

Bob Tomlin



Professor H. R. 'Bob' Tomlin died on 18 April 2000. This date coincided with the Annual Conference of the British Society for the Study of Prosthetic Dentistry of which Bob had been a faithful member, President and Honorary Member.

Bob was born in 1918 and educated at The Grammar School in Barrow-in-Furness. Tertiary education was interrupted by the Second World War. Bob joined the Royal West African Frontier Force for the duration of the conflict. He was stationed in the Gold Coast, as it was then known. This period of his life was clearly of consid-

erable influence as Bob could, with very little encouragement, entertain his many friends with reminiscences of a distinctive 'It ain't 'arf 'ot mum' flavour. On demobilisation, Bob, like many ex-servicemen, commenced university education. He studied at the Edinburgh Dental School and Hospital and qualified in 1950. Following a house job he commenced as an assistant in general dental practice where he collected a good supply of anecdotes.

In 1955, Bob decided to move away from general practice into academic dentistry. He joined Professor John Osborne's team as a lecturer in dental prosthetics at the University of Birmingham. He was of course involved in the move into the new Dental School and Hospital in 1963. At that time the word 'expansion' was on everyone's lips, a far cry from the imposed policy of entrenchment in recent years. One of the new appointees to Birmingham was Harold Wilson. Bob and Harold established a friendship which saw them publish papers on the relatively new short-term soft lining materials, work which formed part of Bob's higher degree. Together they founded the Dental Materials Conference which expanded outside the UK and which continues thirty years later. Bob was pro-

moted to a senior lectureship and honorary consultantship in 1968 and to chairman in dental prosthetics following the retirement of John Osborne. He was co-author of a textbook on complete dentures which survives to this day. One could not wish for a colleague and friend who was more faithful, consistent and unselfish. Neither could one wish for a co-author who was more able to ensure that the task of writing was a pleasant and enjoyable occupation. Bob approached all he did with utmost care and with a great sense of responsibility. He supported his colleagues to the hilt and ensured that their interests came first. His approach to life was unwaveringly optimistic. Sharing a problem with Bob invariably led to the calm comment 'How do we sort this out?' rather than searching for other difficulties which were unlikely to exist. He shared this common sense approach with his predecessor.

Bob and his wife Audrey had a very happy and fulfilling retirement, made all the more enjoyable by their son Alex. Audrey and Alex are in our thoughts as we remember, with gratitude and pleasure, Bob's life.

R.M.B.

James Whitelaw



Jim Whitelaw was a successful general practitioner in Glasgow who devoted the latter part of his career to passing on his skills and experience to students and younger colleagues. His quick-witted humour made him a popular and memorable figure and a living proof that there are still 'characters' in professional education.

He qualified LDSRFPS from Glasgow Dental Hospital in 1947, and then served

for two years in the RADC in post-war Berlin where he was greatly moved by the suffering endured by the local population. Returning to Glasgow in 1949 he was briefly an assistant before taking on the West End practice where he worked for 27 years. During this time he also gave dental care to handicapped patients at Garnavel Royal Hospital and became a visiting teacher at the Glasgow Dental School.

In 1977 Jim was appointed to the full-time charge of the General Practice Unit which had been set up to introduce undergraduate students to the realities and opportunities of general practice. It was natural that he should play a prominent part in the developing organisation of vocational training in Scotland, which began in Glasgow in 1979. To all these activities he brought a sure touch and generous spirit which was underpinned by his great empathy with patients, students and colleagues. His memory is appropriately perpetuated in an undergraduate prize for outstanding merit in patient care. After retirement he served for five years as a part-

time dental adviser to the MDDUS, guiding and supporting colleagues with medico-legal problems and contributing further to an organisation with which he had a long association.

He was President of the Glasgow Odontological Society in 1977, and his address and dinner were a 'tour de force'. A much sought-after speaker outside dentistry also, his talents were appreciated particularly by the Kelvin Rotary Club, whose president he became, and as a founder member and later president of Eastwood Probus Club.

Jim was married to Fiona and they celebrated their golden wedding in 1998 in the company of their three children and seven grandchildren. He died suddenly at home on 3 August 2000. The quotation from Alexander Pope chosen by his fellow students to accompany his photograph in the Final Year Book of 1947 seems as apt a tribute now as then: 'True wit is nature to advantage dressed. What oft is thought but ne'er so well expressed.'

D.A.M.C.G

Peter Thomas Burke



Peter Thomas Burke was born in Tredegar, South Wales on 15th April 1922. He came from a family well steeped in the dental profession. His father and several uncles were

all dental surgeons and indeed his father, Thomas, had trained in the salubrious practice of 'Uncle Regan' at Manchester Piccadilly complete with butler and Rolls Royce. Thomas Burke, along with Nye Bevan and the novelist A. J. Cronin was involved in setting up the first public health scheme in Tredegar. Indeed Thomas featured in Cronin's most famous novel 'The Citadel' as Con the flame haired dentist with a passion for cars. In 1936, the family moved to Baldock in Hertfordshire where a practice had become vacant. Peter attended St Michaels College in Hitchin and in 1940 was called up in the RAF. This was really his university of life and he served in North Africa, the Middle East, Italy and Yugoslavia before being discharged in 1946. Like a lot of young service men at the end of World War II, Peter was quite uncertain as to his future. It was his own father

who advised that the dental profession might be an option. Peter trained at Guys Hospital for six years before qualifying in 1952. At this time he also met his future wife Joan and they married in 1953. The marriage was extremely happy and two children followed — Brian and Angela. Peter worked with his father in the Baldock practice until Thomas' death in 1960. He then carried on his own serving of the town of Baldock until retirement in 1988. Peter had a happy retirement at his beloved house, The Prairie, and took on all the domestic chores as his wife went out to teach and play golf. The end was instantaneous as Peter collapsed in the garden with Joan beside him. He was a kind, loving and non materialistic man who will be greatly missed by family, friends and patients alike. May he rest in peace.

J. B.

Frank Ashley



Professor Frank Ashley who died on 3rd September 2000 at the age of 58 after a long illness was Dean of the Guy's, King's and St Thomas' Dental Institute. He graduated BDS in 1964 at the Turner Dental School of the University of Manchester and, after a short period in general practice came to Guy's in 1968 where he remained until his death. After his arrival at Guy's to take up a research assistantship, his immense capacity for work, outstanding ability to organise and his meticulous attention to detail became abundantly evident. During this time he obtained the FDS and a PhD (Lond). He also undertook some clinical supervision of students, which revealed his brilliance as a teacher. On the expiry of his research assistantship he was appointed as

lecturer in periodontology and preventive dentistry. In 1973, he was promoted to senior lecturer. In 1979 the title of reader in periodontology and preventive dentistry was conferred on him by the University of London. In 1984, the University awarded him a Personal Chair as Professor of Periodontology and Preventive Dentistry. When the sub-deanship of the Dental School became vacant in 1984, Frank Ashley was the unanimous choice. During this period his administrative skills and understanding of university finances became widely appreciated. He maintained teaching and clinical schedules together with supervision of his PhD students and a vigorous research programme. His strict personal discipline, ability to organise his time and his 'workaholic' nature enabled him to achieve so much.

When Professor A. H. R. Rowe retired as Dean in 1991, Frank Ashley was the unanimous choice as his successor. Soon after taking up his appointment the first HEFC Research Assessment Exercise took place for which Guy's was awarded a top rating. At the subsequent RAE Guy's achieved a starred top rating, the only dental school in the country to do so. Frank Ashley served the profession in the wider field *inter alia* as assistant scientific editor of the *BDJ*, chairman of the BDA Dentifrice Accreditation Panel, member of the Health Education Council and chairman of the Dental Health Advisory Panel, member of the

GDC and chairman of its Health Committee and Central Examining Board for Dental Hygienists, and member of the Department of Health Standing Dental Advisory Group. He was a much sought after external examiner both in the UK and overseas. When in 1999, UMDS merged with King's College London and the Guy's, King's and St Thomas Dental Institute was formed, Frank Ashley was appointed dean.

With his immense wisdom and hand on the tiller, minor problems were soon overcome and the more difficult ones were faced with firm resolve. During the first year, the success of the merger was marked by being awarded the top rating in the Teaching Quality Assessment. In recognition of his work, the Fellowship of King's College was conferred upon him. Frank Ashley was a man of the highest integrity and personal courage. He faced his illness with great fortitude sustained by his profound Christian faith. He was a superb colleague brimming with new ideas, full of energy and enthusiasm and always ready to face problems. He cared greatly for people and was always ready to give time to everyone.

He was a family man deeply devoted to his wife, Carolyn. To her, their daughter Elizabeth, their son Paul and his wife Farrah, Frank Ashley's many friends and colleagues will wish to extend their deepest sympathy.

M.N.N and R.D.E.