

DR. P RAYMOND BEGG, A.O. (1898-1983)

International and Australian orthodontics suffered a great loss with the death Dr. P. Raymond Begg on January 18th, 1983. Only those members of the dental profession who travelled overseas were able to fully experience the high esteem in which he was held outside his own country and understand the extraordinary impact which Tick Begg had universally on the development of orthodontics over the past thirty years.

From the month of March, 1924, when he entered the Angle School of Orthodontia in Pasadena, California, Dr. Begg devoted his professional life to orthodontics with a consuming passion. Those who were privileged to spend a great deal of time with him had little doubt that in many ways he cast himself in the mould of his teacher Edward Angle.

Historically it is fascinating to consider that while at the Angle School Dr. Begg and Dr. Fred Ishi of Japan were the first to treat patients with Dr. Angle's new edgewise appliance even though he was still teaching the ribbon arch mechanism. Dr. Begg's programme of the Third Annual Meeting of the Edward H. Angle's College of Orthodontia in Pasadena, California, 1924, reads like an orthodontic who's who. Some of those attending the Meeting were Dr. R.H.W. Strang, Dr. Spencer R. Atkinson, Dr. Frederick B. Noyes, Dr. George H. Han, Dr. Anna Hopkins Angle and Dr. Homer M. Sheldon just to mention but a few of the participants. From the very beginning of his involvement in orthodontics Dr. Begg was fortunate to have known many of the 'greats' of orthodontics. Little wonder that he had such a fine perception of historical events. Trained in an innovative environment Dr. Begg, with his perceptive orthodontic mind began a career of ongoing avant-garde changes which established him as an international orthodontist without peer.

Firstly, he discarded the tenet of the full complement of teeth and began extracting teeth in 1928. By 1930 he began using round section arch wire and three years later he incorporated into his evolving technique Dr. Angle's ribbon arch bracket facing the slot gingivally. A significant event, with long term repercussions occurred in 1934 when he treated his first planned eight-tooth extraction case of four first premolars and four first permanent molars. Then round stainless steel wires were introduced to replace rectangular gold-platinum wire.

In the early 1940's Dr. Begg became acquainted with Mr. Arthur Wilcox, the metallurgist, who developed over many years a series of unique stainless steel wires with their special qualities of hardness and resilience. It will hardly be a surprise to know that Mr. Wilcock topped his Technical College with a mark of 100 percent in the subject of 'Heat Treatment'. During 1954, Dr. Begg pioneered the use of titanium wire for the treatment of patients using wire prepared for him by Mr. Wilcock and Professor J.N. Greenwood, the Research Professor of Metallurgy at the University of Melbourne. This event preceded by some 25 years the overseas introduction of titanium alloys for this purpose — an outstanding Australian achievement that has yet to be fully recognised throughout the profession.

Dr. Begg published his first paper, 'Normal Occlusion and Macroocclusion' in the 1926 Australian Journal of Dentistry. This article marked the beginning of a life-long involvement with the relationship of dental attrition to malocclusion and periodontal disease. Two major dissertations arose from this area of biological research. The first was 'Some Aspects of the Aetiology of Irregularity and Malocclusion of the Teeth' for which The University of Adelaide conferred upon him a Doctor of Dental Science Degree in 1935. The second principal dissertation comprised the series of papers on 'Stone Age Man's Dentition' and the 'Light Arch Wire Technique' which appeared in the American Journal of Orthodontics during 1954 and 1956 and established him as an orthodontist of international renown for the rest of his life.

As the result of the world wide interest in his technique he prepared three editions of the text 'Begg Orthodontic Theory and Technique' which were translated into five different languages.

His 'Light Arch Wire Differential Force Technique' produced dramatic changes in full-banded orthodontic treatment in every continent. Even today the strong influence of his concepts can be seen in the gradual evolution of other orthodontic appliances. Establishment of Begg Societies of orthodontists in North America, Europe, Japan, South Africa and Australia bear clear testimony of his impact as a major figure of the past 50 years.

Since 1960 Dr. Begg has presented orthodontic courses at universities and institutions around the world. So often his penetrating and pithy orthodontic remarks tended to be overshadowed by a rare sense of humour which was ever present.

Dr. Begg's consuming passion for orthodontics kept him in private practice evolving continual technical advancement until he retired in October 1980 at the age of 82. Thereafter, he maintained his orthodontic interest advocating the use of '.022' wire in second and third stage treatment, encouraging the replacement of anchorage bends with curves and designing a new short torquing auxiliary. At the time of his death Dr. Begg had prepared a new paper for publication. His last patient, on a bracket, was registered in December, 1982.

The programme of the Third Annual Meeting of the Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontists held in Pasadena, California, 1924 bears Dr. Begg's signature. At the bottom on every page was a brief quote from Dr. Angle which collectively read as follows:

'There is only one best way'

'And just in proportion to his grasp of the underlying principles is the work of the Orthodontist reduced from chaos to order and system'.

'See the things behind the things'

'Meantime I would leave these simple injunctions with you: think more sharply: reason more carefully; work more delicately and accurately'.

These words convey better than any personal tribute can hope to do, the clinical philosophy of Dr. Begg.

Although not an active politician, Dr. Begg was nevertheless involved in many societies. He was a founding member of the Australian Society of Orthodontists in 1927, an Honorary Life Member of the Australian Society of Orthodontists, Honorary Life Member of the Australian Dental Association, and an Associate Member of the American Association of Orthodontists. He was a Fellow of the International College of Dentists, Fellow of the Academy-International of Dentistry, Member of the Pierre Fauchard Academy, Honorary Professor of Orthodontics at Nippon Dental College, inaugural Honorary Member of the Australian Section of Academy of Gnathology, and President Emeritus or Honorary Member of various international societies bearing his name.

The American Association of Orthodontists honoured Dr. Begg in 1977 with the Orthodontic profession's most prestigious accolade, the Albert H. Ketcham Award. His fellow Australian orthodontists honoured him by establishing the P. Raymond Begg Research Award in his honour in 1978. For distinguished service of a high degree to Australia and to humanity at large the Australian Government conferred upon him the award of Officer of the Order of Australia (A.O.) in June, 1981.

Dr. Begg retired in October, 1980, after 55 years of specialist practice. He was then 82 years of age. It was an unforgettable experience to visit him in his study at home and hear him talk about his life. His study contained many mementos of his family and career. Three prominent items were a photograph of the first Orient sailing ship which his grandfather brought to Australia, a captain's chair and a

corner cabinet on the wall which also came from one of his grandfather's ships. In this environment Dr. Begg would reminisce at great length about his early year at Dr. Angle's school and also in specialist practice in Australia. These meetings were occasions to treasure by those who were fortunate enough to experience them. During his later years his great love was talking with local and interstate postgraduate students about his appliances or reflecting on his earlier life, particularly his time with Dr. Angle.

The Orthodontic world is all the poorer for Dr. Begg's passing. He devoted his professional life to the shaping of new faces, new dentitions and providing his treated patients with a new confidence and outlook on life. Both the Orthodontic profession and its patients were the benefactors of his outstanding contributions to the profession.

Dr. Begg's office effects, records and clinical models are being catalogued to be housed in a recreation of his surgery in Shell House. This display will prove to be a fitting and important tribute to his many significant contributions and a reminder of the environment in which so many of his new concepts were developed and tested.

Dr. Begg is survived by his wife Nellie and three children, Mr. David Begg, Dr. Janet Solly and Mrs. Diana Coates to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

Milton R. Sims

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The Trustees allocate funds or specific research grants from income derived from the invested capital of the Foundation. These Funds are limited and preference normally will be given to assisting projects rather than providing large sums for major research projects.

To assist potential applicants, Trustees of the Foundation will make themselves available for consultation with prospective applicants. **Applications for consideration for 1985 funding close on November 30th, 1984.**

Application forms and other particulars may be obtained from:

Dr R. H. WALLMAN
Hon. Secretary • Treasurer
The Foundation for Orthodontic Research
94 Kermonde Street, Adelaide 5000,
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