



## **Glasgow's Dental Hospital - Development and Management \*** **Robert McKechnie \*\***

PRIOR to 1878 only the Royal College of Surgeons of England granted a diploma in Dental Surgery, and only a very few dentists held the qualification. The Dentists Act of 1878 gave authority to the Royal Colleges of Edinburgh and Dublin and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow to institute examinations and grant diplomas. In Glasgow, the Faculty agreed immediately to implement the Act and in November 1878 they appointed a Board of Examiners.

When the first examinations were held, there were four successful candidates, W. S. Woodburn of Glasgow, E. Melrose of Bolton, P. Gorrie of Dundee and T. J. Mulloy of Stockport and it was now clear that a dental school was necessary in Glasgow so that those wishing to enter the profession should be able to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Consequently the Anderson College, an educational institution, set up a dental department and courses of instruction were started. These lectures had to be complemented by facilities for clinical instruction and training. This was realised by the managers of the College and on 10 November 1879, they set aside rooms within the College with six specially designed operating chairs for this purpose, the first course of lectures had already been held over the Summer term starting on the 6 May. So we can say that Glasgow Dental Hospital was started on 6 May 1879 with the course of lectures. The Dental School in Edinburgh was inaugurated on 30 October 1879, so it can be claimed that Glasgow is Scotland's oldest dental school.

Many of the students were already in practice, so they enrolled to take the lectures and whenever they felt able, they sat the examination. One of the conditions prior to taking the examination was that the candidate had to have been engaged in acquiring professional knowledge including at least three years gaining practical experience with a practitioner registered under the Act. In 1884 the whole future of the School became doubtful when the College Managers decided that the rooms housing the Dental School were needed urgently and it looked for a time that all that had been gained would be lost.

But an urgent meeting of dentists on 25 January 1885 with Mr Woodburn in the chair passed a motion proposed by Mr Brownlie that a Dental School should be set up in Glasgow without delay, that it should be supported by annual subscriptions and that subscribers should be able to send suitable cases to the Hospital. The proposal was adopted enthusiastically and a committee was set up to carry the matter forward.

Premises were acquired at 56 George Street and on 22 April 1885 the first meeting of the managers of the Glasgow Dental Hospital took place in the new premises, close by Anderson College. Advertisements were placed in the

Glasgow Herald for staff appointments; four lecturers, six dental surgeons, six assistants and one house surgeon. The Hospital was now open in the evenings, hitherto patients were only seen in the mornings and immediately attendances increased. Payment of staff was a regular item on the agenda of meetings of the Managers and it was agreed that no payment should be made at present.

Annual meetings of the subscribers were usually chaired by the Lord Provost and at the first such meeting he expressed surprise that so many people in Glasgow were troubled with diseased teeth. Four thousand had attended in the first year and all had their treatment free of charge. In February 1890 the lease ran out and the Hospital moved again, this time to Chatham Place, a less central situation off the Stirling Road.

At the fourth Annual General meeting in January 1889, the Lord Provost, Sir James King regretted that such an important institution should be able to raise less than £100 in subscriptions. He added that the Royal Infirmary already over 100 years old was also having financial difficulties - both were crippled by lack of funds.

At the Annual General Meeting in 1894, the Chairman, Sir James King announced that attendances had increased and there had been an improvement in finances. He referred to a newly opened dental hospital in London and it was felt that something similar was necessary in Glasgow. A reserve fund was to be opened and it was estimated that approximately £3,000 would be required. A search would begin for a suitable site. However, it was decided in the interim to lease the top floor of a building in St. Vincent Street, just off George Square at a rent of £70 per year. At a cost of £45 the 'new' electric light was installed.

In December 1897, the Dental Hospital was recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons, England as an approved place of learning. By now, the Hospital was well established with an attendance of around 7,000 a year, but the property was in a poor state of repair due to lack of funds. At one point one of the floors was in danger of collapsing and needed an urgent repair, so it was agreed at a meeting in February 1899 that on expiry of the present lease an attempt would be made to secure a permanent home. In December of that year a new constitution was introduced and the word 'School' was officially added to the title.

In March of the following year (1900) Mr Brownlie was appointed Dean and the Secretary, Mr Alexander had his remuneration increased from 25 to 40 guineas per year. The number of enrolled students was now 26 and it was reported that several grants had been received. In February 1903, it was announced that premises at the corner of Dalhousie and Renfrew Street had been acquired from a Dr Lothian. The purchase price was £1,225 plus various estimates for alterations amounting to £799 16s 9d. It was said that the operating room on the upper flat, would be one of the finest in the U.K. containing 40 chairs, each with a special pendant light and a startling innovation, the 'Corporation' telephone would be installed.

At the Annual meeting of subscribers on 16 January 1904, it was reported that the Hospital was now in operation at Dalhousie Street and that as the Hospital now owned heritable property, it was deemed advisable to become incorporated under the Companies Act. It was now 'an institution existing for philanthropic and educational purposes.' It was reported that the janitor's salary had been increased to £1 per week.

Incorporation was achieved on 23 September 1904, the Management Committee being superseded by a Board of Governors. The number of students had increased to 42 with 18 new enrolments during the year. A number of internal administrative changes were made which resulted in the staff having a greater say in the running of the Hospital. A Dental Committee was set up which would consult on and supervise all matters connected with the practical working of the Hospital and School and report the same to the Governors. The Dean who would preside was also required to submit a monthly report on the work done at the Hospital, including the attendance of patients and staff. However the greatest concern was financial, income just covered expenditure.

When Mr Brownlie, the Dean, resigned due to ill health, it was resolved that the new Dean should be appointed for a fixed term of office with powers to re-appoint. It was also agreed that the Dean should be required to attend the hospital on an appointed day, once a week. The First World War had a serious impact on the Hospital. Many of the Staff including the Dean went off on active service and the attendances dropped steadily, from 17,260 in 1914 to 6,607 attendances in 1918. But with the end of the war student numbers increased dramatically from only 18 in 1917 to 163 in 1921, as a result afternoon sessions were introduced from 3pm to 5pm. Visiting surgeons were still unpaid but a further break with the past was the decision to award an honorarium to visiting surgeons of £50.

In 1923, a new mechanical laboratory was opened and a full time tutor appointed at a salary of £300 per annum. By 1924 it was clear that the increased numbers of both students and patients necessitated further expansion and the Governors approached the Dental Board of the United Kingdom for help. The Board agreed to make a grant of £5,000 towards the cost of a new Hospital and so the search for a new site was on once again. In 1924, the Dean, R. S. Grant resigned and was replaced by Dr J. Forbes Webster who was to hold the post for the next 24 years. Meantime a new site had been found just a short distance along Renfrew Street from Dalhousie Street and in the following year plans for a new building were approved at an estimated cost of £45,000, a truly huge sum.

Although the Dental Board had increased its contribution to £8,000, there was still a large deficit and efforts to raise funds were disappointing, nevertheless construction by Melville, Dundas and Whitson went ahead and the new building was opened on 31 May 1932 by Sir Ian Colquhoun. An appeal was immediately opened for the £27,000 still outstanding but after two years only £5,000 had been collected. The Governors were reluctant to take out a bond to pay the builders, but were forced to accede after the Secretary had resigned in protest. It was also decided to appoint a full time Dean to which the Dental Board agreed subject to certain provisos. The Dean should retire at 65, the salary should be a minimum of

£100 of which the Board would contribute £500 for 5 years and that there should be an almoner's department to ensure that dental treatment was restricted to necessitous persons.

On 1 April 1936, Dr J. Forbes Webster was appointed Dean at a salary of £1,250 per annum and the institution officially became the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School. It was hoped that under the revised Articles of Association closer links would be established with the University leading to amalgamation.

There were provisions for the appointment of a representative to the Board of Governors from the University as well as from the Faculty of Procurators and the Institute of Accountants and Actuaries. The new mechanical laboratory was now in use and on 1 October 1937, Dr W. Malcolm Gibson was appointed to the new post of Lecturer in Dental Prosthetics and Mechanics. The Board contributed £250 towards his salary which, it was stipulated should not be less than £600 per annum. In the following year the outstanding debt of £3,000 was finally paid but the Hospital's financial worries were not over as the Dental Board which was contributing towards the salary of both the Dean and the Lecturer in Prosthetics became concerned that the treatment being provided was not under the control of an efficient almoner's department. This was rectified when the Governors obtained the services of the City of Glasgow Society of Social Service at a cost of 50 guineas a year.

Dr Webster was now approaching 65 and a successor had to be appointed. In the meantime discussions had been taking place with the University on possible affiliation and considerable progress had been made, so much so that Sir Hector Hetherington, the Principal, was asked to advise on the appointment. It was at his suggestion that in view of the likely affiliation, the appointment should be delayed until this occurred and Dr Webster should continue as Dean until 30th September 1947. These negotiations were now completed and the next day - 1 October 1947, the Dental Hospital became part of the medical faculty and James Aitchison took office.

With the establishment of the National Health Service in July 1948, the Hospital and School came under State control supervised by a Board appointed by the Western Region Hospital Board.

The Hospital's role now changed fundamentally; for the first time it became a reference centre, providing specialist dental services for the whole of the West of Scotland. To meet the increased demand, the staff was increased, many being full time posts and for the first time in its history finances were now stabilised.

Dental staff were graded on an equal basis with medical staff and the appointments and salaries of consultants were made by a Board of Management appointed by the Western Regional Hospital Board. The personnel of the latter were appointed by and responsible to the Secretary of State for Scotland. But as the staff and the workload increased it rapidly became clear that once again the accommodation was insufficient and in 1955 the Board of Management persuaded the Regional Hospital Board and the Secretary of State to purchase an adjoining tenement building and a villa whose grounds faced on to Sauchiehall Street. Plans were drawn up in 1958 but work did not start until the autumn of 1966.

Professor Aitchison having retired in 1964, was succeeded by Professor T. C. White. The new building which now dwarfed the old was officially opened by HRH the Duchess of Kent in December 1970. Meanwhile the reorganisation of the NHS was taking place and in April 1974 a new structure was set up which abolished the Regional Hospital Boards and replaced them with 15 Health Boards, the Hospital becoming part of the Eastern District of the Greater Glasgow Health Board (GGHB). The Eastern District was managed by an executive group whose dental representatives were Dugald Campbell (the District Dental Officer) and Dean T. C. White. In addition the Health Board had dental representatives, the Chief Administrative Dental Officer (CADO) and T. B Henderson, a respected dental practitioner and a member of the former Board of Management. In 1986 another change took place when Mr Lawrence Peterkin was appointed General Manager of the GGHB.

A small executive group was formed which ran the Hospital for the next 5 years, comprising two staff representatives, a finance officer from the Board, the Dean and the Hospital Administrator. The group was chaired by the CADO who was made manager of the Dental Hospital. The Districts had now been replaced by Trusts, the providers of health care while the Health Boards would be purchasers. The Dental Hospital, did not fit into the usual pattern, it had been set up to train students and treat the necessitous poor, additionally it had become a regional reference centre providing specialist services for the West of Scotland. It had no direct competition, nevertheless it had to fit into the overall NHS management structure. Consequently, this was accomplished with the appointment of Dr Doreen Steele, the Hospital's first professional manager.

The Hospital became a free standing trust, the Secretary of State appointing Sir James Armour as Chairman and Sir David Mason as Vice Chairman. There is no doubt that the future of the Hospital is assured with the number of referrals increasing and more well qualified students applying than can be taken. However, there is a doubt about the future of Health Boards and Trusts, either level of management could be lost and decisions on this will be made soon.

Perhaps the most important consideration in arriving at a decision will be cost, would it be cheaper to manage the Dental Hospital on its own or merge it with another Trust? In 1884 the total running cost of the Hospital was £28. In 1894 it was £230. Even up until the first World War it was still under £1,000. Of course it is not possible to compare costs pre-1914 with those of today but in 1996 the annual running cost was £9.5 million, whilst the cost of the Trust Board, Management and Administration amounted to £1,552,000 or 16% of the total. Can a small hospital afford this? Dental education and specialist treatment are costly and the buildings and their equipment are expensive and deserve the very best management. Dental Hospitals like General hospitals before them were set up to provide free treatment for the poor and to train dental students. Today once again we hear that dental treatment within the NHS is becoming difficult to find, the alternative is expensive for many people and one wonders if Parliament may once again, as it did in 1878 feel impelled to intervene.

Dentistry has come a long way over the past hundred years and to quote Menzies Campbell it has come from a 'trade to a profession'. Much of the credit for this transformation must go to the dental hospitals and those who have worked in them. It's hard to see such a radical change over the next hundred years, but there will still be a major role for our dental hospitals to play in the future of the dental profession.

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\*An abridged version of the 16th Menzies Campbell Lecture given on 7 October 1997.

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