



Newsletter, April 2000

News Update

The Group continues to attract new members and at the last meeting the Chairman welcomed Edna Robertson, formerly columnist with the *Herald*, Stewart Taylor retired lecturer, Department of Orthodontics, and Pat Lilly, Instructor in Dental Technology in the Prosthodontics Department of the GDH & S. The increasing attendances required a change in venue - a reflection of the growing interest in the roots of our profession.

The most popular features appear to be reminiscences and biographies. The Adam Cubie article describes the significant contributions by a former member of staff and it is hoped to publish similar papers in the future.

The Group has received the 1999 Report of the Greater Glasgow Health Board Archive, a mine of information for anyone interested in medical and dental history. Karl Magee, Group member is the Board Archivist and he has arranged access to the GGHB Archives housed in the Mitchell Library on Thursdays 9.30 to 4.45pm and on Fridays 9.30 to 4.30pm. Access can also be obtained at other times by appointment with the GGHB archivist. As well as an on-line search facility, questions can be addressed to the Archivist at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/gghb/> or e-mail: k.magee@archives.gla.ac.uk

The secretary has received a most interesting off-print from Professor M Kaufman, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Edinburgh University Medical School. The historical review deals with one of the most remarkable operations carried out in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh during the early decades of the 19th century. This was the surgical excision of an enormous tumour believed to be an osteosarcoma of the lower jaw of Robert Penman, producing severe disfigurement of his face. James Syme then in his late twenties, was invited to see the patient by Professor Ballingall and Dr John Abercrombie and in July 1828 he operated without the benefit of anaesthesia to completely remove the tumour.

The patient not only survived the operation but also remained in excellent health for many years afterwards. He emigrated to the United States but occasionally returned home to Scotland. In 1855. Lord Lister who noted that his "deformity" had been wonderfully masked by a bushy beard saw him. The case is re-evaluated in the light of information from the archives of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and from contemporary and more recent records.

A copy of the complete article can be obtained from the secretary.

From the Minutes

Arising out of the Treasurer's report, for the benefit of new members Professor McGowan explained the original financial basis on which the Group had been set up. He commented on the fact that there was no on-going income to finance a rapidly growing number of Group members. The principal expenses being the cost of the business meeting lunches and the twice yearly newsletter. Other funds, including those now under the control of the Treasurer had strictly prescribed uses and could not be used for any other purpose. The same constraints applied to the Dorothy Geddes Donation. It was agreed that the financial situation would be discussed at the next meeting in April.

It was unanimously agreed that the dental exhibition " A Walk Through Time" had been most successful and the Chairman thanked Professor Moos for all his efforts in co-ordinating the exhibition. He in turn congratulated the secretary, chairman and all who contributed for the fruits of their research. The display panels have been reduced in size and will be used for possible displays at the Dental Hospital or at future exhibitions.

Professor Moos will deliver the "Lilian Lindsay Memorial Lecture" at the Lindsay Society for the History of Dentistry meeting at the national Exhibition Centre. Birmingham as part of the BDA Conference – "Dentistry 2000" taking place at on 6th, 7th and 8th April. The Group will also have a stand where the abovementioned panels will be on display.

An interesting piece of dental history came to light during a talk given to the Senior section of the BDA by Professor A A Duncan, formerly head of the Scottish History Department at the University of Glasgow. It appears that a seal attributed to William Wallace was discovered at the Mitchell Library and that a Maryhill dental mechanic cum dentist was involved in using the seal to make a positive die. New member of the Group Pat Lilly will cooperate with Dr Noble in investigating the matter. Watch this space!

The secretary would be pleased to hear from retired general dental practitioners, hospital personnel and other members of staff who would like to contribute to *Reminiscences*. The Group would also welcome any old photographs associated with dentistry, practice accounts, records or other documents of a dental nature associated with the history of dentistry in general, and the West of Scotland and Glasgow in particular. Old dental books but not text books unless earlier than 1921 would also be welcomed. Contact Dr Noble or Dr Ross at Research Fellows Room, Floor 4, University of Glasgow Dental Hospital and School, 378 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3JZ.
