



## **Rudi's Story, Chapter 5**

### **What made you follow in your father's footsteps as a choice of career?**

Well when I joined the school the powers that be without consulting me said I should learn Latin and Greek, which I liked, I liked very much indeed and all things being equal I might have continued down that line and really got into it. But when I was, what, 15 or so the question arose as to what I would study further in school in order to prepare for a career. And we went through one or two things that I might do and really because as a sort of, well, eliminating anything else, there was nothing else but to become a dentist and follow my father's footsteps. It wasn't a conscious decision, it was more what was left and I thought "well it sounds OK to me" and so I had to change sides and study physics and chemistry. Which was a, I wouldn't say it was a mistake, I had to, but having done Latin and Greek with no grounding in physics and chemistry I then had to catch up in two years what other boys had learned in five for my A-levels and I didn't pass very well. But so I really slid into the dental profession and I can relate a little story about, I think even before the A-level results or whatever they were called, Higher School Certificate had come out, my father went over to the professor of dentistry in Leeds to reconnoitre whether I could study there and they must've got on fairly well together because the professor said "well send your son over and I'll interview him. So I went across and he said "Are you handy with your fingers?" and I said "Well not really". He said "Do you build model aeroplanes or model cars?" I said "No" so he could see that he wasn't going to get much further there. He said, of all things he said "What books did you read" for what was then called school certificate or O-level "in English?" and I said "We read Julius Caesar". "Oh," he said, "the very famous book. Do you recall any speeches from Julius Caesar?" Now at the time of course we must have learnt some of the speeches by heart which was anathema to me, I could never learn poetry or poems or anything by heart, it was dreadful. And he said "What was the speech that Mark Anthony gave at the funeral of Julius Caesar?" Now that was the only speech that I could really remember – "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears" – and when I'd finished that he said "Very good, start in September" and that was my interview [laughs]. That's how I became a dentist.