

# OBITUARIES

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Jonathan Coe at [jonathan.coe@nature.com](mailto:jonathan.coe@nature.com).

All submitted obituaries should be 450 words maximum in length (apart from obituaries for past presidents of the BDA where the length should be 800 words).

Content of the obituary is down to the individual author, and the approval of the family should be given for the obituary prior to submission to the *BDJ*.

## WILLIAM RONALD EDWARDS LAIRD

1939–2015



William Ronald Edwards Laird qualified from the University of Glasgow in 1962. Following dental practice in London, Ronnie returned to

Glasgow to become Lecturer in Pharmacology and then Dental Prosthetics. It was here that he met Kay, his wife, who worked as a staff nurse in the oral surgery department. In 1970 he undertook research at the Eastman, London in physiological jaw movements and in 1974 worked at Manchester Dental School as Senior Lecturer in Prosthetics.

Ronnie was appointed Professor of Dental Prosthetics and Head of Department at the University of Birmingham from 1984 until his retirement in 2004. He was Director and Head of the School of Dentistry from 1989 to 1994. There was turmoil and change at the university and Ronnie was asked by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Sir Michael Thompson, to undertake changes in dentistry. Ronnie kept the ship afloat and Birmingham emerged a much stronger school.

Appointed as Public Orator for the university at degree ceremonies, Ronnie introduced well known honorary graduates before the award of their degree. His introductory speech for each of the awardees was meticulous in preparation.

Externally, he served as Chair of the Council of Deans of Dental Schools (1993–1995), President of the British Society of Prosthetic Dentistry (1996) and both member and Chair of various GDC committees, including the Finance Committee and Professional Conduct Committee (1989–2003). He was a champion of the education and training of dental nurse assistants and was a member of their national examining board.

Ronnie was a super clinician on remov-

able prosthodontics and did attract his fair share of difficult cases, which he handled professionally and always put the interests of the patient first. He loved teaching and a Facebook page set up as a memorial received over a hundred likes and many more comments. All attested to his fairness and expertise as a teacher.

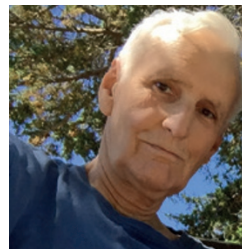
Outside dentistry he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of Scottish football, and followed Queens Park where he sponsored the match ball at home games. He loved his cars, including Rovers and Jaguars. In his latter years he spent time in Millport, an island off the Scottish coast which was his 'island of dreams'. Ronnie loved people, he loved conversations and he was in the true sense of the word, a raconteur – never stuck for an anecdote or a joke. At work gatherings or family events he was often called to give speeches – he had a great gift for capturing the moment.

He will be missed by Kay, Simon and Sally, the wider family and his granddaughters, Poppy and Charlotte.

Damien Walmsley

## PETER GASCOIGNE

1948–2015



Peter Gascoigne, who has died aged 66, was an eminent orthodontist practising in central London.

Originally from Blenheim, New

Zealand, he undertook his dental training at the University of Otago, Dunedin. It was here he met his wife, Annie. Keen to broaden his horizons geographically and professionally, he travelled to London in 1973, initially working in general practice before undertaking his orthodontic training at the Eastman Dental Hospital. Peter returned to practice, working and owning several surgeries in north London. Peter always felt that if he was to work in

the UK then it should be at the epicentre of the dental world, and in 1986 set up a practice in Wimpole Street. It became his home both professionally and residentially, and he often joked about his one minute 'commute' from one side of Wimpole Street to the other. His practice itself was bijoux, even by central London standards, and he likened it to the cockpit of a Concorde with everything being within arms reach.

Throughout his career Peter was an early adopter of the latest developments within the orthodontic field. With an open and enquiring mind he was always attending courses and was prepared to think beyond the mainstream. This marked him out as a clinician and engendered a large number of referrers and friends. He was one of a handful of orthodontists in the UK practising lingual orthodontics back in the 1990s when it was considered a minority sport. His considerable clinical knowledge and skill was also complimented by his unparalleled communication skills, a combination that enabled him to build an enviable reputation.

Peter was always keen to share his knowledge, advising and mentoring numerous clinicians. He was involved at a committee level with various dental societies including the British Lingual Orthodontic Society and was a founder member of the Cranio Group.

As an individual Peter had an innate sense of style, which also permeated to his surgery, from the artwork on the walls to the striped paperclips that accompanied his paperwork. He shared a passion for theatre and film with Annie. He maintained an interest in classic motorcycles and cars, and was a keen follower of motor racing. It was testimony to his flair and panache that a six feet four inch person could look cool in a Fiat 500. Peter retired from practice and returned to New Zealand in 2011.

Peter will be greatly missed by the patients, friends and colleagues whose lives he so greatly enriched.

Alastair Smith