



REMINISCENCES T Neil Rose OBE LDS FDS *

Tom was born on 15th July 1905 in Murrayfield, Edinburgh. His father was a dental surgeon who having served as a locum in Airdrie set up his own practice in that town. Tom's training in what was then known as Dental Mechanics was by indentured apprenticeship in the laboratory of a dental practice. This was a popular method, although the Glasgow Dental Hospital was offering courses in that subject, with the proviso that half the number of hours spent in 'Mechanics' training could be taken there. Those who had served their apprenticeships in practice laboratories were considered to have obtained a superior training and this was reflected in the more difficult exercises set for these candidates.

After qualifying LDS RFPS(G) in 1931 he took up the appointment of House Surgeon along with another future staff member, M N McAlpine, the latter became known to students throughout the 1940s as 'Mum' from his characteristic signature used in signing off students' work. In conjunction with his Housemanship, Tom entered his father's practice in Airdrie and although he had initially rejected an offer of a full time position in the Hospital, he accepted the post of Clinical Tutor in the Extraction department in 1942.

Tom was contemporary with another popular figure in the Extractions department -the late 'Johnny' Orr, and he remembers that both of them entertained a Dr Posner an exodontist from the USA who advocated the use of very stout needles for dental injections. He maintained that the ophthalmic needles then in common use were the cause of the many cases of broken needles.

Tom remembers the early days in the use of Penicillin for the treatment of AUG. It first became available as a liquid which patients held in their mouths for a short period. Later there were attempts to incorporate the drug into a paste to be applied to the affected area.

During his twenty five years as Tutor in Extractions to hundreds of students, Tom was also active in the dento-political sphere and served on a variety of committees concerned with the introduction of the NHS. Subsequently he worked tirelessly to ensure that the imbalance in benefits between Scottish practitioners and their English colleagues was redressed, particularly in the General Dental Services. He championed the health service needs of the Highlands and Islands and subsequently chaired a conference at which a series of recommendations were adopted with a view to improving the NHS service to these scattered communities.

TOM was an active campaigner for Dental Health Education in the early days of the NHS with emphasis on the preventive aspect, an activity in which Glasgow and the West of Scotland was notoriously lacking. His expertise was in evidence when he was involved in consultations on the Health Centres in the new towns of East Kilbride.

T Neil Rose's services to the dental profession were suitably acknowledged by the award in the Birthday Honours List of 1964 of the Order of the British Empire and in 1967 the dental profession recognised his outstanding achievements by the award of a Fellowship in Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

*As told to Bob McKechnie and Dr H Noble.