

Sir John (1815-1895) and Sir Charles (1846-1928) Tomes: Pioneers of Dentistry.

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‘The father and son combination were crucial to the establishment of dentistry as a profession and as a topic worthy of important scientific investigation. The importance of their scientific discoveries was recognised by the awards to both of Knighthoods and the FRS. John Tomes gave the first series of lectures on Dentistry in England at the Middlesex Hospital in 1845, wrote 4 major papers on the structure of teeth and bone to the Royal Society between 1849-1856 and published the first modern textbook on Dental Surgery in 1859. Eponyms still in use today are Tomes process, granular layer of Tomes, Tomes fibrils, resorbent organ of Tomes. In the last 40 years of his life, almost single-handedly, he helped established the Odontological Society of Great Britain, the first Dental Hospital in England (Royal Dental Hospital), the Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons, the Dentists Act of Parliament, the British Dental Association. Charles Tomes eminence was primarily in the research field of dental anatomy, especially comparative dental anatomy. He wrote a large number of papers still quoted today. In addition to updating editions of his father’s textbook, he himself produced his own very influential book “A manual of dental anatomy” in 1876, which passed through numerous editions. Important historical artefacts from the Tomes’ are still used and in evidence in the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, including the Tomes’ Histology Slide Collection, numbering nearly 2000 slides.’

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