



The Caldwell Memorial Lectures

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The death, in July 1972, of Robert Craig Caldwell was an event that brought sorrow to all his many friends and colleagues. The passing of this kindly, charismatic gentle man, at the early age of 42, and still to reach the apex of an already distinguished career was felt deeply by all who had had the privilege of knowing him.

Bob was born in the U.S.A. in 1928. He came, as a young child with his parents, to Millport, Cumbrae, where I first met him and began what was to be a great friendship. Later we both attended Rothesay Academy on the Island of Bute, where our friendship continued.

Even as a youth Bob's special qualities were in evidence. I recall boarding a steamer on a dreary November day to return home to Millport for the weekend. A cold rain was falling on a lead-coloured sea. It was 7.30am and I felt that even my lonely "digs" were preferable to the present situation. I left the deck and descended to the passenger lounge where I encountered Bob. He looked up from the book he was reading. It was the wonderful Pulitzer Prize winning novel "The Yearling" by Marjorie Kinning Rawlings. "Listen" he said, smiling at me, there is a bit in this book describing spring. "Listen!" He proceeded to read to me from the appropriate chapter. Such was the magic of the writing and Bob's infectious joy, that I did suddenly feel the world to be a brighter warmer place. Bob never lost that perceptive sense of wonder and enthusiasm.



Fig 1 Cover of commemorative issue of "Mentalis" the UCLA Dental School Magazine

In 1950, Bob qualified with an LDS from the Glasgow Dental Hospital and school. In 1951 as a house officer in the same institution he was awarded the HDD Glasgow. From 1951 to 1953 he served as Flight Lieutenant in the Dental Branch of the Royal Air Force. In 1953 he received a Fulbright Award and returned to the land of his birth to further his postgraduate education. He obtained an MS in Rochester N.Y. This was followed by his DMD and his appointment as Associate Dean and Chairman of Oral Biology. In 1963 he moved to an appointment as Director of Dental Research in the University of Alabama, where in 1964, he was awarded a PhD for his thesis; "The Glycoproteins of Human Submaxillary Secretion". Bob's last post, which sadly he was to hold for only two years, was that of Dean of the Dental School of the University of California LA (Fig1).

Bob Caldwell returned to Scotland in 1970, a short visit to attend a re-union of the graduates of the year of 1950. At that time he was aware that he was suffering from chronic myelogenous leukaemia. He enjoyed the celebration immensely, relating how grand it had been to meet once more with so many friends and colleagues. Tom Brown Henderson in his history of Glasgow Dental Hospital and School, reported that following Bob's death in 1972, those same contemporaries and colleagues contributed spontaneously to endow an annual Caldwell Memorial Lecture. It is appropriate that the first Caldwell Memorial Lecture was given by Dr Basil Bibby of the Eastman Dental Centre, Rochester, New York, as he was Bob's mentor during his early postgraduate period in the USA. I recall Bob telling me that he was inspired to pursue a career in dental research by Dr Bibby's infectious enthusiasm. Since 1975 this has become an outstanding occasion in the calendar of Bob's Alma Mater. A list of the lecturers, all of them most distinguished members of the dental profession on both sides of the Atlantic, follows this article.

From August 30th until September 1st 1979, the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School celebrated its Centenary. Included in the programme of events was an excellent Caldwell Memorial Lecture delivered by Professor Bert Cohen, Nuffield Research Professor of Dental Science at the Royal College of Surgeons, London, entitled: "Dental Disease in Retrospect and Prospect". The interest shown by all who attended the Centenary Celebration culminated in the foundation of the Glasgow Dental Alumnus Association. This association was mainly concerned with the provision and extension of postgraduate education and as such would have had Bob's warm approval. During that first foundation meeting, it was decided that the Caldwell Memorial Lecture would become an integral part of the Alumnus Society's Annual Symposium (Study Day). Since that time, now over two decades ago, the growth, development and provision of postgraduate dental education in the West of Scotland has been considerable and is continually increasing.

In February of this year Dr J S Rennie, Dean for Postgraduate Dental Education (Scotland) addressed the Senior Members Group of the BDA West of Scotland Branch. In an excellent and informative talk entitled: "The Action Plan for improving oral health and modernizing NHS Dentistry in Scotland – Educational implications". Jim outlined the plans for a vast increase in the facilities for Postgraduate Dental Education including the availability of impressive multi-million pound funding.

The amount of excellent provision, both statutory and voluntary available at this time to dentists in Scotland, who want to increase their post qualification knowledge, is considerable and this has had an effect on the Alumnus Association and the Glasgow Odontological Society. Both of those institutions have, to date, provided a programme of informative and educational lectures, delivered by eminent members of the medical and dental professions. Now much of this educational information is available from other sources.

The Annual Symposium (Study Day 2004) of the Alumnus Society was a very successful event and included a superb Caldwell Memorial lecture delivered by Professor the Lord Ian McColl of Dulwich. Despite the quality of the programme the event was poorly supported, with only sixty-seven delegates attending. The Society's highly efficient and hard working Hon. Secretary, Dr Alan Caplan has expressed concern about the future role of the Association and this raises questions about the Caldwell Lecture. Since its inception, senior

colleagues at the top of their profession have delivered a total of twenty-eight excellent lectures. One would hope that this would continue, but to invite such distinguished speakers requires an adequate audience and the trend would seem otherwise. It is not essential that the memorial to Bob Caldwell must be a lecture and other means whereby his memory is perpetuated are being considered. What is certain is that the name of one of our most distinguished alumni will not be forgotten. Meanwhile I am honoured to offer this tribute to a great friend.

I extend my sincere thanks to Professor Sir David Mason, Dr Alan Caplan and Ms Beverley Rankin for their help in producing this article.

CALDWELL MEMORIAL LECTURERS 1975-2004

1. Dr Basil Bibby, Eastman Dental Center, NY USA "Food & Dental Caries"
2. Prof. John Waterhouse, University of Chicago, USA "The Function of Oral Tissues in Health & Disease"
3. Dean Charles, 'Scottie', McCallum University of Alabama, USA "Current Trends in Dental Education in the USA"
4. Prof. Ivor Kramer, Eastman Dental Hospital, London "The Truth is what I believe today"
5. Prof. Bert Cohen, Dept of Dental Science, RCS, London "Dental Disease in Retrospect and Prospect"
6. Prof. Rod Cawson, Guy's Hospital, London "Immunological Aspects of Oral Disease"
7. Prof. George Nixon, Manchester "Has Dr Black become Redundant?"
8. Mr Iain McGregor, Glasgow "Some recent Advances in the Surgical Treatment of Oral Malignancies"
9. Prof. David Mason, Glasgow "The Hunter Brothers"
10. Dr Bill McHugh, Eastman Dental Center, NY, USA "The Future of Dentistry"
11. Dr John McLean, London "Glass Ionomers"
12. Prof. Jens Pindborg, Copenhagen "Oral Manifestations on Patients Infected with Human I D Disease"
13. Prof. Alan Grant, Manchester "New Horizons in Dental Practice"
14. Prof. N. 'Monty' Oliver, Liverpool "Steps on a Journey in Pursuit of Wisdom"
15. Dr David Barmes, W H O, Geneva "A Global View"
16. Prof. Derrick Chisholm, Dundee "Salivary Glands Revisited"
17. Prof. George Nixon, Retired "The Old Order Changeth"
18. Mr Kevin Lewis, Dental Protection, London "The Future of Dental Practice"
19. Prof David McGowan, Glasgow "Bridging the Gap"
20. Prof. Bill Binnie Dallas, USA "Aids – the North American Experience"
21. Dr Henry Noble, Glasgow "Dental Genesis"
22. Dr Stewart Blair, BDA, London "A Visit to my Favourite Local"
23. Dr Jim Ralph, Leeds "Challenge and Responsibility"
24. (1999 No Meeting)
25. Prof. Wallace McFarlane, Glasgow "Glasgow Dental School – 2000 and Beyond"
26. Prof. Anthony Busuttil, Edinburgh "The Lockerbie Disaster"

27. Prof. Crispian Scully, Eastman Dental Hospital, London “Dentistry Adapting to a Rapidly Changing World”
28. Prof. Bill Saunders, Dundee “Restoration of the Root Filled Tooth”
29. Prof. Lord Ian McColl of Dulwich, London “Mercy Ships International”

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