



Display Cabinet in Memory of Dr Henry Noble FDS RCPSG

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Items from the historical instrument collection of the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School are now on display in Crush Hall in a wall display case donated by the family of Dr Henry Noble. Dr Noble taught Dental Anatomy and Histology at Glasgow University for 36 years and served the College for many years as examiner and organiser of the Primary Fellowship examinations at home and abroad. Having a great interest in dental history, he was the founder of the History of Dentistry Research Group (now named the Henry Noble History of Dentistry Research Group) and was awarded the Tomes Medal in 2003 in recognition of his work in the history of dentistry. Dr Noble spent many hours cataloguing and numbering the historical instrument collection at the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School, the smaller items of which have now been transferred for safe keeping to the College. It is very fitting, therefore, that a case displaying some of the items should be gifted in his memory. (Figure 1)

The items within the case include an array of toothkeys, most with wooden handles but one with an ivory handle. These were used for extraction and date from the 19th century. A 19th century brass syringe is displayed beside a dental anaesthetic syringe from the 20th century to provide a comparison. Beneath these are 19th century dentures made from hippopotamus ivory, the anterior teeth of the lower denture being made from porcelain. The central part of the case contains scaling instruments with ivory handles pre 1850 and 19th century elevators with wooden handles. Wood and ivory disappeared from instrumentation during the late 19th century as a consequence of aseptic surgical techniques. From this period instruments were made entirely from metal which enabled them to be sterilised. The right-hand side of the case contains a variety of items used in dental surgeries during the first half of the 20th century. Of local interest is a box of lint from Glasgow Apothecaries' Hall in Virginia Street, Glasgow. Lint was used for the administration of ether anaesthesia until the 1950's. Ether was dropped onto the lint over an open mask.



Historical dental instruments displayed in the Crush Hall,
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