



Newsletter, April 2001

New Horizons

By Henry W. Noble, chairman, History of Dentistry Research Group

The gradual acceptance of a new millennium has encouraged most of us to realise that the greater parts of our lives have been spent in a previous century. This has implications for our perception of what we consider to be historical. We were in the habit of commonly applying the term "historical" to some fact or occurrence which pre-dated at least the Second World War or even the previous turn of the century in 1900. This historical horizon has suddenly moved forward and occurrences as little as 20 or 30 years ago now belong beyond this horizon in a previous century.

This can lead to a sharpened appreciation of events which we have personally experienced and the realisation that the onus lies upon us to ensure that future generations understand what we have learned by experience.

We have lived through great changes in the delivery of dental care, in the development and assessment of dental education, in the understanding of dental disease and the biochemical and mechanical means by which it can be influenced and in the future outlook for our profession.

While many of these changes are factually recorded in Acts of Parliament, in research reports and textbooks, the real impact of the change upon the lives and practice of members of the dental profession will remain unknown unless those who experienced the event put pen to paper and help us to understand what really happened to them.

It may be some technique or way of working. It may be some personality who influenced a career. It may be some difficulty or problem which was overcome or remained unsolved. Your experiences in the twentieth century will now be just over the historical horizon to those entering the profession in this new millennium.

Your experience can be valuable; don't let it disappear.
