



From small beginnings The History of Dentistry Research Group

Although the idea of a History of Dentistry Unit was first mooted by Dr H Noble in a paper in December 1984, it was not until January 1996 that the Group was formed following informal discussions initiated by Professor McGowan. An inaugural meeting of interested parties was held at the Post Graduate Dental Centre, Glasgow Dental Hospital and School on 10 January 1996.

Present were Prof. McGowan, Sir David Mason, Drs H Noble and R M Ross; R McKechnie and W Smith. It was agreed that Dr Noble be appointed Chairman and Dr Ross Secretary.

Members who have joined since are James Beaton, Librarian to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow and Dr H Marlborough, Librarian, University of Glasgow.

Aims and Objects of the Group

- The preservation and indexing of archival material associated with the founding and development of the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School (GDH & S).
- To undertake research designed to up-date the history of the GDH & S.
- To initiate historical research in all areas associated with dentistry in general and Glasgow and the West of Scotland in particular.
- To foster an appreciation of the importance of dental history by means of lectures, papers and publications.

Current and Future Activities

An important project undertaken by the Group is the publication of an up-date to the work of T Brown Henderson's History of the Dental Hospital and School 1879-1979. This has been compiled by Bill Smith and it is hoped that it will appear in print in the near future. The Group is in the process of compiling an Index of Archival material to be located at the dental branch library and in co-operation with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow, hopes to produce a list of books with dental titles held in the College library. This work is being undertaken by James Beaton. During the year a number of rare books have been acquired from the library of the late J Archie Donaldson OBE BA FDS LDSRCS and we would be interested in adding to the collection . A list of titles is available at the dental branch library.

In addition to his paper on student enrolments in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Dr Noble has completed researches into the life of William Dall, an innovative Glasgow practitioner who qualified LDS RFPs (G) in 1881 and pioneered new techniques in the production of porcelain inlays. It is hoped that a summary of the work will appear in the next newsletter.

For the information of dental historians and others interested in the history of dentistry with special reference to the West of Scotland, the location of archival material has been identified and located. In addition, a number of outstanding tasks have been undertaken, these include the cataloguing of instruments, equipment and artefacts. This work is still in progress.

The dental branch library holds a collection of rare books on dentistry, some dating from the early 19th century. Discussions are taking place as to the appropriate location for these as security at the dental branch cannot be guaranteed by the library authorities.

There are archival records pertaining to the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School at Ruchill Hospital and student records - pre 1947 at University archives. Since 1947 all student records have been located there.

Due to shortage of space the minutes of the Glasgow Odontological Society are being stored in the basement of the Dental Hospital. A collection of large group photographs has been catalogued and a collection of small photographs has been filed. These photographs are mainly of dental personnel who have been connected with the Hospital and School in some way. In addition student/staff yearbook photographs covering the period 1924-1995 have been catalogued and copies of these are located at Ruchill and the dental branch library. Unfortunately this series is incomplete.

Bob McKechnie is the archivist to the West of Scotland branch of the BDA and has access to the minutes covering the period 1919 to date. These could be made available for bonafide research on application to Bob.

Carol Parry, archivist, library of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow, has produced a comprehensive list of archives and artefacts pertaining to dentistry presently located in the library of the College. It is hoped to produce a summary in the next issue of the newsletter.

The Group is considering a number of possible forums to focus attention on the importance of dental history and it is hoped to have further information in our next issue.

For further information on any items contained in the Newsletter contact either Dr H Noble or Dr R M Ross at the University of Glasgow Dental Hospital and School, 378 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3JZ.