' was a generic term while 'obturator' refers to a form of palatal prosthesis although it is often loosely used as though synonymous with 'palatal prosthesis'. It is certain that the palatal prosthesis was not invented, devised or introduced by any 16th century writer; much earlier than this simple devices must have been fashioned to cover congenital palatal defects. In the 16th century a European epidemic of syphilis gave rise to a number of little handbooks on the disease which described obturators like Renner's leather one of 1557. Paré first mentioned an obturator for a palatal defect in 1561, but it is difficult to work out when he might have treated his first palatal defect. Translators of his book into Latin and English indicate that he saw palatal prostheses in use in the Transalpine War of 1537 but reference to Paré's original 1561 writing, and to his Collected Works for which Paré was directly responsible, do not mention this war at all, but only wars in general. Paré describes the simple sponge obturator and not the turn-buckle appliance, which suggests that the former may have been of practical use while the latter never left the design stage.

Snell asserts that Jacques Houllier in 1552 'proposes to stop the apertures with wax or sponge'. This would have been the earliest known published reference, but for once Snell is vague and inaccurate for in 1552 Houllier's only published work was *De Materia Chirurgica*, which makes no mention of the palatal obturator; this is described only in the posthumous 1611 edition edited by Houllier's pupils. Houllier evidently preferred surgical repair by suturing to using a prosthesis, but it is unclear from the Latin whether he describes his own technique or that of another surgeon.

Jacques Guillemeau in his book on surgery of 1594 illustrated Paré's turn-buckle prosthesis, giving the Latin and Greek names, which has given rise to the myth that the ancient Greeks knew of the obturator, now firmly embedded in the literature.

Peter Lowe, a Scottish contemporary of Guillemeau, mentions defects of the palate in his *Whole Art of Chirurgie* of 1597, but not a prosthetic appliance to remedy it.

In 1676, Richard Wiseman's *Eight Chirurgical Treatises* were published, the eighth which mentions the use of palatal prostheses and describes resinous plates which promoted healing of the ulcers and formed an artificial palate. His case histories mention plates retained by a sponge and a silver plate. Thus Wiseman introduced the concept of a plate to cover, rather than enter, the defect, preceding by 80 years Bourdet to whom this advance is usually attributed.

Pierre Fauchard's obturators are too well known to be mentioned in detail, but the dating of the design of his five palatal prostheses is difficult. The earliest mechanical obturator probably dates from 1720. The Spanish dentist Arroyo described Fauchard's second and fourth appliances without reference to their originator in his book of 1799.

In 1797 du Chemant, one of the French originators of mineral teeth for which he took out English and French patents, who practised in Soho, described the manufacture of a plate of mineral paste retained partly by ligatures and partly by its shape and his book carried a plate illustrating two obturators and a velum.

Du Bois Foucou (Jean Joseph du Bois), operator for the teeth to Louis XVI, presented a paper in 1801 on the use of prostheses for the soft palate, being wary of appliances which utilised the teeth for retention but favouring the use of the nasal floor and recommending gold and platinum as the only suitable materials, because silver oxidised, gum elastic gave an offensive odour, and sponge tended to enlarge the defect. Du Bois Foucou's soft palate appliance had a plate to cover the defect with extended zigzag arms to the clasp teeth, and he cited a case where the appliance had been worn for 21 years.

Snell used the principle of the elongated zigzag flexible connector by putting clasps at the end of a rigid bar traversing the palate with a zigzag connector from the centre of the bar carrying the obturating plate to the soft palate, and in one case he covered the metal obturator with wash-leather to prevent ulceration of the subjacent tissues.

The instrument maker John Weiss, who was Snell's contemporary, illustrated his own obturator which used a key to lock the metal plate into position, though it was admitted that it caused ulceration. Weiss then tried india rubber for a stud obturator, first from three sheets luted together, then one carved from a single piece of rubber, though these were evidently not successful.