



# The John McLean Archive: a living history of dentistry

# **Group Interview with Community Service**

## **Dentists:**

**Leslie Cheeseman, Professor Stanley Gelbier, Sandra Halford, Christine Holmberg, Alan Howe, Roy Jackson, Mitzi Macey-Dare, Robin Rippon, Astrid Stockel, Pamela Usher, Jacob Van den Berg, Jerry (Jeremiah) Walsh, Nigel Williams.**

**Interviewer: Stephen Simmons**

**Date: 4 October 2011**

**Location: BDA Headquarters, 64 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8YS**

**Accession number:**

**Equipment used: Zoom H4N Recorder, Rode Lavalier Microphones, Beyer M58 Microphones**

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**In this extract one of the members of the group, Jerry Walsh, is describing joining the Community Dental Service.**

TRACK 03 – 00:00:03 – 00:02:29

**Jerry Walsh:** I actually qualified in Dublin in 1974, so I'm sort of an immigrant to this country. I came into dentistry really because my grandfather was a dentist and I spent a lot of time with him, he had a sort of a workshop downstairs. He was a registered dentist, so he came into dentistry in a different way from most of us and I think he was on the original Dental Register in 1921. But when I came to Britain I worked in private practice as an associate dentist for four years and I was pretty horrified at the standard of dentistry that I saw being done, I felt very uncomfortable with it. I looked around at alternatives and I had an older colleague of mine who'd gone into the community service, so I actually contacted the local Area Dental Officer from Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth, where I was living, and I joined the community service in 1978. It was sort of quite mind blowing, really, the different between general practice and the community service. The community service was very laid back in terms of the number of patients seen per day and it took me a little while to sort of get used to that. But I did find that it, essentially, was what you made it, so that just because everybody else was sort of not doing a great deal didn't mean that you didn't, that you had to not do a great deal. You could actually work as much or as little as you wanted really. I stayed in community until I retired two years ago and I found the whole experience really quite satisfying, career wise. I would also say that one of the best things I ever did was to start to actually come to the Community Dental Services group here at the BDA, which was immensely supportive and I think it guided us and saw us through all the changes that happened over the time I was working. So that's all that I want to say for the moment.