BDA MUSEUM

The cost of setting up in practice

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

Catalogues and equipment manuals are invaluable tools for museum staff, volunteers and researchers. They are used for dating equipment and give us an insight into the history of the dental trade in Britain, all of which helps the museum with its research, displays and exhibitions.

This booklet produced by the Dental Manufacturing Company Ltd in 1934 gives the details and costs of equipping dental surgeries on different budgets. One, at £450, is the top-of-the-range surgery

with a Rathbone unit including a long-armed dental engine, operating light, bracket table, double-bowl spittoon and operating stool. There is also a free-standing steriliser with variable automatic temperature control and a free-standing Walton anaesthetic machine. The catalogue described this surgery as 'enabling operations to be carried out with the minimum expenditure of time and energy and impresses the patient by its air of dignified modernity and efficiency'. The cheaper option costs £100 and provides more basic equipment in separate parts. It includes a Rathbone dental chair, with free-standing spittoon, separate foot engine, electric steriliser and anaesthetic machine. The images of the surgery give us a good idea of the design of dental surgeries at this time.

Suggested Surgery

No. 5 £100 (approx)

CATALOGUE		Items Selected			
Section	Page		£	s.	d.
A	5	Rathbone Chair. Any standard colour upholstery and any standard plain colour enamel, bright parts chromium-plated, with D.M.Co. special non-slip seat as illustrated ...	45	0	0
A	17	"Number-Three" Single-Bowl Spittoon as illustrated. Bright parts chromium-plated ...	12	12	0
A	28	"Number-Sixteen" Cabinet in Oak or Mahogany ... from	16	10	0
D	9	Grade B, N ₂ O Outfit complete ...	9	0	0
Special Leaflet		Premier Electric Sterilizer. Chromium-plated 2-heat from	4	0	0
A	32	Aseptic Stand specially designed to take sterilizer. 14 ins. x 14 ins. x 36 ins. Enamelled any standard colour ...	4	10	0
E	3	Foot Engine complete with Arm and No. 7 Handpiece and Slip-joint ... from	7	0	0

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The cost of setting up a basic dental surgery in 1934

A typical lower cost dental surgery in 1934 with Rathbone dental chair

Suggested Surgery

No. 1 £450 (approx)

CATALOGUE		Items Selected			
Section	Page		£	s.	d.
A	2	"Twentieth-Century" Chair with D.M.Co. special non-slip seat as illustrated. Enamelled and upholstered any standard colour. Bright parts chromium-plated ...	79	0	0
Special Booklet		Rathbone No. 1 Unit enamelled any standard colour, bright parts chromium-plated A.C. Model ...	180	0	0
A	23	Round-Table Cabinet with revolving top and body. Finished in Mahogany or cellulose enamelled to harmonise with other equipment ...	105	0	0
A	22	Sponge rubber chair mat. Full or three-quarter circles. Wide variety of colours ... from	4	15	0
Special Folder		Rathbone "Auto-Reg" Electric Sterilizer, with Variable Automatic Temperature Control and Stainless Steel Boiler, cast in one-piece. Chromium-plated case ...	11	11	0
A	32	Aseptic Stand specially designed to take sterilizer. 14 ins. x 14 ins. x 36 ins. Enamelled any standard colour ...	4	10	0
Special Leaflet		Walton Gas and Oxygen Apparatus. To take 2 x 200 gln. N ₂ O and 2 x 60 gln. oxygen cylinders. Bright parts chromium-plated ...	37	10	0
D	13	Alston Nasal Inhaler consisting of nose-piece, mouth-piece, bag, tubing and single union ...	6	3	0
A	13	3-tier Chromium-plated Aseptic Stand ... from	3	0	0
A	13	Operating Stool, D.M.C. First quality. Seat upholstered and pedestal enamelled any standard colour ...	5	5	0
A	37	Sanitary Waste Bin No. 1. White enamelled ... from	1	17	6

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The cost of setting up a more superior dental surgery in 1934

A top-of-the-range dental surgery in 1934 with free-standing Walton machine