'It's always good to laugh!'

Jocelyn Harding, or Joss, has been working in dentistry for 30 years and is currently a dental hygienist at Confident Dental and Implants Centre in Stroud, Gloucestershire.

I get up at 7 am to walk the dog. I'm originally from Peterborough but now live in Gloucester with my husband and our two teenagers, aged 16 and 18. I have fruit for breakfast, usually in the car on the way to work, but if I'm organised it'll be porridge. Work is nine miles away.

I work 30 hours a week as a dental hygienist. Our practice is private but as a referral practice we see patients from many areas and practices. I also treat patients of all ages which is fabulous.

In my dental team there are implant, endodontic and orthodontic specialists, three general dentists, three hygienists, management staff and lots of lovely, well trained and enthusiastic nursing support.

I originally got the dental bug 30 years ago after work experience at the local dentist's and sitting in with a lovely ex-Navy dental hygienist called Becky. That is when the idea of being a dental hygienist in the Navy began.

I spent nine years in the Royal Navy, four years as a dental nurse and the rest as a dental hygienist, qualifying in Aldershot with the Army. I served abroad in Gibraltar, Hong Kong and Hawaii and was lucky to work in oral surgery and for a periodontist. I worked in Wiltshire when I left the Navy and then moved to Gloucestershire and have been here ever since.

I get a real buzz when patients say great things about their appointment. I enjoy the professional relationship I have with the patient and their families over the years and

what a privilege it is to help them and to improve their oral hygiene. Having been at my current practice for over ten years it is great to recognise if a patient is struggling or if they wish to confide in me about a particular problem. I especially enjoy the trust I have from the young patients and how over ten years many have come back after university or are on their chosen career path and love to chat about what they are up to. It makes me feel very honoured.

Sometimes my most frustrating challenge is time management. I do have a habit of talking a little too much. There's never enough time!

I have recently been involved with patients on their cancer journey and so my dental career has taken a different path. I love being involved and helping cancer patients with their mouths and help with symptoms that can occur with their treatment and beyond*. I gave a presentation to Macmillan Nurses and other cancer charities which was a fabulous opportunity. Mouths are often overlooked with cancer treatments as the priority is to get patients through their treatment but it is much improved if they have help and options for their dry mouths and ulcers. I have been asked to present and help professionals with products which are available to cancer patients and I have been able to attend cancer support days to help patients and their families.

I am also a member of Gloucestershire Independent Dentists - Hygienist & Therapist Group. I am treasurer of this group and have been involved for the almost 15 years that it

has been running. It is fab, on our doorstep and we get awesome speakers! It also provides most of my CPD hours through attending meetings four to five times a year.

I usually get home around 6 pm. Outside work I enjoy socialising, going to the theatre, historical buildings and we love comedy clubs: it's always good to laugh! At weekends I like going out with the family and dog, catching up with friends and having meals out.

As a family we have a good, varied diet; like most people we are not 100% virtuous but we try. We love to cook and with having a coeliac member of the family we try many foods and concoctions. Obviously, I am keen on good oral health in my family and this is a challenge with a busy family. I have to say I think we are motivated and the same as many families. I think my husband is as good as me at giving oral hygiene advice! Fingers crossed the good habits will continue in the future.

It is my big '5-0' this year so we are off to Portsmouth with 54 friends and family and then visiting Liverpool and The Cavern Club. For our anniversary we are going to Plymouth and watching 'War Horse' - all very exciting.

was honoured to speak at the BDA annual dental conference and the BSDHT annual conference. This was completely out of my comfort zone as I never thought I would be presenting but the feedback has been fabulous. Stories I have been lucky to listen to have been both emotional and motivating. And so this journey carries on...

I try to be in bed by 10 pm. I am a bit of an early bird and it has to be said, I'm not great without my eight hours' sleep.

Interview by Kate Quinlan

Jocelyn 'larking about with other colleagues from the oral surgery department in Gibraltar in 1990'

'I GET A REAL BUZZ WHEN PATIENTS SAY GREAT THINGS ABOUT THEIR APPOINTMENT. I ENJOY THE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP I HAVE WITH THE PATIENT AND THEIR FAMILIES OVER THE YEARS AND WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT IS TO HELP THEM AND TO IMPROVE THEIR ORAL HYGIENE.'

I love where my career is going at the moment with the care for cancer patients. This all came about from asking the question 'how can we help these patients when they come back to general practice?' So, from this question and not getting an adequate answer I decided to take on the challenge and a learning curve; I knew I wasn't the only professional to need a reply to this question. I have been given lots of support to write my articles from specialists, patients and friends. I have attended Macmillan support days and got the appetite for further research. I have now started presenting my topic and

*Jocelyn published the article *Dental care of cancer patients before, during and after treatment* in BDA Journal in January 2017: <https://www.nature.com/articles/bdjteam20178>.

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