

# Letters

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## War leads to major advances in oral surgery

Dear *BDJ Team*,

Recent correspondence about wartime developments in the RAF reminded me of other wartime developments of interest to the dental team. World War I brought major advances in oral surgery. Trench warfare was devastating for many men who put their head over the parapet and were immediately wounded in the head and face. The forces had no dental branches so dentists often joined up as combatants rather than practitioners. Those who were medically trained joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. Cooperation at several centres for the treatment of head and facial injuries led to the development of oral surgery as a specialty. Dually qualified William Kelsey Fry was initially attached to the Welsh Fusiliers but was repatriated after

injury. He was then posted to the Cambridge Hospital in Aldershot to become part of a team treating facial and jaw injuries. It included the surgeon and war artist Henry Tonks plus Harold Gillies, an ear, nose and throat specialist. Kelsey Fry and Gillies worked closely, each learning from the other's specialism, to produce wonderful results. It was the first time dental cases could be referred to a specialist unit. In 1917 Fry and Gillies transferred to Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup, which was used as a training centre for plastic and oral surgery. Their groundbreaking relationship continued in the years following the war. Thus was born what became the hospital speciality of maxillofacial surgery.

**Stanley Gelbier**  
(Hon Professor in the History of Dentistry)

## Stronger together

Dear *BDJ Team*,

We were absolutely delighted with the coverage in the November 2018 issue of *BDJ Team*. Your publication is fantastic and thank you so much for featuring us – it's been a really tangible 'feel good' moment for our fantastic team who work so hard on behalf of our patients right across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. All of us working with Smile Together are completely engaged with our employee-owned social enterprise concept, enthused and inspired by knowing all our profits go back into benefiting our local community. The dedication and commitment of our team members really makes the difference here – of course, there have been challenges along the way, but nothing we can't rise to together.

**Tracy Wilson**  
(Head of Marketing, Smile Together)



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