



**Archives and Artefacts Relating to the History of Dentistry
at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.
Carol Parry ***

The founder of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (as it was then termed), Peter Lowe, wrote about the teeth and illustrated eight types of dental instruments in the second edition of his work *The Whole Art of Chyrurgerie* published in 1612. Recognition of any formal qualification in dentistry was not achieved in Scotland however until passing of the Dentists Act in 1878 when both the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow were empowered to grant licentiateships in dental surgery.

On 19th January 1879 the Glasgow Faculty elected a 'Dental Board' and the first candidates presented themselves for examination for the Licence of Dental Surgery in April 1879. William Stead Woodburn of Glasgow was the first to sign the Glasgow L.D.S. register. Woodburn subsequently became lecturer in Dental Mechanics and Metallurgy at Anderson's College (the Glasgow School of Dental Surgery being formed there in June 1879 as a consequence of the 1878 Act). The LDS remained the goal of the undergraduate dental student in Glasgow until 1948 when the Dental School became part of the University of Glasgow and the LDS was superseded by the BDS, the Royal Faculty concentrating on post graduate dental qualifications. 1

The need for a higher dental qualification had been recognised by the Royal Faculty in 1920 by the institution of the Higher Dental Diploma. (HDD). Although moves had been made as early as 1947 by Dr John Forbes Webster to establish a Fellowship, it was not until 1967 that the HDD was superseded by the Fellowship in Dental Surgery.

In 1949 the Royal Faculty established a Diploma in Dental Orthopaedics. This was the first postgraduate diploma in orthodontics to be awarded in the U.K. The Membership in General Dental Surgery was introduced in 1982 and the Membership in Clinical Community Dentistry in 1989. Following the passing of the 1921 Dentists Act, the Council of the Royal Faculty created a Dental Committee to advise Council on Dental matters. The Dental Committee was superseded by a new Dental Council in 1967 formed shortly after the Royal Faculty changed its name to Royal College.

In 1990 the Dental Fellows collectively became the Dental Faculty and the Convenor of the Dental Council the Dean of that Faculty.

Examination Registers Held:

Licentiate in Dental Surgery	1879-1961
Higher Dental Diploma	1926-1966
Diploma in Dental Orthopaedics	1949-1989
Membership in Dental Orthopaedics	1990-current
Fellowship in Dental Surgery	1967-current
Membership in General Dental Surgery	1983-current
Membership in Clinical Community Dentistry	1989-1993

Examination Regulations

Some copies of examination regulations for dental surgery are held amongst the College archives. More complete details of examinations can be obtained from Medical Directories held in the College library.

Minute Books

An index is available for consultation which gives details of dental issues within the Faculty minute books from 1878-1921. Dental Committee/Council minutes are held from 1935 onwards.

Other College Papers Relating to Dentistry

Remarks by the FPSG on a report by C. Tomes to the GMC on the examination for the Licence in Dental Surgery, c. 1895.

GMC Visitation Reports on dental examinations held at RFPSG, 1947-1949.

Correspondence regarding the LDS, 1948-1956.

Correspondence and papers regarding the HDD including draft question papers and regulations, 1945-1977.

Memorial by the RCPSG for the opinion of counsel regarding a Fellowship in Dental Surgery, 1964.

Private Papers and Records of Societies

Dental treatments can be found amongst general medical notebooks. For example an 18th century book of remedies contains several treatments for dental conditions including this one: "to make childrens teeth cut tak the Braines of a hare or the Braens of a hen and rub the Childs gums with them once or twice a day and it will make the teeth cut without pain"

Dental matters can also appear in the proceedings of Glasgow medical societies. Volume 2 of the essays of the Glasgow Medical Society has a paper read by Dr Monteith in 1816 "A case of dentition accompanied by nervous irritation" (RCPSG 2/1/5).

20th century material held by the College includes the Diplomas of Professor T.C. White (RCPSG 26) and papers relating to Mrs Margaret W. Menzies Campbell and the Menzies Campbell collection of dental instruments and artefacts (RCPSG 15).

Dental Instruments

The College has a small collection of dental instruments. These include 19th century tooth keys, forceps and an elevator. One of the tooth keys is made by Norrie of Glasgow and it is likely that the other items are of local manufacture. More modern instruments also form part of the collection. For example a recent accession has been a set of instruments manufactured in 1945.

Tracing Glasgow Dentists

Individual dentists can be traced using the Dentists Register from 1879 onwards. Before this date trade directories from the early 19th century onwards will give the names of local dentists. The Glasgow Post Office Directory for 1834-35, for instance, lists seven "Dentist-Surgeons." Both the Dentists Register and Glasgow trade directories are available in the College library.

Further information about the above and details of the printed books relating to the history of dentistry held in the College library can be obtained from the College Archivist The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, 232-242 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5RJ. Telephone 0141 227 3234. E-mail carol.parry@rcpsg.ac.uk.

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1 The Faculty was granted the title 'Royal' in 1909.