

DIARY

BDA Northern Counties Branch AGM

Date: 14 November 2012, 7 pm
Venue: Tyneside Cinema, Digital Lounge, Newcastle upon Tyne
Telephone: 07854555684
Email: claire.field@newcastle.ac.uk

BACD Annual Conference

Date: 22-24 November 2012
Venue: MCCC, Manchester
Telephone: 020 7612 4166
Email: suzy@bacd.com
www.bacd.com

Current concepts in general practice, developing leadership skills by Prof. Cyril Meyerowitz

Date: 4 December 2012
Venue: BDA, London
Email: l.greenwall@btconnect.com
www.ao.org

The therapeutic gradient, a medical concept for actual dentistry? by Dr Jean Pierre Attal

Date: 29 January 2013
Venue: BDA, London
Email: l.greenwall@btconnect.com
www.ao.org

British Dental Conference & Exhibition 2013

Date: 25-27 April 2013
Venue: ExCel London
www.bda.org/conference

DEATH NOTICE

Rolf Katterman, 56, passed away peacefully in his sleep on the morning of 17 October 2012.

PROJECT AIMS TO TRAIN BUDDHIST NUNS IN ORAL CARE

Surgeon and maxillofacial surgical trainee from Newcastle upon Tyne Dr Andrew Bartram, currently in his fourth year of dental studies at Trinity College Dublin, is a medical officer and volunteer work officer for the Amchi programme. Amchi aims to make a sustainable difference to the oral health of the people of Ladakh, India.

In August 2012 44 dentists, dental students and associated health care workers from 14 countries and four continents, including a number from various parts of the UK, travelled to Ladakh to take part in project Amchi. The project was a collaboration between the European Dental Students Association, Manipal University in India and Wisdomtooth, an American NGO.

Amchis are Buddhist nuns who are the local healthcare providers in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir, Northern India. In an area the size of Britain with a population of 180,000, there are four dentists working in only one location. Due to the mountainous terrain, extreme weather and high altitude the majority of the population of the region

cannot access dental care for much of the year. Thus the burden of care falls upon the Amchis who have no training in dealing with oral disease.

Dr Bartram explains that 'the goal of the Amchi programme is to correct this deficit, train the Amchis in line with the WHO ART programme and empower them to help their fellows, making a self sustainable improvement in the health of the local population.'

In August the project began the process of training the Amchis and treated over 1,200 people in seven days.

For further information on the Amchi project and on how to take part, visit www.edsaweb.org/amchi-programme.



OLDEST DENTAL FILLING UNEARTHED

The discovery of a 6,500-year-old fractured canine filled with beeswax could provide the oldest evidence of prehistoric dentistry in the form of a therapeutic-palliative dental filling.

Analysis of a Neolithic mandible from Slovenia by Bernardini *et al.*¹ prompted the finding of a seemingly repaired cracked canine, filled with beeswax.

A full X-ray and micro-CT confirmed that the beeswax exactly fills the shallow cavity and crack in the tooth, though it cannot be confirmed whether this was done whilst the man was alive or post mortem as part of a burial practice. Beeswax is known to have been used as a binding agent in both Chinese and Egyptian antiquity, though archaeological

reports of tooth injuries and restoration are scarce.

As other teeth in the mandible showed similar dental wear and exposed dentine but without any indication of beeswax application, it can be presumed that this was not part of any burial custom and instead the canine alone was filled with beeswax to reduce particular pain inflicted upon the individual. If this hypothesis is correct, then this find is the earliest evidence of dental therapy to date.

1. Bernardini F, Tuniz C, Coppa A *et al.* Beeswax as dental filling on a neolithic human tooth. *PLoS ONE* 2012; 7: e44904.

By Laura Pacey