

Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the Editor, British Dental Journal, 64 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8YS
Email bdj@bda.org

Priority will be given to letters less than 500 words long. Authors must sign the letter, which may be edited for reasons of space.

Readers may now comment on letters via the *BDJ* website (www.bdj.co.uk). A 'Readers' Comments' section appears at the end of the full text of each letter online.

BANANA ROOT FRACTURE

In the previous issue of the *BDJ*, the letter *Banana root fracture* (*BDJ* 2012; 213: 263) described a patient who attended as an emergency stating that a tooth had fallen out that morning whilst eating breakfast. Detailed questioning revealed that the tooth-like item was actually dried banana. The illustrations were omitted from the original letter but are shown here (Figs 1-3).



Figs 1-3 Photographs of the suspicious 'tooth'

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ALF'S RESULTS

Sir, may I pay a warm tribute to Lord Morris of Wythenshawe whose death was announced recently?

As plain Alf Morris he was my local MP for many years, Minister for the Disabled and a tireless fighter for the handicapped of all natures.

In the early days of the GDS Eastbourne only accepted a 'one treatment fits all' approach for the correction of Class II malocclusion, namely 'Extract 4/4, retract 3/3 and then retract the upper incisors. Ignore lower arch'. For patients with very severe skeletal or overbite problems this was of course often inappropriate, sometimes damaging. In fairness, the Board's officers were tied by the same rulebook. For families unable to seek a private alternative a detailed letter to Alf often did wonders on the south coast.

Now long retired I still occasionally bump into some of these fortunate patients and enjoy 'Alf's results'.

Long may his memory live on.

H. L. Eirew, Chapel-en-le-Frith

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MY OWN BITTER EXPERIENCE

Sir, I was glad to read Professor Clark's Opinion paper on peer review (*BDJ* 2012; 213: 153-154). From my own (bitter) experience it is high time to expose an outdated opaque system which purports to pick the most worthy papers for publication, but actually could undermine and prevent papers from being published if the content threatens the standing of the reviewer.

It was my misfortune to select the topic of occlusion for my series of papers, a topic which is rife with differing and conflicting views. This may be one reason why journals like the *BDJ* carry so few papers related to this subject. While I can testify to the enthusiasm and encouragement of the Editor-

in-Chief, who personally made helpful suggestions to the layout of the articles, I am not sure if he had the ability to choose reviewers who would have been the most impartial and knowledgeable.

Many months of work and alterations were of no avail, as the reviewer(s) placed obstacles at every stage. The final 'nail in the coffin' came after I had the temerity to contradict one or more of the reviewers' opinions, supplying ample facts and papers to support my statements. Having spent many years of study, mostly in the USA, and taught courses here in the UK, I reckon my understanding of the subject might be good enough to warrant reading.

I did not know the identity of the reviewers. At one stage I was described as an 'enthusiast' in my subject. I suppose this may have been a compliment, but now I wonder.

Had we both been aware of our names one can only think about another outcome.

Dentists, like anybody have their pride, and do not like being contradicted. In the area of peer review I now see that the current process leaves much to be desired. The series was never published in the *BDJ*.

H. Stean

By email

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INCREASE IN REFERRALS

Sir, I read with interest the recent letter by Professor Crispian Scully and Dr Mark Griffiths (*New anticoagulants*; *BDJ* 2012; 213: 96), advising dental surgeons on the likely rise in the prescription of the new anticoagulants dabigatran (a direct thrombin inhibitor) and rivaroxaban (a Factor Xa inhibitor)