

# Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted by email to Heather Bradbury at [heather.bradbury@nature.com](mailto:heather.bradbury@nature.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*.



**John Brookman**  
1931–2024

John Brookman BDS, LDS, FCGDent, MGDS(Edin), FFGDP(UK)(Hon), one of the founding board members of the Faculty of General Dental Practice, and the founder of Vocational Training (VT) for GDPs, passed away peacefully on 27 January 2024, age 92.

Never wavering from his childhood desire to be a dentist, he qualified from the Royal Dental Hospital, London in 1954 with a career-long commitment to continuing education and postgraduate dental training. In 1957, he married Penny and worked as a GDP in Surrey. They had four children, Mark, Lucy, James and Claire. Early in the 1960s, he suffered a mental health breakdown and had to suspend his dental career. With support from friends and family he made a full recovery, during which he retrained as a teacher which proved to be a pivotal experience in his return to dentistry.

In 1970, John purchased a practice in Banstead, Surrey, expanding it to five full-time dentists with part-time associates and hygienists, serving a mix of NHS and private patients. In 1973, he became an assistant dental tutor for the British Postgraduate Medical Federation and from 1975 established the UK's first VT scheme for GDPs in Guildford, laying the foundation for nationwide VT, which became a statutory requirement in 1993. From 1975 he liaised with the University of Surrey, was a research lecturer at the Eastman Dental Institute, Senior Dental Advisor to Surrey Health Services and the Thames postgraduate regions, and had the Guildford PG Centre phantom head teaching laboratory named after him. He passed the Membership in General Dental Surgery examination, Royal College

of Surgeons (RCS) of Edinburgh, achieved Fellowship of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, RCS England and was Chairman of the UK Conference of Dental Advisors. President of the BDA's Southern Counties branch and a founder editorial board advisor of *The Dentist*, he was regarded by those who knew him as a true gentleman, who alongside these professional accomplishments continued being active in numerous community commitments.

John and Penny retired to Cumbria in 1993 and he embraced life, enjoying fell walking and woodturning. They were both active members of the village church and his Christian faith was hugely important to him, shaping how he lived and worked. Sadly, Penny died from cancer in 2007. He continued to walk the fells well into his 80s and it would have meant the world to him that he was able to live out his life in the home he loved so much.

Mark Brookman and Claire Chesworth



**Newell Walter Johnson CMG**  
1938–2024

Professor Emeritus Newell Johnson died in January 2024, aged 85. Graduation from Melbourne Dental School was followed by research at Bristol, which earned him his PhD. Newell then secured the Readership in Experimental Oral Pathology at 'The London', later taking over as Head of Department from Professor AEW (Loma) Miles in 1976. In 1983, he was appointed as the Head of the MRC Periodontal Diseases Research Programme at The London and Nuffield Professor of Dental Sciences by RCS England.

Newell then accepted a Chair at King's College London where he served for nearly 15 years variously as Head of Oral Medicine

and Pathology and Director of Research of the Dental Institute. As a prolific researcher, he worked to identify demineralising patterns of enamel caries and was the first to describe bacterial periodontium penetration in juvenile periodontitis. He argued that clinical markers identified periodontal disease retrospectively, centring research on clinical and laboratory markers for detecting high-risk groups and individuals. On oral cancer, he published papers on epidemiology and aetiology, clinicopathological aspects of cancer and precancer, took interest in its natural history, and initiated a detailed analysis of its genomics.

Following his retirement from King's, Newell took up the position of Foundation Dean/Head of School of Dentistry & Oral Health and Professor of Dental Research at Griffith University, Australia. From 2009, he served as a Senior Fellow, Menzies Health Institute, Queensland; Director of Population Oral Health; Senior Member of Infectious Diseases and Immunology Group; Cancer Research Centre. Here, he developed a passion to critically analyse misgivings in dental training and delivery of dentistry – deliberations that are described eloquently in the La Casada Declaration he wrote with other global experts.

Newell received a remarkable set of honours, awards and appointments nationally and globally, the most senior of which was appointment by Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II as a Companion of the Most Excellent Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) for services to oral health and to public health internationally. In supervising 30 successful PhD students, he also influenced the careers of generations of academics for over 55 years, authored many textbooks, and published over 600 research articles. His contributions have been remarkable and he will be greatly missed by so many of us. Newell is survived by his two daughters and three grandchildren.

Saman Warnakulasuriya OBE and  
DYD Samarawickrama