

Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Jadene Doak at jadene.doak@springernature.com

All submitted obituaries should be 400 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*.



Christopher James Bridle

1950–2022

Christopher James Bridle, familiarly known as Chris, was born on 20 February 1950 in Southampton, Hampshire. He began his career in dental technology in 1966 as an apprentice dental technician and qualified in 1971, the year the Orthodontic Technicians Association (OTA) was formed. Chris spent much of his career as an orthodontic technician, and later as the dental laboratory manager, at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester, now part of the Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Chris was an elected member of the OTA council for much of his career and was the association's chair for more than 20 years. In 2011, Chris hosted the 40th anniversary OTA conference at the Grand Harbour Hotel in Southampton; he retired as chair at this conference but continued to serve as a council member. One year later, outgoing OTA president Les Joffé recommended that an OTA council member should succeed him to serve as the ceremonial head of the Association (the position had previously been held exclusively by orthodontists since its inception in 1974). The OTA council unanimously agreed that Chris, as the association's longest serving chair, was the natural choice to serve as the first president to be elected from within the OTA membership; he fulfilled this role for a two-year term between 2012 and 2013.

Following this, Chris remained as a member of the OTA council, where he served for periods as publicity officer and membership secretary, before finally stepping down in 2017. Chris also worked as a part-time lecturer in dental technology at Southampton Technical College (now Southampton City College).

Chris passed away peacefully in his sleep in Exeter, Devon, on Tuesday 10 May 2022 aged 72. He leaves behind his beloved wife Jill and will be greatly missed by his family, friends and former colleagues.

James Green



J. S. van den Berg

1929–2022

Jacob van den Berg, known to everyone as Van, died February 2022 at the age of 92. He came from a small town in the Orange Free State of South Africa called Zastron, and travelled to study dentistry at Liverpool. After just one year of too much rugby with possibly some beer involved, but not enough dentistry, he was asked to leave. There followed three years of various manual jobs including digging up holes in the roadway, waiting at Joe Lyons, and even working in the kitchens at Buckingham Palace, but always playing his beloved rugby.

He managed to secure a place at Guy's to study dentistry through his rugby contacts, but that involved going to night school to pass the right exams to get in.

He played rugby for the London Welsh, Surrey, Harlequins and of course Guy's. He also managed to become the boxing champion for London University.

He met Drina, a nurse at Guy's, during his weekly trip to the A&E to have his auricular haematomas drained. His cauliflower ears were a permanent marker of his sporting prowess. He remained a keen sportsman throughout his life, running many marathons and half-marathons, the four day international marches at Nijmegen and orienteering.

One of the possibly longest ever students at Guy's, he was eventually forced to qualify to support his growing family with eventually four children and his own practice in Coulsdon, Surrey. He moved over to Dental Public Health, gaining his DDPH, as well as spending many weekends in the Territorial Army, rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and commanding a Field Ambulance. He managed to receive two invitations to Buckingham Palace Garden Parties, commenting that on these occasions he was going through the front entrance having done the back. In the latter years of his career, he was the Corporation of the City of London's dentist.

He was a great raconteur with always the best stories and the loudest laugh, but never lost his Afrikaans accent. One of his children and two of his grandchildren have followed him into dentistry, but could never fill his shoes (they were too big) and he leaves behind his wife, 4 children, 13 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

He will be sadly missed.

Ali van den Berg