The Begg technique was a fixed appliance technique developed by the Australian Raymond Paul Begg in the 1950s. The BOS has several examples of Begg typodonts in the collection as well as a large collection of the many components required to construct a Begg appliance.

Raymond Paul Begg was born in Coogarlie, Western Australia in 1888. After qualifying with a degree in dentistry from the University of Melbourne in 1923, he enrolled in the Angle School of orthodontics at Pasadena, California. On Begg’s return to Australia he initially practised using Edward Angle’s non-extraction edgewise technique but, like his contemporary Charles Tweed, found it ineffective in the treatment of dental crowding. He, like Tweed, began experimenting with the extraction of first premolars using Angle’s ribbon arch brackets in combination with round arch wires and light forces. He began developing his own bracket design, which was introduced in 1933. It was the first bracket to use single round wires of 0.016 inch in diameter or less. He also developed the high tensile Australian Orthodontic Wires in the 1940s, essential to this new technique, with the metallurgist A.J. Wilcox.

In 1956 Begg introduced his multi-loop, light wire, differential force technique, now known as the Begg technique. It used a modified ribbon arch bracket with a gingival facing vertical slot. The technique used differential force and operated in three phases. First the crowns were tipped and aligned, then extraction spaces were closed and finally the roots were torqued to upright the teeth in their correct arch relationships. This crown tipping technique allowed the correction of large overbites and overjets and rapid closure of extraction spaces but the technique required great skill on the behalf of practitioners to keep the movement of the teeth under control. Teeth could often give the appearance to being over tipped during treatment and the design of the bracket allowed teeth to continue moving with no facility for holding the teeth in their corrected positions. The technique also required a lot of complex wire bending and the construction of springs for individual tooth root correction, making it a time-consuming technique.

Despite these disadvantages, the Begg technique became popular all over the world with Begg societies forming in Europe, North America, Japan and the Philippines. The first UK course in the technique was held in 1966 shortly after the first edition of his book was published and the effectiveness and the relative cheapness of the bracket and round archwires at a time when many were still using the Ripple bracket made it immediately popular in the UK.

The Begg technique remained pre-eminent in the UK until the introduction of the pre-adjusted edgewise bracket by Larry Andrews in 1972. Although the technique is no longer commonly used, elements of Begg’s technique have been incorporated into a variety of other orthodontic techniques.

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