



Newsletter, October 2000

News Update Latest Group Activities

As a consequence of the cessation of funding by the University, the Group decided to approach the recipients of the newsletter asking if they would be willing to subscribe £10 as an annual subscription. The Treasurer was pleased to report at the last meeting that there had been a favourable response with 38 subscriptions received. This income will fund the biannual newsletter and defray the cost of the working lunches – sandwiches and coffee.

It was emphasised by the chairman that the meetings are open to all interested in dental history – and it would appear that this interest is growing as attendances continue to increase. It is hoped that the group will arrange an open meeting in the near future with a dental historical theme to be addressed by one or two speakers.

Our intrepid interviewers, Bob McKechnie and Dr Henry Noble have again been persuading retired dentists to record their reminiscences. Their latest subject, [Rankine Crerar](#) features in this issue. Rankine's vivid images of general practice in the 1950s highlights the dramatic changes in dental practice in the last fifty years. The reminiscences of Charles Downie who sadly passed away recently will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

The paper delivered by Professor Moos on *The History of Orthognathic Surgery* at the BDA Conference – "Dentistry 2000" at Birmingham in April has been published in full in the *Dental Historian* issue of May 2000. An abridged version by Professor Moos appears in this [issue](#).

The HDRG web site has undergone a transformation as well as a relocation. It can now be accessed at: <http://www.rcpsglasg.ac.uk/hdrg/home.htm>

Carol Parry, Archivist at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Glasgow has undertaken to act as webmistress and new material including the newsletter should now be available on screen. It is hoped that a hyperlink from the GDH & S web pages will also enable the site to be accessed.

The Alumnus Society Annual Symposium to be held on 3rd November 2000 in the Royal Scottish Automobile Club will feature a Tea and Trade exhibition at which the Group will have a table and display panels relating to dental history on show.

Our Group members continue to be popular as speakers and at the recent Lindsay Society Autumn Conference held at Norwich, Professor W J S Kerr delivered a paper – *The Rise and Fall of the Removable Appliance*. It is hoped that a condensed version will appear in a future issue of the newsletter.

One of the encouraging signs stemming from the formation of the Group has been the emergence of retired dentists venturing into the field of research in dental history. At the recent meeting of the Group, Stuart Taylor, formerly of the orthodontic department at the GDH & S, informed the meeting that he was hoping to research the Transactions of the British Society for the Study of Orthodontics. As there are some thirty volumes, he should have plenty of material to work on.

Encouraging research by dentists and associated health care workers is one of the aims of the Group. There are many interesting fields remaining unexplored. For example, the impact of dental manufacturing companies and depots on the burgeoning profession. In this area there is ample material in the illustrated dental company catalogues dating from the late 19th century. Another worthwhile project might be the role of the chemists practising dentistry as revealed by the Dentists Register of 1879, where 125 were identified in Scotland. Although the 1921 Register no longer specifies this category, many chemists were still allowed to extract teeth albeit with restrictions. The subject of remuneration of dentists over the last century would also lend itself to an interesting research project. So, come on you researchers, Get cracking!

The Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland will celebrate its centenary in 2002 with the production of a history of the Union. Dental contributions are being made by the chairman and secretary of the HDRG. As the account will cover the 1930s, '40s and '50s, a great deal of hitherto unexplored and unpublished material relating to dentistry in this period should be unearthed.

The influence of the Group has extended to Arizona, USA where Ms Adler BSc, MA (McGill Univ.) has been in contact with one of our members, Dr M Watt. Dr Watt on behalf of Ms Adler has applied for funding from the Menzies Campbell Bequest to defray the cost of research into medieval dentitions present in excavations at Whithorn, South West Scotland. The Group agreed to the request in principle pending further details.
