



# The Newsletter of the Glasgow Dental School

# Dental Mirror

Issue 3  
October 2007

We are delighted to have such a diversity of material to publish in this issue and would like to thank all our contributors. You will find the changes taking place in undergraduate and postgraduate education very interesting and this will give you a greater appreciation of how such innovation is helping to get us recognised

nationally. Our undergraduate course has recently been ranked second in the UK by the Times. This is significantly different from second last three years ago!  
Your comments about *Dental Mirror* are much appreciated and please do not hesitate to continue to share these with us.

## Dental School New Postgraduate Portfolio

The Dental School started admitting to students again for taught postgraduate programmes on 7th September 2007. Fourteen students have started the MSc(Dent Sci) Primary Dental Care Programme which is designed for dentists in general dental practice and primary care who wish to achieve a qualification that will entitle them to apply (when clarified by the Departments of Health), to be a dentist with a special interest or an enhanced or advanced practitioner.

The first year is a core course consisting of topics in basic science, health science, and research science. In the second year students can choose one of either Endodontics, Periodontics, Removable Prosthodontics, Fixed Prosthodontics, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, or Special Care Dentistry as their special interest subject. The second year incorporates 'mentored clinical practice' in the student's own dental practice. The third year is completed with an audit / research project in practice/primary care.

**Course leaders in the MSc are:** Dr Robin Orchardson (*Core*); Dr Colin Murray (*Endodontics*); Mr Lee Savarrio (*Periodontics*); Professor Fraser McCord (*Removable Prosthodontics*); Mr John McCrosson (*Fixed Prosthodontics*); Professor Jim McDonald (*Orthodontics*); Dr Petrina Sweeney (*Special Care Dentistry*); Professor Richard Welbury (*Paediatric Dentistry and Programme Director*).

**Welcome to Glasgow to:** Saleh Aria; Caroline Beaton; Paul D'Eathe; James Donn; Tricia Granger; Abigail Heffernan; John Ho-A-Yun; Giorgios Leros; Lorna Moncrieff; Janette Nayak; Jamie Newlands; Irene Offord; Umar Rehman; Ewen White.

Planning for future didactic courses for overseas graduates is progressing well and our business plan includes the following courses which are scheduled to commence in September 2008:

- **MPhil Oral and Maxillo Facial Surgery, (OMFS)**  
2 years full time  
*Programme Director* – Professor Ashraf Ayoub
- **MPhil Restorative Dentistry, (RestDent)**  
2 years full time  
*Programme Director* – Professor Fraser McCord
- **DClinDent Orthodontics, (Orth)**  
3 years full time  
*Programme Director* – Dr Sunny Khambay

It is our intention to recruit the following numbers of students to each of the above courses:

- **MSc in Primary Dental Care.** 12+ students/year/each year
- **MPhil (OMFS).** 3-4 students/year/each year
- **MPhil (RestDent).** 6 students/year/each year
- **DClinDent (Orth).** 2 students/every 4th year

The core course previously mentioned in the MSc (Dent Sci) Primary Dental Care will be common to all Postgraduate Courses.

**Professor Richard Welbury**  
*New PG Programmes Coordinator*

# Staff News

## Congratulations

### Dr Marie Therese Hosey

Promotion to Reader in Child Dental Health.

### Dr Ailsa Nicol

Awarded an ITI Clinical Scholarship at the University of Florida Gainesville, USA (for one year from 1st October).

### Dr Jason Leitch

5-year secondment to the Scottish Government as Special Advisor to the Chief Medical Officer.

### Helen-Marie Clayton

2-year secondment to the International and Postgraduate Service as an International Officer.

### Dr Colin Murray

Awarded the Bellahouston Medal (see below).

## University Appointments

A warm welcome to new University staff:

*Administrative Officer* – Mr Stuart Hutchison

*Senior Lecturer in Epidemiology* – Dr Alex McMahon

*Lecturer in Ethics in Relation to Dentistry* – Dr David Shaw

*Senior Lecturer in Oral Biology* – Dr João Carlos Miguel

*Clinical Teacher in Restorative Dentistry* – Mr Niall Rogerson

## NHS Appointments

A warm welcome to new NHS staff:

*Pros Lab MTO* - Cameron Smith.

*Pros Lab Clerical Officer* - Lynne Currie.

David Devennie – Staff Grade (Teaching), Department of Restorative Dentistry.

## NHS Leaving

All our best wishes to colleagues who are leaving:

*DCP School Secretary* - Christine Piechowiak.

*Dental Nurse* - Louise Dillon.

*Dental Nurse* - Romy Slater.

# Medal Success for Glasgow Dental School Staff

The Bellahouston Medal, instituted in 1897, is awarded annually by the University of Glasgow Faculty of Medicine for the most outstanding thesis (PhD, MD or DDS) submitted by a medical or dental graduate. In recent years, this prestigious award has been won on three occasions by academic staff at Glasgow Dental School:

Dr M Petrina Sweeney (2000), Dr Keith Hunter (2005) and Dr Colin Murray (2006). Their theses, in the fields of special care dentistry, oral cancer and oral immunology respectively, reflect core themes within the research strategies of the Dental School and Faculty of Medicine and demonstrate the commitment of the Dental School

to achieving research excellence.

Pictured just prior to the presentation of Dr Murray's medal at the Wolfson Medical School Building, University of Glasgow, on 16th May 2007 are (left to right) Dr Hunter, Dr Sweeney, Professor John Reid (*Regius Professor of Medicine & Therapeutics, and Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*) and Dr Murray.



# Moodle

The Dental School began to utilise the University supported virtual learning environment, Moodle in August 2004. This coincided with the introduction of the first year of the new dental curriculum. A virtual learning environment is a computer simulated surrounding in which to gain knowledge and skill.

## So what is Moodle?

*Moodle is a course management system (CMS) - a free, Open Source software package designed using sound pedagogical principles, to help educators create effective online learning communities. [www.moodle.org](http://www.moodle.org)*

Moodle is an acronym for **Modular Object-Orientated Dynamic Learning Environment**. It is also a verb that describes the process of lazily meandering through something, doing things as it occurs to you to do them, an enjoyable tinkering that often leads to insight and creativity. As such it applies to the way a student or teacher might approach studying or teaching an online course. Anyone who uses Moodle is a Moodler.

Moodle is a software package for producing internet-based courses and web sites. It's an ongoing development project designed to support a social constructionist framework of education. Moodle is provided freely as Open Source software. Basically this means Moodle is copyrighted, but that you have additional freedoms. You are allowed to copy,

use and modify Moodle provided that you agree to: provide the source to others; not modify or remove the original license and copyrights, and apply this same license to any derivative work. There are over 29832 Moodle sites in 189 countries, 2145 within the United Kingdom alone.

## The Moodle contribution to studying dentistry in Glasgow

Our aim with this new environment was to support the student learning experience in the 2004 dental curriculum. However once word got round, all the students wanted access to it. The environment now supports the pre 2004 curriculum as well as the 2004 curriculum with all students and staff, registered and participating.

This autumn sees the launch of a new programme of postgraduate courses and as you would expect Moodle has a role to play in these. It is beginning to be more than a simple file repository, with many courses utilising interactive elements such as forums, quizzes and assignments.

The Moodle environment can be viewed at: <http://moodle.gla.ac.uk/dental>. For further details on the Dental School's use and future plans for this environment please contact me at [r.mckerlie@dental.gla.ac.uk](mailto:r.mckerlie@dental.gla.ac.uk).

**Robert McKerlie**  
*University Teacher  
& Moodle Administrator*

# Undergraduate Elective

Lots of people told me that Orkney would not have electricity or cars. Despite this I decided to make the long trip north from Birmingham. On approaching these green and pleasant islands all I could hear in my head was the "Father Ted" theme tune. What have I let myself in for?

On arrival, to my surprise, they even had street lighting but on a July evening there was not much need for it. They even had a bookshop with a Harry Potter poster in it! I would be able to get the new book after all.

My accommodation was spartan but functional. A timetable, which had me leaping between 5 sites! These covered everything including General Dental Services, Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, Special Care Dentistry and private dentistry.

Observing the dentists at work at this stage of my career was like work- experience with the light switched on. Frustrating that I couldn't get in there and do it myself but look out vocational training here I come! The in- surgery time is just a small part of the elective experience, as we all know.

There really wasn't enough time in 2 weeks to take in all the sights but the friendliness of the locals made sure that I got as wide experience as possible. There is work to be done on the back of this. I am trying to find out what made these dentists come to Orkney and stay. Even after my short visit I

can see the attraction. It seems to me that if you are looking for a varied dental career in an environment which is close to nature, but still has bookshops and a cinema, then this might be the place for you.

**Frances Goble, Birmingham Dental School**

*A small number of grants of £500 are available to defray travel and accommodation for student electives in Orkney. To learn more about Electives in Orkney contact Moya Nelson, CADO: [moya.nelson@orkney-hb.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:moya.nelson@orkney-hb.scot.nhs.uk)*



# Research Matters - Infection & Immunity Research Section

In this edition of Dental Mirror it is the turn of final research section within the Dental School, the Infection and Immunity Research Section, to apprise us of their progress.

For many years, Glasgow Dental School has enjoyed a strong reputation in diagnostic oral microbiology and infection-related research following the pioneering work of Emeritus Professor T Wallace MacFarlane, who established the original Oral Microbiology Unit. In recent years, the Oral Microbiology Diagnostic Service has become the only such service nationally to gain CPA accreditation and the scope of research activities has broadened with the appointment of new staff members. Currently the Infection & Immunity Group (head of group: Dr Marcello Riggio) conducts research across the following three main themes:

## Biofilms

*(theme leader: Dr Gordon Ramage)*

There is no question that the use of various medical devices has greatly facilitated the management of serious medical and surgical conditions. However, the introduction of artificial materials into several anatomical locations has been accompanied by the ability of micro-organisms to colonise them and form biofilms. These complex films of microbes encased in a 'glue' like layer protect the cells from antimicrobial agents and the host immune system, and often lead to persistent and recurrent infections. Recent estimates predict that at least 65% of all infections are biofilm related. For example, devices such as dentures, prosthetic limbs, catheters and indwelling biomaterials all have been shown to support colonisation and biofilm formation by bacterial and fungal species.

Here at the University of Glasgow Dental School we are particularly interested in biofilms that form on oral and medical prosthetic appliances and indwelling devices. In addition, we have an active interest in how microbes grow as biofilms and interact with the immune system on biological surfaces of the oral cavity.

It is our overall aim to develop new strategies to combat and eradicate these 'hard-to-treat' infections by understanding what microbes are involved, how they grow on surfaces and cause disease, and what antimicrobial agents are effective.

Current projects include work on biofilms associated with; oral candidosis, MRSA biofilms, fungal biofilms in the ICU, root canal infections, periodontal infection, prosthetic joint infection and cystic fibrosis.

In collaboration with the Diabetic Centre at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, we are currently investigating a large population of non-smoking type 1 diabetes mellitus patients for prevalence of chronic periodontitis and other oral complications including dental decay and oral candidosis.

We are also participating in the UK and Ireland Periodontal Disease Consortium which is a collaboration involving 10 universities in the UK and Ireland. The ultimate aim is to identify genetic markers for susceptibility to aggressive periodontitis, a severe form of periodontitis which is diagnosed in patients under the age of 45.

## Diagnostics

*(theme leader: Dr Marcello Riggio)*

Research in this area has concentrated on the development of improved diagnostic tests for identifying bacteria associated with both oral and non-oral diseases. In particular, identification of bacteria using 16S rRNA gene sequencing technology has been used to identify species that are difficult to grow in the laboratory, those which cannot be grown and those which have never been previously identified.

This approach has been used to investigate the role of oral bacteria in infections in other parts of the human body, including heart disease, prosthetic joint infections and arthritis, as well as in oral diseases such as periodontal disease, halitosis and spreading odontogenic infections.

Collaboration with colleagues at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Glasgow was recently established to investigate the bacteria associated with oral disease in cats, dogs and sheep, and also arthritis in dogs. There is a close genetic relationship between oral streptococci and the more invasive *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (also known as the pneumococcus). These species can exchange genetic material, such as antibiotic resistance genes.

A close working partnership has been established with the internationally recognised Pneumococcus Research Group led by Professor Tim Mitchell (<http://www.gla.ac.uk:443/ibls/staff/staff.php?who=PAGA|A>) at the University of Glasgow Institute of Biological & Life Sciences, to undertake research that will improve our understanding of the distribution of genes in oral streptococci and the pneumococcus that are responsible for disease.

## Infection Control and Decontamination Sciences

*(theme leader: Dr Andrew Smith)*

Hardly a day goes by without TV, radio or newspapers highlighting the threat of superbugs, emergence of new diseases and the spread of some ghastly disease by healthcare workers. Our group is at the leading edge in combating these threats and members of our group are in demand locally, nationally and internationally to provide advice and undertake testing of new and old technologies to keep us safe.

Our group has undertaken the largest observational study of instrument decontamination in dental practice, the findings of which continue to influence Health Department policies across the UK and will have an unprecedented impact on the future operation and set up of general dental practices. Further work is on-going in partnership with Health Protection Scotland to investigate new equipment (washer-disinfectors), surgery design and practice management.

Work by our group has also led to big changes in how we handle some types of dental instruments in our day to day work, for example, matrix bands and endodontic files. Our work on endodontic files has led to the reappraisal of the risks of vCJD from dental treatment, and endodontic files are now single use only.

Work continues in collaboration with the Health Protection Agency (Porton

Down) on the biology of prions in the oral tissues and transmission by dental instruments. In addition our work on the epidemiology of vCJD and potential links with dental treatment in collaboration with the CJD Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh continues to be supported by the Department of Health.

Our activities are not limited to laboratory research and we are

actively involved in the appraisal and development of new infection control teaching programmes – this includes the NES Cleanliness Champions initiative (currently undergoing a dental facelift) and the UK's first dedicated Decontamination Clinical Skills Laboratory on level 9 of Glasgow Dental Hospital & School.

**Dr Marcello Riggio, Head of Infection and Immunity Section**

## Prosthodontic and Orthodontic Technology Training

I have worked at the Dental Hospital since Sept. 1972. I trained at the Dental Hospital when we still had technician training 'in house' and proceeded through the grades to reach Laboratory Services Manager for Prosthodontics (Level 2) and Orthodontics (Level 5).

The laboratories are responsible for all prosthodontic and orthodontic work for all clinical staff, and dental undergraduates, as well as covering the technical work for other hospitals: Glasgow Royal Infirmary; Stobhill General; The Royal Hospital for Sick Children. You can appreciate that we are kept pretty busy!

The work is carried out by 30 technicians and a clerical assistant, which is 21 technicians in Prosthodontic and 9 technicians in Orthodontics. This may seem like a lot of staff but remember we have a lot of clinical staff to provide for. The technicians range in experience from many years standing to trainees. We currently have 2 in each laboratory classed as trainees. The trainees attend Telford College in Edinburgh for the HNC certificate in Dental Technology over a period of 4 years.

There are also post qualifying certificates in each of the specialities i.e. Prosthodontics, Orthodontics, Crown & Bridge, and Maxillo Facial Technology, which takes a further 2 years to HND level. Almost all of the hospital technicians train to this level as it is required to proceed through to the higher grades.

Degree courses are also available in some areas and are currently being developed in Scotland. Dental Technicians throughout the UK are currently in the process of being registered with the GDC. All of us must be registered by next August or we will no longer be able to work on patient cases.

The Prosthodontic Lab is split into 3 teams, each of which is headed by a very experienced technician. Each team has 5 technicians & each team is allocated its own cases. Individual technicians do not, as a rule, carry out a case from start to finish but the team to which they belong will see the case through. This allows the less experienced staff to carry out stages of work on complex cases that they otherwise would not get the opportunity to work on. Team work is an important teaching and learning tool.

In the Orthodontic Laboratory each technician does complete the case allocated to them as the technical work here consists mainly of 1 stage rather than the 6 stages in Prosthodontics. Each laboratory has a manager who will be happy to assist you with any enquiries. In Prosthodontics this is Graeme Reid and in Orthodontics it is Tony Coyne.

Both laboratories have a vast amount of experience, so please use it. Feel free to come and ask any technical queries you may have. We will always try to accommodate your questions.

**Lynn Macdonald, Laboratory Services Manager**

## Staff Publications 2006 - (continued from last edition of Dental Mirror)

38. Silva NA, McCluskey J, Jefferies JM, Hinds J, Smith AJ, Clarke SC, Mitchell TJ, Patterson GK. Genomic diversity between strains of the same serotype and multilocus sequence type among pneumococcal clinical isolates. *Infection & Immunity* 2006;**74**:3513-8.
39. Smith AJ, Jefferies J, Clarke SC, Dowson C, Edwards GF, Mitchell TJ. Distribution of epidemic antibiotic-resistant pneumococcal clones in Scottish pneumococcal isolates analysed by multilocus sequence typing. *Microbiology* 2006;**152**:361-5.
40. Vardar-Sengul S, Buduneli N, Buduneli E, Kardesler L, Baylas H, Atilla G, Lappin DF, Kinane DF. Dietary supplementation of omega-3 fatty acid and circulating levels of interleukin-1beta, osteocalcin, and C-reactive protein in rats. *Journal of Periodontology* 2006;**77**:814-20.
41. Vardar-Sengul S, Buduneli N, Buduneli E, Baylas H, Atilla G, Lappin DF, Kinane DF. Effects of selective cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitor and omega-3 fatty acid on serum interleukin-1beta, osteocalcin, and C-reactive protein levels in rats. *J.Periodontol.* 2006;**77**:657-63.
42. Watt RG, Benzian H, Binnie VI, Gafner C, Hovius M, Newton TJ, Mecklenburg RE. Public health aspects of tobacco control: setting the agenda for action by oral health professions across Europe. *Oral Health Prev.Dent.* 2006;**4**:19-26.
43. Wilson KE, Girdler NM, Welbury RR. A comparison of oral midazolam and nitrous oxide sedation for dental extractions in children. *Anaesthesia* 2006;**61**:1138-44.
44. Wright G, Muir ML, Bryan R, Smith AJ, Hosey MT. Dental follicle infection following a dog bite. *Int.J.Paediatr.Dent.* 2006;**16**:147-50.
45. Zhili M, Siebert JP, Cockshott PW, Ayoub AF. Constructing dense correspondences for the analysis of 3D facial morphology. *Pattern Recognition Letters* 2006;**27**:597-628.

# Training for new Dental Graduates – A Demanding Problem

The introduction of Vocational Training (VT) for new graduates several years ago has undoubtedly been a great success. Having a first job in a dental practice which meets certain standards, a supportive trainer and a standard salary has without question made life easier for new graduates.

Recently however the recruitment process for training programmes has been affected by several factors such as:

- legislation making VT mandatory prior to working in the NHS
- the introduction of the dental student bursary in Scotland
- findings of the Scottish Dental Practice Based Research Network (SDPBRN) report which indicates that Scottish VT is very highly thought of by participants
- increased output of Scottish dental schools
- a move away from the NHS by a number of potential trainers, thus making them ineligible to be trainers

All of the above have impacted on trainee and trainer numbers and this has resulted in increased competition for training places in Scotland. Additionally, European law prohibits the exclusion of any non-Scottish dental graduate from the Scottish selection process and, as word spreads regarding the quality of Scottish VT, so the numbers of graduates from outside Scotland wishing to participate have increased.

In an effort to reduce the possibility of graduates being unable to find a post in Scotland if they wish, those involved with training programmes in NES have been enthusiastically pursuing more training posts and this has resulted in an unprecedented number of trainers in Scotland and created a challenge to NES to maintain the standards of quality with these demanding targets for recruitment.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that VT in England is in slight disarray, with growing discontent and uncertainty amongst English dental graduates about the availability of posts there. This in turn creates uncertainty for organisers of training posts in Scotland as it is not known exactly how many graduates will want to travel to Scotland to undertake their training year here, where the situation is much more stable. As competition for places increases, NES is acutely aware of the increased pressure this can create for final year students, particularly at a time when they are approaching their finals.

In order to be successful in this competitive market, it is important for students from Glasgow, and elsewhere, to realise that performing well at interviews and creating a good impression with potential trainers becomes even more important than it was in the past. CVs and the communication skills of dental graduates have always been impressive and it is the wise dental student who can produce a portfolio or perform at an interview in a way which makes them stand out from the crowd.

Graduating students seeking employment have never had such a variety of options as they have today. There are currently a number of training programmes available in Scotland such as:

- VT – A one year training programme in General Practice which, following attainment of satisfactory completion, allows the issue of a Health Board list number.
- Dental Foundation (DF) – This 2 year programme allows new graduates to receive further training in different services, different disciplines and in different chronological orders, sometimes concurrently.

Even the traditional model of VT is changing to permit greater choice. The 1:1 trainer:trainee model is gradually being supplemented by posts where trainers with enhanced training skills are taking on more than one trainee at a time. Currently 1:2 models are available but rapid progress is being made towards 1:3 and even 1:4 models where a single trainer's focus is primarily on training rather than treating. Hygienist-Therapists are also being introduced to this arrangement in order that the training practice encompasses training for the whole dental team.

In an effort to fully inform students and keep the inevitable stress to a minimum, NES will continue to provide talks to the final year students on training programmes. Additionally information nights and information booklets are freely available to any Scots graduate who wishes to know more.

It is hoped that despite the increasing competition, Scots graduates will be able to find a post to their liking if they wish to remain in the country.

**Alan Walker**  
*DPGDPE August 2007*

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## A Pilot Scheme for Dental Technician Vocational Training within the Dental School

In collaboration with NES NHS Scotland, Glasgow Dental Hospital and School is taking part in a pilot scheme for vocational training of dental technicians (VDTech). This initiative is the first of its kind anywhere in the United Kingdom. Following a 'pre-pilot' of four dental technicians (VDTech) from February to June this year, 10 technicians will observe and work with BDS4 students in removable

prosthodontics from September to December 2007 under the supervision of Professor Fraser McCord. The technician's 'clinical attachment' will consist of observing students and staff in the clinic and undertaking the technical processes associated with the student cases.

This part of the scheme provides technicians with an introduction to the clinical environment and an

opportunity to work closely with undergraduates and clinical teachers thereby developing and fostering good communication between members of the dental team. This is an exciting development in dental technology training in advance of the proposed Dental Care Professional registration with the General Dental Council in June 2008.

**Donald Cameron, University Teacher**

# Student Matters



Final Year Dinner 2007. Courtesy of Wesleyan Medical Sickness and Murdoch Ferguson

The G.D.S.S social calendar was kicked off this year with the thoroughly successful "Big Brother, Big Sister" night. It was the perfect opportunity to welcome our 92 new first years to the colourful social life of "the dental student". Everyone seemed to enjoy the festivities and there was a great turn out from all years.

Many students consider the annual field day to be one of the real highlights of the year. This November we look forward to the trip south of the border to Newcastle. The recently formed 'Team Tooth' are relishing the prospect of playing both Dundee and Newcastle's dental football teams. We are also hoping to send a representative rugby team, a woman's football team and a hockey team. As always we expect the usual high turnout from the Glasgow students to support our teams and also those who partake in the "refreshment" activities and games!

The November Ball is being held in Bar Sola on Friday 16th November, with a 'Granny and Grandpa' fancy dress theme to the evening. Highlights include games of Bingo, a raffle and a free set of 'Wallies' to the best dressed Gran and Grandpa! Perhaps a Prosthodontic member of staff will check the "resting face height" at the end of the evening.

Plans for the dental panto are also well under way; with the script almost complete, the thespians among the G.D.S.S

are eager to start rehearsals. 'Peter Panavia and the revenge of Captain Drill' is loosely based upon 'Peter Pan' and promises to be an all singing, all dancing extravaganza. The one show in the evening will no doubt help everyone attending to enter into the Christmas spirit, especially with a visit from Santa Claus himself – Ho, Ho, Ho.

We have secured the Art School's students union for this years performance. That's the building on the corner of Renfrew Street and Scott Street. It is on Tuesday 18th December commencing once the clinic finishes at 6:30pm until 8:00pm. Doors open at 5:00pm and there is a bar open for refreshments. We have the use of the venue after the Pantomime, 8 till late, with dental DJ's so it should be a good social evening. All profit will go towards the selected charity - SKIP. The money raised will be used to promote correct handwashing procedures in Malawi.

The third year students have been raising funds to help defray the costs of their half way dinner and wish you to put the date in your diary. It is on Saturday 1st March 2008, at 19:30 until 01:30 in the Millennium Hotel at George Square. At this stage it is hoped the tickets will not exceed £35:00. They would greatly appreciate as many staff as possible attending along with their year.

**Thomas Lamont, *President G.D.S.S***

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## Education Matters - Reflection in the 2004 BDS curriculum

Students in higher education are being encouraged to be active and independent learners rather than passive recipients of information, the Dearing Report endorsing the use of progress files to support this approach to learning. A portfolio intended to fulfil the role of a progress file and to promote learning through reflection was introduced as a central component of the revised undergraduate degree at the Glasgow Dental School in 2004.

Because the process of reflective learning is new for students it was felt at the outset that it would need careful facilitation, so a system of mentoring was introduced in conjunction with

the portfolio. On entering the School, each student is assigned to a member of teaching staff who will be his or her designated mentor for the duration of the BDS programme.

Each mentor has between four and six students who form a discussion group, groups meeting on average three times a year to discuss their reflections. This reflective discussion is facilitated by the mentor. Students also meet their mentors on an individual basis on three occasions, more if required.

Students' and mentors' views of the portfolio and of reflection were gathered in 2005 and 2006; data for 2007 is being collected currently. Most students did not enjoy reflecting (a

finding commonly reported elsewhere) or feel that it helped to identify their learning needs. However, it appears that they took exception to written reflection, rather than reflecting per se, and they were generally very positive about mentor group discussions and having a mentor.

Comparisons of the views of students in BDS1 2004-5 and again at the end of BDS2 2005-6 suggest that they are becoming more comfortable with reflection, which is encouraging, as is the fact that the great majority of mentors in the two years evaluated to date said that they had enjoyed being a mentor.

**Dr. Helen Bush, *Curriculum Facilitator***

# Personal Reflection

We're going up the hills again and you're all very welcome! All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.....not to mention unfit. But getting a department's staff out of their work building and onto the green pastures and rocky outcrops of the hills of Scotland was going to be a challenge....or so I thought.

The department of Paediatric Dentistry's inaugural ramble up a hill came in the form of Conic Hill at Loch Lomond in summer 2006. This is a hill which despite a fairly healthy incline saw us, after less than an hour of walking, at the peak with superb views over the islands of Loch Lomond. It was great on our very first walk to have the company of staff from other departments along with their friends and family.

Despite some typical Scottish drizzle, by the time we returned to the bottom, the picnickers were not to be deterred and the tablecloths, soups, sandwiches and teas were mightily enjoyed.....almost as much as our tipples or two afterwards in the Oak Tree Inn at the foot of the hill at Balmaha.

Dumyat in the Ochil Hills of Stirlingshire gave our walkers their next venture. After such good press from our last walk, not only had we managed to get staff, friends and family out...this time we even had the dental school's very own Head, Professor Bagg in tow. (Though jealously I must

correct myself and tell you that he in fact had US in tow!). For relatively little effort - the car park is halfway up the hill - the 1000ft of Dumyat gives absolutely stunning views from the Forth Rail Bridge in the east, over the many bonded whisky warehouses in the Forth Valley and westwards to the Trossachs.

Our descent took us to a thoroughly enjoyable lunch at the Sherrifmuir Inn, a stopping point in days gone by for farmers bringing their livestock from the Perthshire lands to sale at market in Stirling. It's understood that many animals never made it as far as market, having been traded on the way to fund drinking at the Inn. Thankfully our monies sufficed and no errant Professors had to be traded in for the amber nectar.

By the time this issue of the Dental Mirror comes to press, we will hopefully be having an Indian Summer and have had our third walk, taking us up 'The Whangie' at Auchineden Hill by Carbeth. As for future walks, there will be notices posted throughout the hospital and I would like to warmly invite anyone who is interested to come along.

Here's to good walking and beer garden weather.....

**Graeme Wright**  
*SpR in Paediatric Dentistry*



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