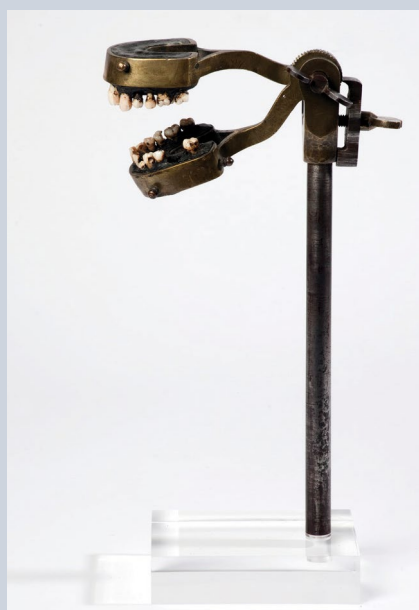


## BDA MUSEUM

## Phantom head

By Rachel Bairsto, Head of Museum Services, British Dental Association Museum

The phantom head is a vital teaching tool to hone clinical practice. One style of phantom head was based upon milliners' blocks that were specially adapted for use by dental students. King's Dental School was described as having, in the 1920s, 'a phantom head room ... provided with ten heads; large wooden structures which had been obtained



... from Messrs Clarkson the famous theatrical wigmakers.<sup>1</sup> However, assembling the mouth to work on was done in house and the hospital engineering department made the metal jaws and joints. It was even suggested that students should source the natural teeth before the start of term.

At the Annual General Meeting of the BDA in 1894 at Newcastle upon Tyne, Scottish dentist Oswald Fergus presented his dental phantom for the use of students and demonstrators. He commented that it was designed to 'aid both student and teacher at this trying time and initiatory stage in his professional career' and this phantom aimed to simulate chairside work. He went on to suggest his phantom 'lends itself to the illustration of almost any operation surgical or mechanical, that comes within the scope of our art. For example, the following steps may be demonstrated upon it. Adjusting the rubber dam, preparation of any cavity in any situation, filling such cavities with the material most suited for the situation in which it is to be placed; the crowning or capping any root or roots with any numerous styles of crowns; the construction upon suitable roots or tooth of various forms of bridgework and lastly the



application of either partial or full dentures of vulcanite, metal or continuous gum.'

Oswald Fergus offered his invention to C. Ash and it first appears in the 1894 *Ash Catalogue* costing 45 s.<sup>2</sup> The phantom head was made in three parts: the metal rod for securing to the back of a dental chair and the two brass jaws with deep grooves in which plaster of Paris or sealing wax was inserted. The teeth were then secured in the plaster or wax at appropriate spacing and the regulating screws allowed for movement and manipulation.

The model was often stretched with thin sheets of rubber over the upper and lower jaws to serve as cheeks.

## References

1. Hall V F. *History of King's College Hospital Dental School*. London: King's College Hospital Medical School London, 1973.
2. Claudius Ash and Sons Ltd. *A catalogue of artificial teeth and dental materials, instruments, tools and furniture, manufactured, imported and sold by C.Ash*. 1894.

## Dame Margaret Seward 1935–2021

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Dame Margaret Seward on 22 July 2021. Dame Margaret was the first female resident dental house surgeon at the London Hospital, Editor of the *BDJ* from 1979–1992 and the second female President of the British Dental Association (BDA) in 1993. She was the first female President of the General Dental Council (GDC) (1994–1999). An obituary appears in this issue of the *BDJ*.

Dame Margaret's family have set up a memorial page where messages can be left and donations made to her nominated charities, the BDA Benevolent Fund and Saving Faces: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SomeoneSpecial/MargaretSeward>.

## First virtual World Dental Congress this September

The Australian Dental Association (ADA), in partnership with the FDI World Dental Federation, are hosting this year's World Dental Congress from 26–29 September 2021. It is the first event on this scale to be held virtually and will feature over 100 speakers, more than 200 sessions and a world-class virtual exhibition. The Congress

will bring the global dental community together to share ideas, knowledge and experiences, as well as the latest in practice, research and industry.

The live sessions will be available to delegates for 60 days after the event. For more information and to register visit: <https://2021.world-dental-congress.org/>.

