

NEWS IN BRIEF

East of Scotland fundraiser

A very successful fundraising cocktail party for the BDA Benevolent Fund was held on 20 June 2014 in the Officers' Mess at Edinburgh Castle.

East of Scotland BDA Branch members, their families, dental teams and guests enjoyed a champagne reception and canapés, with a chance to view the city and surrounding countryside from the impressive castle ramparts.

Dr Colwyn Jones, Consultant in Dental Public Health/Honorary Senior Lecturer, NHS Health Scotland, said: 'The cocktail party allowed 75 members and guests to network and socialise in beautiful surroundings. There were also BDA members from the North and West of Scotland BDA Branches present. The result was a very successful social and fund raising event, to the credit of our Branch President Dr Andrew Mulford.'

A magical interlude in Windsor

The BDA Windsor section has raised over £1,300 for Smile Train and the BDA Benevolent Fund.

At a meeting on 6 June Yusof (Joe) Omar, Senior Clinical Teaching Fellow for Sedation at the Eastman Dental Institute, gave a captivating talk on medical emergencies. This was followed by an unexpected magic show given by Raj Rattan.

Reporting on behalf of the BDA Windsor section, Reshmi Bansal said: 'The audience was wowed by Raj Rattan's unknown talents as a magician. Little did we know that he has been performing magic since the age of 16 and has been a full member of The Magic Circle for 30 years.'

PROFESSOR GEOFFREY HOWE

We are sad to report that Professor Geoffrey L. Howe has died.

Professor Howe was the first to be appointed as Professor of Oral Surgery in the UK at Newcastle at the age of 35. He was also Vice-President of the British Dental Association (BDA) in 1979. In 2002 a review of his memoir, *Reflections of a fortunate fellow*, was published in the *BDJ*.

An obituary will follow in a future issue.

A DENTIST'S LIFE

I usually get up between 6:45 am and 7 am depending on how much work I have to do. After getting dressed, I usually do some work – either uni assignments, medico-legal or article writing – until it is time to get to work.

I am an associate at Cudworth Dental Surgery in Barnsley and Croft House Dental Practice in Rotherham. I drive to work, usually listening to Radio 4 which I find keeps me up to date with the world. It gives me my daily dose of sporting trivia so that I can just about hold a conversation with a patient if they want to talk about football. Breakfast is usually a cereal bar.

Working week

I spend three days a week at Cudworth doing private dentistry and two days a week in Maltby in Rotherham treating patients on the NHS. I also work two late nights in Barnsley which is hard work but rewarding because it means patients get a lot of flexibility and I can fit in long appointments for big cases.

I really like the distinction of working at two completely different practices. At Barnsley, I typically treat patients with low dental needs and high motivation, who value the extra time you can spend treating them. Cudworth is a sedation practice, so many of my patients there like to have IV sedation or RA sedation which I really love doing. It is such a nice way to treat nervous patients.

In Rotherham, the patients are mainly from Maltby itself which is very deprived. Typically every new patient starts off with an acute episode which hopefully will lead them onto the road of getting back to good oral health. Along with my principal there, we set up an oral health educator who is one of the long-standing dental nurses at the practice, and really helps get patients on side. Sadly this is a limited resource as there is no extra funding for it, so we self-fund it. It makes a real difference though so in my mind is worth it.

DENTISTRY IS AN AMAZING CAREER

Alexander Holden, 26, is a dental surgeon, writer and expert witness. An associate in Sheffield, Alex is about to finish a Master's in Medical Law and is due to complete a Master of Dental Public Health in 2015. He writes regularly in the dental press, is active within the BDA Young Dentists Committee and is engaged to Viki, also a dentist.



'I feel that my postgraduate degree courses have made me a better dentist, which is in some ways strange because they are non-clinical subjects.'

I really like both of the dental teams I work with; I am lucky to work with two sets of really nice people who I get on with. It makes the day run smoothly when you are alongside nice people.

A family of medics

I come from a family where the profession of choice is to become a doctor; there are nine medics. Having decided that medicine would have been too much of a path previously trodden, I thought dentistry might be good fun. I am not ashamed to admit that I went into dentistry for completely the wrong reasons. I wanted a lifestyle that was similar to that which I was accustomed to and thought that dentistry might be interesting. I am lucky that I do genuinely enjoy what I do – the financial reward is nice, but very much secondary to feeling good about your work. I'm not very good at coping with

misery – I questioned my career choice when I started working at my first practice outside of VT. It was a big corporate and the culture was just all wrong. It wasn't until I went back to work for my old VT trainer and current principal in Maltby that I realised that NHS dentistry in the big wide world isn't just UDAs and pushing targets.

Postgraduate studies

I don't really see my current academic studies as work. I was a bit lazy at university. My then-housemate (also a dentist) and I did what we needed to do and then spent the rest of our time chilling out. I graduated and then felt I should probably start doing some work! I started both my postgraduate degree courses because I really enjoyed the subjects. I am due to hand in my final law dissertation at the end of July and am about to start the same for my Master's in dental public health and both of them have been more hobbies than work. I feel that they have made me a better dentist, which is in some ways strange because they are non-clinical subjects.

I only write articles on topics that interest me. It isn't a chore when it is something that you feel strongly about. Usually I sit in front of the computer and start typing and don't get up till I've finished.

Medico-legal work

My father is a psychiatrist and for as long as I can remember he has always done medico-legal work and inevitably talked to us about cases around the dinner table. I never really thought I would like to do what he did – it always seemed to take up a lot of his time – but now I can understand why he does it. Like him, I really enjoy the challenge that reporting on cases provides, especially when they aren't so clear cut.

When I first decided to start doing reports, I got in touch with solicitors and I was surprised with just how receptive they were. I am lucky in that most cases don't go through to court, so mostly it doesn't move into my clinical time. I have very helpful and understanding nurses and

'My motivation comes from always wanting to fall asleep feeling that I did my best that day with regards to treating my patients...'

receptionists who help me organise seeing medico-legal patients as and when. The majority of the time is spent writing the report itself but then I tend to work pretty late at night anyway.

Hypnosis

I love hypnosis. I started getting into it as a concept just before graduating and trained to become a qualified hypnotherapist whilst a VT. I use it a lot, but usually in conjunction with other sedation techniques which I find are really enhanced by using hypnotic language. Sometimes, patients become quite interested in hypnosis and then I will use it without sedation. I find it is really useful for stopping patients tensing up and slipping into the cycle of working themselves up.

At the coal-face

If you had told me five years ago what I would be doing today, I wouldn't have believed you! I take the view that I want to move towards doing more of what I like. I would love to be more involved with dental public health, but I am happy with what I am doing for now, which is just as well because there seem to be very few training posts in DPH. I just want to work towards making a career that will continue to make me happy. I can never see myself stopping general practice; I like treating patients too much. I hope that whatever I end up doing, I will always make time to treat patients at the coal-face and keep in touch with what it means to be a GDP.

I have met a lot of older dentists who seem very miserable with the professional directions they chose and to be frank, that scares me, so I think my ultimate goal would be to ensure that never happens to me. Dentistry is an amazing career and there are so many opportunities. My motivation comes from always wanting to fall asleep thinking I did my best that day and either did the right thing with regards to treating patients or took every opportunity given to me.

FD salaries

The recent announcement on the planned reduction of foundation dentists' salaries is disappointing. I think it has been on the cards for a while. FDs work very hard and they provide a lot of good quality work. The dental profession has seen costs go up and for associates certainly, earnings go down. I don't get the argument that FD salary needs to mirror the foundation doctor salary because the roles are completely different. F1 doctors are by necessity, supernumerary, whereas FDs are very much separate and as I said, provide a lot of good quality dental care. They are also fully registered with the GDC and liable for their own profession indemnity; F1 doctors are not.

As regards the cost of being a dental student today – there often seems to be a lot of confusion over tuition fees. The £9,000 doesn't need to be paid back until you can afford to do so. This shouldn't in theory put anyone off applying to study dentistry. The reality is, it will put off those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who may feel daunted by this level of debt. It may also deter mature students if they have dependants and are not entitled to a student loan.

ARF increase

I have probably got a slightly different take on the ARF increase than other dentists. I don't like the idea of being more out of pocket, but for me it goes beyond this and suggests that the GDC is missing the point somewhat. Instead of throwing more money at the fitness to practise process, they should be spending more time and effort helping to stop complaints in the first place. They forget that patients are not entitled to perfection; they are entitled to dental treatment of a reasonable standard as judged by the profession. The GDC runs the risk of asking a higher standard with regard to duty of care than the civil courts do which to me is just plain wrong and the GDC needs to reflect on this.

The things that matter

I always make time for the things that I want to do and that matter to me. I spend lots of time at the weekends with my fiancée, Viki. We often go off exploring different parts of the country and it is nice to discover new places. About a year ago I got into photography big time and especially like photographing wildlife and nature. Recently I was off the coast of Scotland at Bass Rock photographing the nesting gannets and I am planning my next trip at the moment. I also make time during the week to go out with a few mates from VT. Every Thursday we all meet up for a meal and swap stories.