

Obituary

J. M. Alexander

John (Jack) Alexander, the founder of the British Association of Orthodontists, died on 26 March 2004. Largely due to his initiative and drive, orthodontics outside the hospital service was accepted as a specialist discipline in this country with the consequent introduction of the specialist practitioner title.

The scion of a prominent Scottish family, Jack qualified at Guys where he was a leading member of the Jacht and Ocean Racing Club. He had a good war in the navy, much of it at sea, and ending up in the Far East. He also met Catherine, a WREN of outstanding beauty whose face adorned a thousand recruiting posters. She became his lifelong companion and a noted historian and art expert in her own right.

Jack returned to Guys for formal orthodontic training under the famous Reggie Rix, who offered him a position in his West End private practice. After much heart searching Jack decided to follow instead his dream to become a country gentleman in the West Country. They

bought a fairly dilapidated listed property at Langport in the heart of Somerset. From there he visited five widely spaced general practices to provide much needed orthodontic services, acquiring particular repute for the recovery of partially impacted canines. With Catherine's help he was able to restore the house and its wonderful gardens.

After unification of all the national orthodontic groups in 1994 he was honoured with life membership of the newly created British Orthodontic Society.

Jack was also a very active officer of the Somerset Local Dental Committee, the British Dental Association and a sponsor of the Royal Bath and West Agricultural Show, which he and Catherine attended regularly in grand style. They had truly become pillars of Somerset society. The impact of Jack's vision on the future of British orthodontics is immeasurable. He died aged 94.

H. L. ELREW