

Jack Messing, 1923–2007



Jack Joseph Messing, BDS (U. Durham), FDS RCS Eng., died in January 2007 aged 83 years. A past President of the British Endodontic Society, he was one of the few Founder Members of the Society who are still in clinical practice.

Jack was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1923 and was educated in the city's grammar school which is now in its centenary year. He qualified BDS in 1946 at Durham University. Jack married his wife Maureen in 1949 in her home town of Belfast. The young couple moved to London in 1952 when Jack accepted an appointment at the Eastman Dental Hospital. Two years later he was appointed to a teaching post at

University College Hospital Dental School, where he continued to teach for the next 29 years, eventually retiring with the title of University Reader in Dental Surgery.

His inventive mind and gifted teaching skills were a source of inspiration to many generations of dental students and professional colleagues. He lectured at home and abroad, often doing so in the native languages of other European countries which he seemed to master with amazing ease. He was in demand as a gifted lecturer in Cyprus, Spain, Italy and France, and taught as a visiting lecturer at the Dental School in Malta for 7 years. Jack Messing was always noted for his sense of humour, and his fund of hilarious anecdotes could always be relied upon to enliven the most boring of dental meetings. He designed the 'Messing Gun', an invaluable tool for placement of retrograde apical seals; this together with his other inventions were manufactured to his design by the Swiss firm of Produits Dentaires. He enjoyed many hobbies including golf, music and photography; he was one of the early pioneers of the use of CCTV as a teaching aid in dentistry and was the author of numerous publications.

Twenty years ago, after surviving open heart surgery, he resumed the practice of his chosen profession. Last year he suffered further cardiac complications and a pacemaker was fitted but failed to function satisfactorily. While undergoing further investigations in St Mary's Hospital he suffered a terminal cardiac arrest.

He is survived by his wife Maureen, son Alan, daughter Julie, four grandchildren and several generations of his past students and colleagues all of whom mourn his passing.

Maurice B. Rothschild

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