'It is a *privilege* to be the incoming BADN President'

Hazel Coey is a Dental Tutor for Workforce Transformation Thames Valley, Health Education England. Hazel began working as a dental nurse over 30 years ago and this year is President of the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN).

Interview by Kate Quinlan

Starting out in dentistry

I am originally from a small hamlet in Buckinghamshire but I now live near Leighton Buzzard. I first became a dental nurse in 1985 at a small village dental practice. I was only four miles from home, in the next village, and the part-time hours suited me. The great thing about dental nursing is that there are usually part-time/full-time jobs available, which fit in with a family. I have three children and these days, five grandchildren as well, aged between one and 17.

With dental nursing I enjoyed meeting people and working with some lovely colleagues. I went to college and studied for a dental nursing qualification as I wanted to understand the science behind the practical dentistry. I also wanted to be professional at my job.

After working as a dental nurse I went to RAF Halton to study as a dental hygienist, but could not finish my course due to a family tragedy. A short time later the Wing Commander (a periodontist) asked me back to work for his team in a research project. This was in fact the 'PerioChip', which became very successful and beneficial to patients.

While at RAF Halton, I also studied for the Further Adult Education Teaching Certificate (FAETC), studying on an evening course at Aylesbury College. I then became a locum Dental Nurse Tutor, covering during sickness, and finally took over the course when the Tutor retired. I carried on with my studies and gained the Certificate in Education, which led on to a BA(Hons) degree.

I went to work in an oral health promotion team in Buckinghamshire, as I had gained my certificate in oral health education (OHE) and wanted to use it. I achieved the qualification by driving from Oxford after work to Matthew Boulton College in Birmingham every week, for a one year course, as this was not available locally. So I think it fair to say that oral health education is a real passion of mine.

I volunteered to become an examiner for the National Examining Board for

even now, I don't think that dental nurses have the status that they deserve; after all, qualifying with a Level 3 Diploma is broadly comparable to two A-levels.

I was on the Voluntary Register of dental nurses before statutory registration came in. Registration has brought a professional status to dental nurses, but I don't believe that the general public are necessarily aware of this. Dental nurses are not the sort of profession who 'sing their own praises'.

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Dental Nurses (NEBDN) in 1994, as it was essential to pitch the correct exam level for my students, by being involved and understanding the NEBDN examination requirements.

Dental nursing over time

I have seen many changes to dental nursing over the years, including the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - we did not even wear gloves when I started! However,

Regarding working conditions and salaries for dental nurses, I really hope that things are improving and moving in the right direction. So many dental nurses are afraid to speak up for themselves and can be undervalued. That is why joining the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN), their voice, is so important.

There are also many dental nurses that have excellent working conditions and are employed by innovative dental practices.

Joining the BADN

I joined the BADN so long ago that I cannot say when, but I am a Fellow of BADN, which you only achieve after being a member for over ten years.

It is a privilege to be the incoming BADN President. I aim to meet as many BADN members as possible during my presidency, and have a strong voice on their behalf.

As an Association we are running a salary survey at present, to give a clear picture of pay scales. This we will share with the General Dental Council (GDC), our regulating body. At present the Annual Retention Fee (ARF) stands at £116.00; this is a huge increase on the initial £72.00 which the GDC collected from dental nurses in 2008. We

Outside work

I live with Ray, my husband of many years. I enjoy reading, visiting National Trust houses and sites and going swimming, bowling and to the cinema with my grandchildren (exhausting!), some of whom live in Cornwall, where we take them surfing.

I have always tried to encourage my family in healthy eating and oral hygiene. This is easier said than done with your own family, but I do have a ready supply of toothbrushes and interdental aids when they come to stay!

I would definitely recommend dental nursing as a career! I have so enjoyed my work to date; working with people is at the top - my colleagues are such professional and lovely people. So many of them are very close

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are also conducting a multi-faceted Member Engagement Review which will lead to the development of our Member Engagement Plan in 2018.

In my role as President I have a full diary: to begin with I am attending BADN Conference at Milton Keynes on 17-18 November 2017. This is followed by GDC meetings, DCP meetings and BADN Executive committee meetings.

In 2018, I shall be chairing the Dental Nurse Forum at the British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show, and manning the BADN stand at BDIA Dental Showcase, and attending other shows around the country such as the Scottish Dentistry Show and the BDA Scottish Conference. BADN also are working with the Royal College of Edinburgh on their Study Day in March 2018.

I work part-time at the moment as a Dental Tutor/DCP Development Tutor for HEE Thames Valley. I have been BADN Treasurer for two years now, and have always been supported by my employers to enable me to attend these meetings.

friends now. I have also enjoyed working in the dental surgery, schools, working with health visitors, early learning teams, learning disability teams, hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, healthy living centres, colleges ... really I have been everywhere - even on the BBC local news once, promoting Mouth Cancer Awareness Week!

The three things (besides people) that I could not live without are tea, when I wake up - my husband always makes me a morning cuppa! - my Kindle (or books), as I read every night before I sleep, and my National Trust card, as I love the countryside, and visiting wonderful places that the NT protect.

To find out more about the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) and membership options, visit www.badn.org.uk.

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