



# 'I will continue to raise the profile of the dental nurse'



*BDJ Team* is five years old! In July 2014 we met **Jacqui Elsdon**, who started out as a dental nurse in the 1980s, even though during her first week of work experience in a dental practice she fainted while observing an extraction.<sup>1</sup> In 2014 Jacqui was working as a Dental Education Facilitator and studying for an MSc in Advanced and Specialist Healthcare. *BDJ Team* caught up with Jacqui to find out what she's up to in 2019.

**BDJ Team:** *Since your interview in *BDJ Team* in 2014, how did you find the rest of your Master's course and juggling it with your other commitments?*

**Jacqui:** I found that I had to be very disciplined with my time management to be able complete my Master's degree on time. My supervisor, Debbie Reed, ensured that I kept to my timetable as much as I could. In addition, my classmates were a great support network to me when the pressure became

too much and writers' block had set in. From time to time I had to ask my family to give me space to complete my work which was very hard, however they were all very understanding of the situation. I found myself declining a number of functions because I had a 'uni deadline'!

**BDJ Team:** *How did it feel to graduate with an MSc distinction in Advanced and Specialist Healthcare and win the prize for highest achievement?*

**Jacqui:** It was a great feeling, to be honest. I had worked really hard and put in a lot of study time, not only at home but in the fabulous library on the university campus. I felt that the hard work had paid off and I was thrilled. The graduation ceremony was at Rochester Cathedral and lasted most of the afternoon. It was also great to witness my fellow colleagues receiving their degrees also in the impressive cathedral building.

**Jacqui became BADN's President-elect in November 2018.**



of my presentation was 'Dental Nursing - What Lies Ahead?' It was part of the Dental Nurses' Forum programme and following my delivery, it was extremely satisfying to receive some very positive feedback from the audience about my presentation. All of the seats were full and many were standing in the aisles to listen. For any speaker, it is always a challenge to engage the audience, however, I was reassured by the feedback and also the questions that promoted some thinking and discussion about the future role for dental nurses.

volunteering in my local charity shop in the village. This has provided me with a new set of skills in retail, however, I am still able to use all of my communication skills to the full. It also allows me to dedicate more time to my professional association as President-elect and Education Representative. My love of holidays hasn't stopped and I have recently returned from the beautiful city of Florence.

The future? Well, I am really looking forward to taking on the role of BADN President. My inauguration ceremony will take place at BADN's annual dental nursing

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**BDJ Team:** *How does it feel to be BADN President-elect and what are your plans for the role?*

**Jacqui:** It is a great honour and privilege to be elected to the role of BADN's President-elect which was confirmed last November. I have been a member of the Association for most of my dental nursing life, however, I took a break from its membership when I started my non-chairside role with the NHS back in 2004. It was whilst I was studying for my Master's degree that I became more interested in re-joining and was nominated to the role of Education Representative. I have enjoyed introducing some new features for the Association's membership about which we have received some very positive feedback. The most popular was our CPD and PDP booklets which not only explained the GDC's new enhanced CPD requirements, but gave our members some practical help as well.

As BADN's education representative, I delivered a 45-minute presentation at this year's British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show in Birmingham. The title

Hazel Coey has been a great President for BADN over the last two years and I will find it hard to follow in her footsteps. I will, however, continue to advocate and raise the profile of the role of the dental nurse within and external to the profession and to further encourage employers to support their dental nurses with lifelong learning (GDC Scope of Practice & CPD) during working hours. I would also like to see the ARF reduced and not increased for dental nurses, as we are the lowest paid DCP in the profession. Coupled with having to pay for training and indemnity ourselves, it really doesn't help to promote the retention rates of dental nurses. I have spoken to many dental nurses who do the bare minimum to stay on the register because this is all that they can afford. This arrangement therefore does not allow many dental nurses to pursue further training and flourish to reach their potential, because of the barriers related to cost.

**BDJ Team:** *You seem to be very busy already but do you have any plans for the future?*

**Jacqui:** Since appearing in your 2014 edition, I am now employed part-time with HEE London, Kent, Surrey & Sussex. This has allowed me some time to pursue my hobbies further and I have also committed to

conference in Oxford, and I hope that many members will be able to attend as I am looking forward to meeting new faces as well as familiar ones. The programme is full of inspiring and informative speakers and if you haven't done so already you can book your place by visiting <https://bit.ly/2xV8AHG>.

I will make every effort to ensure that I use my position to advocate the role of the dental nurse as we are of immense benefit to the dental team and should be supported, not discouraged, to complete continuing professional development.

BADN's vision acknowledges that: 'as an organisation we want to encourage our membership to engage proactively and reflectively in lifelong learning and to reach their potential'.

#### References

1. Quinlan K. 'A dental nurse can achieve success at Master's level.' *BDJ Team* 25 July 2014. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/bdjteam201476> (accessed July 2019).

*We plan to catch up with other past-BDJ Team interviewees this autumn.*

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