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Alumni Newsletter issue 10 2008

CONTENTS

**BOH Graduation
December 2007**

**Vietnamese
Experience**

**MDSS Charity
Concert**

**A Word From
The Head**

News In Brief

Research News

From the Museum

Profiles

**Dr Esperance Kahwagi
Dr Nathan Cochrane**

From the Editors

**Letters
Reunions**



Graduation Ceremony Bachelor of Oral Health Students 2007

The first cohort of Bachelor of Oral Health students graduated in December 2007. Dr Julie Satur, who is the coordinator of the programme, proudly gave the Occasional Address at Wilson Hall.

'Firstly, my congratulations to the graduands. You are about to receive a Melbourne degree — a degree that has been a long time in coming and one that will set you apart from many other graduates. Be proud of this degree and all you have had to do to achieve it — because it is an outstanding achievement. I'm sure many of you will recall those early, anxious days of university life, can I really do this? Have I chosen the right course? Where is the library? Have I chosen the right clothes to wear? Well, you have worked hard and have arrived and today we celebrate.

I am very excited today and proud to be here today among all of you

and particularly among the very first graduates of the Bachelor of Oral Health from The University of Melbourne which has been the culmination of many years work for many people. For Alfred Fones, who first thought that preventing dental diseases was an important part of the work of dentistry and trained young women in his carriage house in 1914 in Connecticut to educate people, children in particular, about the causes of dental disease. For Dr K Norman Cox, president of the New Zealand Dentists' Association who in 1913 proposed a system of school dental clinics in New Zealand to be staffed by school dental nurses to address the appallingly high needs of children for dental care. For several Federal Governments, who debated between 1920 and 1950 the merits of introducing oral hygienists to deal with the problems of unmet dental needs made visible by the appalling state of soldiers' teeth during the World Wars. For the NHMRC, who in 1965 recommended that the high amounts of unmet dental needs in Australia's population should be addressed by a dental auxiliary based school dental service. For the Victorian Health Department that implemented a controversial new course for dental therapists of

'...systematic and regularised, non-university training that ensured the complimentary rather than substitute nature...' of dental therapy practice. For Christeen Millsteed who developed the very first accreditation documents for this course on her kitchen table and saw the transition to a more knowledge based course of education for dental therapists. For Paulette Smith who in 1988 wrote to Victoria's Parliament seeking the right to practise dental hygiene, for which she had qualified in South Australia. For Professor Clive Wright from The University of Melbourne, who had the vision to establish the first University program in dental therapy and dental hygiene in Australia in 1996 with the Diploma of Oral Health Therapy, and for those of us involved in its evolution into the degree, we confer today. I have had the rare privilege of witnessing the birth of a new profession and that has been an enlightening and gratifying process.

Continued on next page...

Pictured Top:
Graduands - l-r David Che-Hao Lui, Pamela Conway, Natalie Mileto, Louise Ngo, Daniela Grasso, Tamsin Martini, Anna Tsougranis.



A Word From the Head

The School is changing its name. We no longer will be the School of Dental Science but the Melbourne Dental School. The name change is part of our mission to be an internationally recognized centre of excellence and it also reflects our proud link with the city of Melbourne. The name change also sets the platform on which we can launch our new graduate-entry, four year professional degree the Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) which will commence in 2011.

The last intake of school leavers into the BDS will be in 2009. The University of Melbourne has already commenced promoting these new professional, graduate-entry degrees as part of its "Dream Large" campaign. To gain entry into the DDS in 2011 applicants will require a degree, such as the Bachelor of Biomedicine, with completion of units in Physiology, Biochemistry and Anatomy.

The DDS will involve advanced clinical training, be research-led, evidence-based and international in focus, producing graduates who will become the leaders of their profession.

On the 22nd of July the Melbourne Dental School was visited by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Glyn Davis. The Vice Chancellor addressed the School and then chatted with staff over coffee. He was very supportive of the name change to the Melbourne Dental School and very pleased with the progress the School was making with developing the curriculum for the DDS.

The Vice Chancellor also discussed the difficult financial situation the University faces in 2009 and concluded by congratulating the School for its performance which places it as the leading school nationally and one of the leading schools globally.

The relocation of the Royal Women's Hospital in 2008 provides a unique and exciting opportunity for the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM) together with the Melbourne Dental School to expand their activities into the buildings at the rear of the RDHM building. An expansion of the RDHM could include more student dental chairs as well as an entrance on Cardigan St to improve public access into the building. An expansion of the dental school hopefully will include a student locker room, another student dental simulation laboratory and more staff and postgraduate student offices. The University of Melbourne and Dental Health Services Victoria are working together in a bid to the State government to acquire support for the expansion.

The Melbourne Dental School, as part of the Cooperative Research Centre for Oral Health Science, recently received a CRC Association 2008 Excellence in Innovation Award presented by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr. Congratulations to all those involved in winning this prestigious award. This award highlights the outstanding research that is being carried out in the dental school by its staff and students.

PROFESSOR ERIC REYNOLDS AO



Top: VC Group pictured left to right; Eric Reynolds, Nathan Cochrane, Sandra Turner, Kim Hanson, David Manton, Kate Fletcher, Professor Glyn Davis (VC), Julie Satur, Matt Hopcraft, Mina Borromeo.

Above: CRC-OHS Award for Tooth Mousse.



Left to right: Dr Hanny Calache, Mr Mark Cussy, Dr Julie Satur, Ms Pamela Leong.

Continued from page 1...

I was one of those first dental therapists trained in Victoria and our course had all the hallmarks of a feminine occupation in the 1970's. We were selected for our youth (under 26), our unmarried status and our right handedness. We wore white uniforms, white shoes, we were schooled in obedience (learn what we tell you - don't go looking for other information) and even deportment, our practice was directed and controlled, there was only a single employer and we were charged with the task of working ourselves out of a job. We were sent out to brand new clinics in school grounds to provide dental checkups, fillings, extractions and dental health education to Victoria's children. My hygienist colleagues can tell similar stories of their education and socialisation in other states and countries as there was no education for hygienists in Victoria until 1996. While dental hygiene was widely accepted all over the world as an integral role in the prevention and clinical management of periodontal disease, in Victoria dentists had to manage this care themselves, although the defence forces have had hygienists for many years. In the USA for example, there is almost the same number of dental hygienists as there are dentists and around 1 hygienist for every 2,000 people. In Victoria today there are about 150 dental hygienists and 250 dental therapists which is equivalent of 1 for every 20,000 people. About 70 of those practitioners are oral health therapists, qualified and registered as both therapists and hygienists as these new Bachelor of Oral Health graduates will be.

It is a tribute to the foresight and support of the dental professions that these professions developed and flourished as they did and now stand proudly alongside dentists, nurses, doctors, physiotherapists as an important part of our primary health care system. Dental diseases are among the most prevalent and costly diseases in Australia today and the burden of that disease has significant economic and social costs.

Who will employ a person if their front teeth are decayed or missing?

How does that person feel about themselves when their appearance is so compromised?

Will they continue to socialise if they can't eat or smile?

How will a person get the funny lump in their mouth checked if they can't afford to see a dentist?

Our teeth and mouth health is intimately connected to our general health and yet remains unfunded

by Medicare, relegated to a silo outside the health system and of too little concern. Oral diseases affect so many people we don't recognise them as abnormal. We spend half our lives worrying

about the quality, calorific value and quantity of what we put into our mouths and almost no time concerned about what we will eat it with. Most of you will know that there are long waiting lists for public dental care in Victoria, that only about half of our population receives regular dental care and that only around 11% of people on waiting lists will get public dental care in any one year. The biggest issue for community oral health is workforce. This is where the critical effort needs to go in the oral health field. These oral health therapists will play an important role in the oral health workforce because their key roles are health promotion, prevention and low to medium technology clinical care, they work to reduce demand and increase supply. Many of you here of course, will also meet them in private dental practices, both general and specialist where they work collaboratively with dentists to provide dental care.

They will have far more important roles in areas where need is greatest and resources few, in aged care,

with low income populations, with Aboriginal and other culturally diverse communities, in hospital settings where medically compromised people have oral diseases that are making their general health worse, with children and young families, in research and in health promotion, they have the potential to be the bridge between oral and general health and to greatly improve access to dental care.

So to our new oral health therapists, the Bachelor of Oral Health graduands

and all the other graduands, I want to issue a challenge.

As health practitioners you move out into the community to do important work, work that you have dedicated some years to learning about, work that has

people placing great trust and faith in you and your knowledge. Your expertise is important as is the critical interpretive role, the interpretation of complex ideas and knowledge for the benefit of others. So is the altruism of profession, the doing of good for others because it is good.

We are privileged to be part of the process of managing the technologies and resources of the health sector and the spiralling costs of health care. Australians have access to high quality health care, care that is at world best standards but care that is not always equally available to all. We need to continue to have concern for those who can't pay our bills and those with chronic and social disease (mental illness, addictions and those arising out of social inequality). It is here that our greatest challenges lie.

I want to challenge you to work collaboratively across the health sector, keep an eye on the things that are happening outside your immediate area of expertise and work to do the things that will improve the health of the community.

You may or may not work in public health but my challenge to you is to try to bring a public health perspective to what you do and do things that will reduce inequality and improve the position of those who struggle most with the costs/burden of poor health. Here is where your greatest roles are.

Finally I want to congratulate all the graduands here today, you collectively represent about 1300 years of learning between you and that's pretty impressive. Every one of you is the envy of us because the journey is ahead of you and while this may be your greatest achievement to date, there are bound to be many more.

I want to leave you with a quote that I like about learning from William Butler Yeats;

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

That fire is important. I hope you leave us with a fire in your belly and find a place in the world where your fire stays alight and you have the opportunity to fulfil the potential you have, continue to learn and become everything you are capable of being'.

DR JULIE SATUR

Prize winners for 2007 were Shellie Morris who was awarded the DHSV Public Health Prize and the Victorian Dental Therapist Association Graduate Prize and Rhadika Krishnamoorthy was awarded the Dental Hygienists' Association Prize.

Graduands: Anna Tsougranis, Daniela Grasso, Tamsin Martini, My-Linh Ngo, Adam Rogers, Joanna Yong, Annabelle Crooke, Rebecca Holt, Radhika Krishnamoorthy, Pamela Conway, Sarah Ryan, Shellie Morris, Lea Dethridge, Mary Barber, Carly Ross, Natalie Mileto, Sophie Norden, Andrew Bradley, Che-Hoa Liu, Kinh Luan Ngo.



Far left: Backteeth Boys – (Clockwise from L) – Tri Nguyen, Leighton Phu, Viet Nguyen, Mark Nguyen, Sam Koh

Left: Backteeth Boys (L to R) – Sam Koh, Leighton Phu, Viet Nguyen, Mark Nguyen

Below: Sizzling Salsa—Mervyn Sia and Amy Nguyen



Melbourne Dental Students' Society Charity Concert

This has been an exciting, action packed year for the members of the Melbourne Dental Students' Society (MDSS). With Debbie Sivapalan taking the reins as president, 2008 has revealed how creative, fun and close knit our dental community can really be. Traditional MDSS annual events such as the orientation camp, trivia night, boat cruise, mentor night and the upcoming dental ball, left our guests anything but disappointed, far exceeding their expectations and setting new standards on each occasion. Just as we thought we couldn't do any better, we have stepped up and raised the bar yet again. Through terrific teamwork, the MDSS committee

and a large number of members worked very hard to introduce and bring to the stage the inaugural MDSS Charity Concert.

The charity concert starred our very own dental students and staff, including Dr Matthew Hopcraft on drums, raising money for the Rotary Club of Footscray's Vietnam Dental Health Project. Every year, a team led by Dr Jamie Robertson volunteer two weeks of their time in various cities and rural areas in Vietnam, improving the oral health and lives of the local children and sharing skills and knowledge with the local professionals. We first heard of this project through the 4th and 5th year students who won an essay competition to join this team and thought we could contribute in our own way.

As some of you may recall, a full-time dental course does not allow the performers many opportunities to put an act together. Nevertheless, the buzz surrounding this new event was infectious, and we were stunned with the phenomenal response when over 30 talented dental performers, including Dr. Matthew Hopcraft, volunteered to take up the challenge. We wanted to showcase the vast talent within our School, and that is exactly what we got, ranging from music and dance, to comedy, a fashion show, and also our very own boy band, the Backteeth Boys.

Held inside Melba Hall on a slightly damp but cosy Sunday afternoon, the atmosphere was relaxed and casual despite the performers' jitters backstage. The support was incredible with over 150 tickets being sold, with each ticket raising money for the Rotary Club. No one knew what to expect, but to our pleasure (and relief), the program was a resounding success from the first dimming of the lights for the President's welcome, until the very end when an impressively large cheque was formally presented to Rujuta Bhide, on behalf of Dr Jamie Robertson, director of the Vietnam Dental Health Project.

As well as raising over \$1,700 for a good cause, the charity concert was a fantastic way to bring our dental community together. There was an incredible sense of respect and appreciation for the performers who gave up their time and effort,

and mustered up the courage to share with everyone present their tremendous hidden talents outside the world of dentistry. Of course, the concert could not have been nearly as sensational were it not for our wonderful audience whose support was most encouraging. A fan club has even formed for the Backteeth Boys, seemingly composed of squealing girls, and boys throwing their shirts on the stage, all comically displaying their love for this previously unknown boy band. Needless to say, the event was an astounding success and will no doubt become a fixture on any future MDSS events calendar, setting its own new standards for years to come.

MDSS is now selling DVD recordings of the concert, with all proceeds going to the Vietnam Dental Health Project. If you missed out on this concert, email: contactus@mdss.org.au to reserve your copy now!



VIETNAMESE EXPERIENCE Rotary Vietnam Dental Health Project

BY DR AMY FUNG
(2ND YR PED DCLIN DENT 2007)
AND MS DHANYA SIVATHASEN
(5TH YEAR BDS C 2007)

The Vietnam Dental Health Project began in 1991 as a part of a broader Health project and on the first trip there was only one dentist, Dr Jamie Robertson.

Over the years, the project has rapidly expanded and developed its own separate entity. It soon developed associations with the Institute of Odontostomatology (Ho Chi Minh City) and since 1998 Australian specialists have also been involved. The emphasis of this project is to improve oral and health promotion combined with continuing education and support for local dental practitioners.

This year 25 self-funded volunteers of dental specialists, dentists and auxiliaries carried countless suitcases of equipment and dental consumables to Vietnam for this 2 week project.

We were split into city and rural teams. The city team comprised dental specialists and the Cleft Palate Surgical Group. They not only treated difficult and challenging cases but also provided hands on teaching to the local Vietnamese specialists. The rural team, of which we were a part, consisted of dentists and dental auxiliaries. We visited two villages in the southern provinces of Vietnam, Ben Cau and Vi Thanh.

Local dentists are often placed in poorly equipped clinics with no opportunity to develop their skills.

This project offers local dentists from Ho Chi Minh City the chance to observe the dentists from the Rotary team. These local dentists are also encouraged to treat some of the children under the guidance of Rotary dentists.

The children we treated were randomly selected from the schools in each village and were between 12 and 15 years of age. A school bus would transport the children to the clinics at which we had set ourselves up. The first day proved to be rather challenging. While the dentists were at work, those of us assisting would scurry around grabbing instruments and materials and, more often than not, due to the confined space we were in, we would have to take extra

care in order to avoid colliding with the others! However we soon developed a system which ensured the smooth running of the clinic and enabled us to carry out the required treatment within the given period

of time. At the beginning of each session all the children would be triaged. Extractions were done if the children complained of pain but otherwise we mostly did restorations. We worked for long hours and had to overcome many challenges including the heat and humidity, poorly equipped dental surgeries and cultural differences. Language barriers and the slow process of translation precluded the ascertaining of current medical or dental histories and made communication difficult. We often had to rely on our acting abilities, tone of voice and patting the children on their shoulders to make ourselves understood or to put them at ease.

Needless to say, some of the children found us highly amusing.

The oral health therapist from our team had the opportunity to visit a school in Ben Cau where a school tooth-brushing programme had been implemented by the Rotary Dental team. Toothbrushes and cups had been donated to the children and teachers would demonstrate tooth-brushing using a mouth model.

Every Friday at school, the children would line up in a row and brush their teeth over a sink.

We had limited dental equipment or material supplies and most were kindly donated by many dental companies. We had to be frugal with the materials to ensure we had enough to last us the entire two weeks. We assumed that a vast majority of the children we treated would have rampant caries due to their lack of dental awareness and access to fluoridated water. We were surprised to find that that was, in fact, not the case. We also saw a definite decline in the number of extractions performed over the years in both villages. Over two weeks, the rural team saw a total of 645 patients, placed 1182 restorations, 1064 fissure sealants and extracted 55 teeth.

Going to Vietnam was a first for the both of us and we found it to be a beautiful country with hospitable people. Despite the harsh conditions and challenges, knowing we were playing a small role in improving the oral health of these disadvantaged communities proved to be a rewarding experience and one which we look forward to repeating. Finally we would like to acknowledge GC co-operation for their continual support and their generous donation of materials and funding to undergraduate students.



Top left: Volunteers teaching students how to brush.

Top right: Modern clinical facilities.

Above: a novel way of brushing teeth!

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Anyone interested in future volunteering opportunities in Vietnam should contact Dr Jamie Robertson at robdenti@bigpond.com



SPRING8 SYNCHROTRON

In early June 2008 a research team from the School of Dental Science, The Tsurumi University School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM) and Monash University visited the SPring8 synchrotron in Japan to carry out a study of age-related changes in cortical bone. The team comprised Mr David Thomas and Professor John Clement from the School of Dental Science, Dr Chris Hall (Monash University Centre for Synchrotron Science) along with Dr Shinji Shimoda and Mr Junichi Yamazoe from the Department of Anatomy, Tsurumi University School of Dental Medicine.

The SPring8 synchrotron is the largest such machine in the world and is located in Hyogo Prefecture, about an hour and a half by bullet train and local bus west of Osaka, inland from the cities of Aioi and Himeji (where the White Heron Castle World Heritage Site is located). The facility can be explored on the Web using <http://www.spring8.or.jp/en/> with a web-cam at http://www.spring8.or.jp/en/users/status/live_camera/publicfolder_view

The aim of our experimental work at SPring8 was to describe and measure the three-dimensional pore structure in bone from donors of both sexes and of ages ranging from young adult to the elderly. The study is based on the idea that complexity of the pore structure should increase with increasing age due to on-going bone turnover throughout life. Bones are dynamic, living organs which, in contrast to their permanence after death, have a surprising capacity to adapt to the functional demands placed upon them during life. The dominant adaptive mechanism in mature bone is called "remodelling" which involves the internal modification of bone tissue through the breakdown of older bone tissue and the creation of localised new units of bone (called osteons or "Haversian systems") to replace it.



It is a change in the balance between bone removal and replacement towards greater loss than deposition that leads to cortical bone loss and osteoporosis.

The current deficit in the understanding of cortical bone microstructure is primarily a result of methodological limitations. While techniques such as serial sectioning and corrosion casting have been used to visualise bone microstructure, they are tedious and have primarily generated qualitative information. Quantitative 2D analysis of bone microstructure (histomorphometry) is an established technique in studies of aging processes in human cortical bone. It is vital that research in this area seeks to better characterise bone microstructural variation and the biological processes that produce it. The School of Dental Science has sought to do this through the development of an exceptional reference collection, the Melbourne Femur Collection, and the application of novel imaging methods. A key limitation of this analysis has been its reliance upon 2D methodology, a limitation largely removed by using synchrotron radiation micro-CT.

The School of Dental Science researchers have used the micro-CT facilities at SPring8 previously as well as those at another synchrotron, the Advanced Photon Source at the Argonne National Laboratory in the USA. The Imaging and Therapy beamline at the Australian Synchrotron will become available in 2009 and the team look forward to being able to use this new, world class facility in the future.

The research team is very grateful for the help provided by Dr Kentaro Uesugi, beamline scientist at BL20B2 and Dr Naoto Yagi the Chief Biological Scientist of the Japan Synchrotron Radiation Research Institute. Professor Kenzo Kawasaki of the Department of Anatomy TUSDM gave permission for his staff to take part. Funding for the University of Melbourne researchers came from an internal grant from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research.

AWARDS

Dr John Harcourt has been awarded a Meritorious Service Award from the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons which was conferred on 30th May during the Opening Ceremony of the Nineteenth Convocation of the College in Hong Kong.

Dr Mina Borromeo received the award for the Best Presentation in the Senior General Category at the New Zealand Hospital and Community Dentists Conference held in Auckland, New Zealand in July 2008.

PROMOTIONS

Dr Peter Parashos has been promoted to Associate Professor. This is an outstanding achievement and well deserved. Since his appointment in 2006, Peter has published 19 articles. This is a remarkable achievement on a 50% appointment. Peter is the Convenor of the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics and a highly respected Endodontist who is internationally known for his leadership and advancement of Endodontics.

Dr Paul Veith has been promoted to Senior Research Fellow effective 1st September 2008. This promotion is a fitting acknowledgement of Paul's outstanding contribution to research in the School and University.



Above far left: David Thomas setting up a sample.

Above left: SPring8 synchrotron in Japan.

Above: Dr John Harcourt (right).



VALE Dr Adele Christine Campain

26th October 1963 – 3rd May 2008

It was with sadness that the School heard of the passing of Adele Campain on 3rd May 2008 after a long battle with cancer. Her funeral was attended by many friends and colleagues from the School of Dental Science. The following is a tribute to Adele from Professor Mike Morgan, who spoke about his student, colleague and friend.

'I am honoured to have been asked to speak on behalf of the School of Dental Science today at Adele's service and to say a few words about Adele's professional life. Dr Adele Campain had a long and indeed distinguished career at The University of Melbourne. She commenced her association at The University by enrolling in a Bachelor of Dental Science as a school leaver in 1982. Five years later, in 1986, she completed that degree and gained the attention of the soon to be Dean of the Faculty (as it was then), Professor Clive Wright. It was Adele's writing skills, her attention to detail and her intellectual inquisitiveness that encouraged Clive to seek out Adele and lure her from private dental practice in 1989 back to her alma mater to develop a clinical trial research project that required exactly those skills. She continued to not only develop the project, but to manage it and to complete it at an extraordinarily high level. It was the beginning of a career that Adele made uniquely her own.

It began a research legacy that continues today.

Other research projects came along to which Adele brought her skills and her charm. Right up until this year, she remained a key participant and force in many diverse research activities within the School of Dental Science and latterly at the Cooperative Research Centre for Oral Health Science. We have all benefited from her tenacity and strength of character. In these endeavours, Adele certainly kept us, and me in particular, in line and honest.

Her research interests were further developed to the extent that she enrolled in and completed a Masters in Public Health in Epidemiology at The University of Melbourne in 2000. Her abilities were once again recognised by her teachers and Adele graduated with one of the, if not the highest mark in the course, eclipsing some other perhaps more high profile candidates.

Adele's final academic hurdle was a PhD in which she enrolled in 2006. It was during this degree that sadly Adele became ill and from which she chose to withdraw last year.

One of Adele's key attributes was an ability and willingness to fit in wherever her skills were needed - in service delivery, research and in administration. This is perhaps exemplified by the number of titles that she held throughout her career, that of a General dental practitioner, Lecturer in Preventive and Community Dentistry, Demonstrator in Conservative Dentistry, Dental Officer, Research Officer, Senior Research Assistant and Research Fellow.

My professional involvement with Adele began in 1989 and I remain in her debt for her dedication and tireless efforts in order to get things right, see them through and make them work. The one exception to this was her attempt to help me improve my writing skills. Adele spent a large part of her time over the years to her frustration, I think, trying to teach me where to place apostrophes correctly in my written work. Despite numerous and clearly for her, exasperating hours of tuition, this is possibly the one thing in her academic life that she completely failed to achieve.

Dr Adele Campain was a joy to work with and will remain an inspiration to all those who knew her. She authored numerous articles, reports and conference papers. She worked closely alongside many of the people seated here today who all will attest to her dedication, her clarity of expression, her scientific integrity and, importantly, her humanity. She will be greatly missed at The School of Dental Science as an outstanding colleague and as a warm and generous friend'.

ITALIAN OLDER PEOPLE'S STUDY

Approximately 300 people from 10 Italian social clubs around Melbourne are participating in a study being conducted through the CRC-Oral Health Science in the School, which is aiming to improve the dental health of older migrant adults in Melbourne by using existing community networks. The project is being led by Dr Rodrigo Mariño, who describes the community-based approach of the research as a new model for meeting the oral health needs of older people from culturally diverse backgrounds. All participants in the project have been provided with dental examinations and half of the clubs are participating in weekly group discussions in Italian on oral health topics. At the completion of five discussion sessions, the participants will undertake a follow-up dental examination to compare the oral health status and knowledge of the two groups.

Articles about the project have appeared in the Moreland Leader, Manningham Leader and The Star (Thomastown) newspapers.

The Ladies Auxiliary 1926—2008

Epilogue to the 'Sixty five years of service' by Henry F Atkinson 1993

The activities of the Auxiliary of The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne have been recorded on three separate occasions. In 1985 the Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne, Mr Bill Philips, wrote a brief history. In 1990, to coincide with the Centenary of the hospital, Professor Henry F Atkinson's *In Defence of Ivory Towers* appeared, and a few years later, by the same author, a more detailed account of the work of the Auxiliary entitled *The Ladies Auxiliary: Sixty five years of service, the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne Auxiliary, 1928-1993* was published.

In July 1990, for the Centenary Celebrations, the organisation officially entitled 'The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne Auxiliary' but always referred to as 'The Ladies', contributed to the success of the week long celebrations through the raffle of a painting donated by Sir William Dargie, a chicken and champagne supper, a fashion parade and other special events.

The early history of the Auxiliary is one of a privileged group in the community, the wives of the members of a professional body that in its early years was achieving status by public spirited actions which focused on the establishment of a dental hospital to, in its own words, 'treat the deserving poor' and for the education of dentists. The wives of the members were the voluntary workers, the fund raisers, who strove to assist the new Melbourne Dental Hospital in practical ways as did the ladies of the auxiliaries of the nearby Homeopathic and Melbourne Hospitals and other similar institutions.

In the early 1930s, some of this privileged group would visit, by 'steam ship or liner the old country' or 'home' as England was still referred to, and on returning with photographs, slides and possibly 'movies' would offer them to the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary was quick to put any suitable items to good use in raising funds through 'slide shows' or 'cinema nights' – a fee of course being charged. As well as these activities they organised card nights, garden parties, dinner parties and theatre nights all of which took considerable effort on the part of the few ladies directly involved, but added to the coffers and gave good publicity to the Dental Hospital and the Australian College of Dentistry.

When in 1936 Dr and Mrs Tuckfield returned from America, they brought the news that dental organisations there were collecting waste amalgam from dentists and making good money for clubs and associations by its resale to precious metal refiners. Our Auxiliary immediately followed suit, including in their collections foil from x-ray films and scrap gold. The efforts put into collecting were amazing, and the whole state was covered. So keen were they that if a member, when 'on a motoring holiday' in some remote part of the state, saw a dentist's plate with a name not on their list, she would immediately make contact and cajole the owner to save scrap, perhaps for as long as twelve months, until the member could collect it on her next annual excursion! But the city - Collins Street - was their goldmine and it took a considerable effort to develop the active seam.

The extraordinary organisation that was required is demonstrated by the following record in the minutes of an early meeting, which say that if "a member's husband had a five or six seat Mercedes" she would, after a meeting of their committee and with general agreement, make "arrangements with the Town Hall" to be allowed to park in Collins Street for a specific time, on a nominated day, in a designated spot. On the appointed day, with approval given, five or six ladies would emerge from the vehicle and for two or three hours scour from end to end the dental premises

On the appointed day, with approval given, five or six ladies would emerge from the vehicle and for two or three hours scour from end to end the dental premises in the street for potential wealth.

in the street for potential wealth. Their results were amazing, increasing each year as more dentists were pressed into saving scrap and donating to the Auxiliary. With more members as volunteer collectors

covering the whole state, income increased, but there were always problems to be overcome, such as bogus operators claiming to represent the hospital and the odd dentist selling the scrap directly and keeping the proceeds! The entire organisation for the collecting was undertaken from a member's 'home office' without any external help, which is a truly exceptional effort.

On the broader stage greater social freedoms were being achieved. It is strange now to scan the list of members pre-world War II and see them recorded as "Mrs Cyril Bell", "Mrs William Tuckfield" etc., as then in public life all the ladies took both the first and the family names of their husbands. Few had occupations other than 'domestic duties' but they had time for, and welcomed, social events.

One popular activity was volunteer fund raising for a charitable organisation. As a result of the 'extra domestic activities', wives gained a certain measure of independence approaching a social equality with their husbands. This change continued and, when later reinforced by the demands of war and other factors, led to a life in which there was little time for socialising as many were forced to find work to support a family. There were also subtle changes in the makeup of the student body; first there were 'returned soldiers' entering dentistry as new and older students and then, later, increasing numbers of students coming from overseas with parents striving to adapt to a new life in which they also had little time to socialise. As a result, the student body increased in size but the pool of available parents, on which the Auxiliary mainly depended for support, decreased.

However subtle, and at that time unrecognised, changes were taking place in dentistry that, in the early 1990s, resulted in the lowest 'amalgam cheque' for three decades. This, combined with a continuous fall in the number of active members, led the committee to give consideration to the winding up of the organisation. Some of the changes that were occurring in private dental practice included the introduction of technology such as automatic dispensers for delivering the correct amounts of alloy and mercury, mechanical amalgamators, capsules with accurately weighed contents and new restorative materials. In the community at large, factors including the fluoridation of public water supplies, dental health education, programmes for the prevention of dental diseases, the fear of mercury toxicity and, most fortunate of all, fewer and smaller cavities resulted in a substantial fall in the amount of amalgam used and a corresponding reduction in available scrap.



Pictured left: Marika Kocsis at work on one of Prof Down's drawings.



Pictured far left: Past members of the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne Auxiliary including Pat Smith, Rosemary Priede, Pam Probert, Nevenka Tucker, Lorraine Ryan, Sylvia Kilpatrick, Isabel Lockhart, Dorothy Hanlon, Premilla Soosaipilla. Also present Prof. HF Atkinson, Mr A Kilpartick and Mr L Hanlon.

Furthermore, variations in the price of silver caused the refiners to state that it was unprofitable for them to accept scrap amalgam unless in 50 kg or more lots. As it would now take many years for the Auxiliary to accumulate such an amount, the main source of income ceased.

Nevertheless the faithful few continued to raise funds with luncheons and guest speakers, trading tables in the foyer of The Royal Dental Hospital to which members donated goods that were sold to patients, staff and students. Meanwhile, in spite of personal appeals to the profession and membership drives that included staff, students and parents, few if any new names were added to the list while time was taking its inexorable toll on the remaining faithful few.

Few would have dared to suggest in those heady days of the early 1960s, with 'the new building' very visible opposite the Royal Melbourne and ready for occupancy, that major changes in administration were being considered that would completely alter our life style. As a result the staff of the hospital and the school, after a relatively short time in 'The New Building', transformed from an organisation governed by a committee, whose members were mainly elected by an active group of the subscribers who were very aware of the wishes and needs of those in the institution, to one appointed by government that became possibly more efficient administratively but single minded and somewhat remote. On the academic side the 'benevolent dictatorship' of the Australian College of Dentistry passed into history. A few, although admitting that some changes were necessary, tried to maintain certain aspects of the status quo. However, personal contacts were lost and a new order evolved that affected all, including the Auxiliary.

The amazing efforts of the Auxiliary have been recorded in detail in the above mentioned histories but it is salutary to look back and remember some of the earlier major donations. In 1926, before amalgam waste collection started, sufficient funds had been amassed so that after much discussion, sometimes quite heated, at their meetings, a dental chair and unit were donated for the 'Special Surgery' of the new Professor, Dr F C Wilkinson. Both these items, together with the bronze plaque that was fixed to the surgery door acknowledging the Auxiliary's gift, have fortunately been saved, and are now held by the Museum. Later, the hospital saw the introduction of x-ray equipment, sterilisers, air conditioners, carpets and curtains for common rooms, a children's play area with aquarium, a sewing machine, prizes for nurses and students and, most significantly, two air rotors. This was welcome as students in 1962-3 were leaving Spring Street without experience of the new techniques. And then, some years later, there was another 'new building' on Swanston Street, in which support continued for major items such as a special microscope for endodontics, 3-D imaging equipment, display cases and fittings for the museum and much more. The giving continued until, in spite of all the efforts of the few remaining faithful ladies, the coffers were empty.

On March 7th 2008, at a small ceremony in The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne, 720 Swanston Street, under the guiding hands of the President, Mrs Dorothy Hanlon and Treasurer-Secretary, Mrs Sylvia Kilpatrick, both of whom had done so much to keep the organisation effective, and in the presence of the few remaining members and invited guests, the Auxiliary was formally disbanded. Why? Why at a time when the disadvantaged had the greatest difficulty in obtaining relief?

Why at a time when the services of the profession were never so much in demand and at a time when the profession has never been so affluent? Why have we allowed this to happen?

Let consideration be given to the return of an Auxiliary with a volunteer body from the public, the hospital, the academics and the profession, with fund raising as in the past but supported by modern methods of advertising incorporating the ease and simplicity of the credit card. Giving today has been made so very easy as we no longer handle cash! The photograph and appeal of the orphaned child in the latest charity brochure touches the heart strings and before emotion fades all that is required of a donor is "to circle ...\$100, \$50, \$25 or My Choice..." add a string of memorised figures, slip into the prepaid addressed envelope and relax, feeling the glow of giving. The child in the arms of a harassed father in the emergency queue at the Royal Dental Hospital on a Sunday morning and the student burning the candle at both ends to meet rent and assignment deadlines need as much or possibly more support than they required twenty five years ago.

However 'our ladies' of the Auxiliary will always be remembered for their generosity by the continuing Bertha Bennet Prize and the Ladies Auxiliary Prize detailed in The University of Melbourne Regulations and awarded to successful dental students each year.

Miegunyah Trust and Cultural Collections 2007 Grants Program funding awarded to the Dental Museum

Miegunyah Trust funding to preserve drawings by Professor Harold Down

In 2007 the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum received generous funding of \$27,000 from the Miegunyah Trust to conserve a collection of drawings created by Professor Harold Down, the first Professor of Conservative Dental Surgery at the Australian College of Dentistry. The treatment of the collections was undertaken as part of the Drawings Renewal Project initiated by the University's Cultural Collections Committee to address the backlog in cataloguing and conservation, experienced broadly across the collections.

The large scale pastel and line drawings were created by Professor Down for his thesis for the degree of Doctor of Dental Science, University of Melbourne, 1938. Appointed to the post of Demonstrator in Operative Technique at the Australian College of Dentistry in 1922, (Charles) Harold Down lamented at the time that the blackboard was the only available teaching aid. Given the sophistication of delivery and technology associated with modern education, it is difficult for us today to grasp the rudimentary nature of teaching facilities in the early 1920s and 1930s.

Continued on next page...



Challenged by the desire to improve teaching methods in operative technique and tooth morphology, Professor Down developed a comprehensive set of teaching aids which included colour pastel drawings and numerous plaster models that were to reduce significantly the time required for individual instruction.

At the completion of his thesis, over 500 models of teeth and 20 pastel drawings had been created. Amongst the plaster models were 5 sets of deciduous and permanent teeth which were loaned to students for studying and copying. The drawings, on the other hand, were to illustrate the "nomenclature, morphology and arrangement" * of teeth and were considered more flexible as a teaching aid than lantern slides, the alternative of the day which required the use of a darkened theatre.

The conservation treatment of the drawings was undertaken by Marika Kocsis, paper conservator, the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, the University of Melbourne. Marika commenced work on the collection in early October 2007 continuing for a five month period, to March 2008. In all, 14 drawings were cleaned, flattened, repaired and rehoused, 6 having already been treated by conservation students in 2005 and 2006. The completion of this conservation project ensures that Harold Down's drawings, which strongly evoke the character of early dental education, and by association the history of teaching at the University, are preserved and available for future generations to discover.

* *The teaching of Operative Dental Technique and Tooth Morphology by Visual Methods*, thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Dental Science, University of Melbourne by C H Down, BDS (Melb), Department of Conservative Dental Surgery, 1938.

New Vernon Collection Management System

The Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum was also fortunate to receive \$5000 from the Miegunyah Trust to support the purchase of a new collection management system including a new online browser. With further generous funding of \$5000 from the Cultural Collections Committee 2007 Grants Program, as

Once installed the new Vernon Browser will substantially improve the ability for online users, whether University staff, students or external visitors, to accurately search and retrieve information about the dental collection.

well as funding from the School of Dental Science, the Dental Museum has been able to purchase Vernon Systems Catalogue Module; a sophisticated, flexible and easy to use electronic collection management system, and Vernon Browser Module.

The Vernon Cataloguing Module is a dedicated museum database/management system which has already helped improve the way information about the dental museum collection is recorded, arranged and reported. Significantly, it is designed to reflect national and international cataloguing standards for the cataloguing of cultural objects and will also be used to manage the School's large Oral Medicine slide collection.

Once installed the new Vernon Browser will substantially improve the ability for online users, whether University staff, students or external visitors, to accurately search and retrieve information about the dental collection. The browser will be able to respond to search enquiries for a single record or to more complex requests for groups or sub-collections of records.

Preservation copying of makers' catalogues and re-housing project

Two other projects received funding from the Cultural Collections 2007 Grants Program. They included \$4444 for the preservation copying of the museum's historic makers' catalogues and \$645 to rehouse, and therefore better preserve, a small collection of significant photographs, documents, booklets and catalogues. Many of the photographs in this collection depict students and staff from the early days of the Australian College of Dentistry, including founding figures in the history of dentistry in Victoria. The catalogues are invaluable for identifying and therefore providing insights into the workings and application of many of the wonderful, rare and unique instruments, machines and materials that make up the dental collection.

The rehousing project has been undertaken by Jasmine Targett as part of the University's Cultural Collections Student Projects Program and is the second project that Jasmine has taken up with the museum.

The Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum is grateful to the Miegunyah Trust and the Cultural Collections Committee, and warmly acknowledges the importance of the support they provide. Funding of this nature ensures that the museum can continue to preserve, manage and display the many wonderful and significant items that make up the collection.

Visit to the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum by Blackburn Dental Group

Dentists and staff from the Blackburn Dental Group recently visited the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum. The group of eleven, which included dentists, hygienists, receptionists, dental nurses and practice managers, took time out from their usual responsibilities to reconvene at the museum where they were taken through the current exhibition by the Honorary Curator, Professor Emeritus Henry Atkinson.

Professor Atkinson spoke to the group about the history of dentistry, describing at length the methods and approaches to treatment in a period covering almost 250 years; from the early 1700s through to the mid 20th century. Professor Atkinson discussed along the way items as diverse as the two handed dental drill, ivory dentures, horn head hammers and St Apollonia.

Addressing an audience familiar with the terms and practices of dentistry meant that history came alive as instruments and practices of old were discussed and contrasts drawn between the methods of the past and the sophisticated, pain free and efficient approach of modern dentistry.

The curators would like to invite and encourage other interested groups or individuals to visit the museum. To arrange a time, contact the curators on 61 3 9341 1519, Professor Atkinson (Honorary Curator), or 61 3 9341 1518, Louise Murray (Curator).



Dr Esperance Kahwagi

Class of 1988

Having graduated almost 20 years ago, I was one of ten new graduates to complete the Inaugural 'voluntary' intern year in 1989. This provided me with an opportunity to experience different facets of dentistry while concurrently consolidating my clinical skills. The opportunities were vast and I recall feeling like I had completed more clinical work in that year than I did in my entire undergraduate clinical years — a slight exaggeration, but I do recall the very supportive and dedicated team who helped shape my early years in the profession — a few of whom are still supporting our future dental professionals to this day!

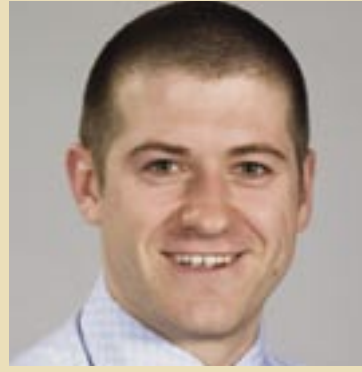
Vivid memories of my time spent as a clinician in regional Victoria highlighted the enormous contribution by the profession both in the public and private sector to meet the demand for the provision of dental services, particularly for the marginalised groups within our community.

I believe that my experience during this year helped guide me to pursue a career in public dentistry, as a clinician initially and since 2002 as a hospital manager in several areas including my first management role, that of the Undergraduate Teaching Clinics, and my most recent appointment as the Acting General Manager of RDHM.

My appointment as Manager of the Primary Care Unit at the Hospital has been a particularly memorable one in which I have focused on emergency demand management and other quality improvement initiatives within RDHM, with a strong customer oriented approach. During this time I have been very fortunate to have been supported by DHSV in completing a Diploma in Business and most recently in completing another management program which will no doubt equip me with the additional skills required to work in such a complex field that is Public Dentistry.

My involvement in various levels of management while maintaining a small clinical component has been very satisfying. I have enjoyed the friendships forged (or rekindled) with hospital and university staff, and have gained a greater appreciation of the complex nature of how to deliver dental services within a public health context.

My work/life balance (if such exists) comes in the form of time (as little as that may be) spent with my 2 children and close friends. All in all a very fortunate life!



Dr Nathan Cochrane

Class of 2002

Dr Nathan Cochrane commenced his dental education at The University of Melbourne in 1997 and has never really left. Since that time, he has journeyed through the roles of an undergraduate student, clinical demonstrator, postgraduate student, visiting lecturer and examiner. Nathan deferred during his 3rd and 4th year of his Bachelor of Dental Science and conducted a one year research project to obtain a Bachelor of Dental Studies degree. That year lit the research flame in Nathan and led to his return for further postgraduate training in 2005. Nathan completed his undergraduate training in 2002, graduating as top of the class after being on the Deans Honours role for every year since 2nd year.

General practice dentistry followed immediately after graduation when he accepted a position in Bendigo with Drs David and Jacki Goode. At this time, he also returned to The University of Melbourne as a clinical demonstrator for 3rd year students.

After 2.5 years of full time general practice, he decided to return to University to undertake a PhD on the remineralisation of carious enamel with casein phosphopeptide amorphous calcium fluoride phosphate. This research has resulted in a number of publications and presentations at both local and international level. In 2007, he was awarded the inaugural young investigators prize at the European Organisation for Caries Research Conference in Denmark for the best presentation by a young researcher.

He currently maintains his general practice skills as a contractor for the Australian Defence Force.

Nathan is heavily involved with the Australian Dental Association, is deputy Chairman of the Dental Health Education Committee and also a hearing panel member for the Health Practitioner Registration Board. In 2006, Nathan was selected as the ADA Young Professional Representative for a joint initiative between the Australia Japan Foundation and Professions Australia seeking to increase professional collaborations between the two countries. This program has seen Nathan visit, or receive delegations from, Japan each year since.

Nathan has just submitted his PhD and is looking forward to continuing his research and teaching endeavours at the Melbourne Dental School.



Class of 88 - Remember when ... ”

“20 years on and with that in mind, it was time to celebrate the occasion! We had a great attendance rate with approximately 50% of past graduates attending. 27 graduates of the class of 1988 attended the celebration at Yanni’s and Vasili’s in Abbotsford despite it being footy season - I was impressed”!

In preparation for the occasion, a little help was needed (and greatly appreciated!) from Chris Owen to complete the obligatory nametags, which of course had our most current photo, even if it was from yesteryear. These came in handy for those of us who found it difficult to remember colleagues, mind you none of us changed that much. However, to let the truth be known, there was one more senior person (who shall remain nameless) who had recourse to this resource.

With the obligatory class photo, many thanks to the photographer, we all enjoyed the evening with fond memories of all our past educators, mentors, supervisors and the like!

We left the night thinking how lucky we are and how special the bond we forged together all those years ago is! A special thanks to my dearest friend Anna without whom the night would not have been possible. To those who educated us, or at least tried to do their very best, we salute you!

Until the next reunion, take care and thanks everyone for making it a great night!

DR ESPERANCE KAHWAGI

From the Editors

We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of Dent-al, the Melbourne Dental School’s newsletter for alumni. We would be very pleased to have your feedback on this issue and if you would like to contribute in any way, or have any suggestions for future issues, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

If you have any items of interest, please let us know.

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