CAUSE FOR APPLAUSE

The **Smiles Dental Group** is sponsoring the **St Joan Margaret Clinic** in Haiti. Despite highly limited resources, the clinic was able to perform 43 extractions in October, 14 dental restorations and 15 professional cleans, thanks to donations raised to support it.

November's **Mouth Cancer Action Month**, organised by the **British Dental Health Foundation**, saw a call to action supported by almost 1,500 health professionals around the country while more than 100 health organisations offered those within their local communities the opportunity to get checked out for signs of the disease. The campaign raised more than £20,000 towards raising awareness of mouth cancer.

The **British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy** raised £600 for Mouth Cancer Action Month through two mouth cancer screening workshops at their annual conference in November.

The **Mouth Cancer 10 km Awareness Walk** in September in Hyde Park raised an outstanding £51,716 for the Mouth Cancer Foundation. Over 600 people took part. The profit will go towards the **Mouth Cancer Screening Accreditation Scheme**.

Illume, a dental practice in Cheltenham, was the Mouth Cancer Foundation's **Practice of the Month** for February, raising awareness of mouth cancer and its early detection.

The **Association of Dental Groups (ADG)** has made African-based **Bridge2Aid** one of their key charity partners for the next 12 months and has made a substantial donation to the organisation.

ESSEX SHOWCASES CUTTING-EDGE COURSES

Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft CBE and Stephen Welfare, Managing Director of Health Education East of England, visited south Essex in February to see how the University of Essex is 'leading the way' on dental health education.

They dropped in to Benfleet Dental Studio to see first hand how Oral Health Science students are learning through work-based placements and then went on to the Southend Campus to visit facilities including The Forum and the Dental Skills Lab.

Dr Cockcroft said: 'It's been great to experience education of the wider dental team in action, and to appreciate how these two forms of learning complement each other at Essex. The students' enthusiasm and how they see their role in the development of better services for patients is extremely encouraging.'

Senior Lecturer Dr Philip Cannell said: 'We have worked hard to develop courses which help students develop the skills they need to make an effective contribution to patient care. [...] We are very much about using real-world work placements to provide learning experiences for students. It helps

(l-r) Stephen Welfare, Dr Philip Cannell and Barry Cockcroft CBE with student dental therapist Mehli Ganjvar

develop graduates who are fit for purpose and highly employable.'

The University of Essex already delivers the largest dental hygienist programme in the country, with 39 students currently training at the Southend Campus. Essex academics are also establishing a number of cutting-edge courses thanks to support from Health Education East of England and the NHS. The programmes are responding to the national strategy for NHS dental services being piloted at the moment and set to be introduced from 2015.

BOOK REVIEW

POLITICS, HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE: SELECTED ESSAYS

T. R. Marmor, R. Klein

Yale University Press

price £80.00; pp 544

ISBN 9780300110876

What makes a good book? The key themes that come to mind include its importance, accuracy, objectivity, thoroughness and relevance to the potential audience. To this can be added the extent to which any content makes the reader think. Dealing with the first four categories this book, beautifully written by two gifted academics, scores highly.

Ted Marmor based at Yale, and Rudolph Klein from Bath, have been highly influential in health policy for a number of decades. The book is structured around policy themes, and is a collection of their thinking over their careers. Two examples include the relationship between the state and the medical profession and rationing. While the majority of the essays have been published elsewhere, the introduction to each policy issue section provides a basis for the essays inclusion: each section highlighting the relevance of the works to current debate.

Of particular relevance is the section titled 'New paradigms: health care to population health'. It deals with two of the most influential reports affecting the growing orientation of health services, namely the Lalonde Report, published in Canada in 1974, and the Black Report in Britain in 1980. The authors provide a wonderful exploration of key issues. The subjects of inequalities and of need, both central to the present dental policy agenda, are discussed. Those responsible for debating the issues would be wise to read this section if nothing else.

In the preface the authors lay out their objectives as contributing to: a better understanding of the political dynamics of policy making in healthcare; a more informed discussion of policy options, and (using a beautiful turn of phrase, examples of which litter the book); fewer cycles of naïve enthusiasm leading to disillusion. All are achieved.

It is not in my opinion a book to sit down and read from start to finish in a single sitting. The great strength of the work, the erudite thinking presented, means that the issues raised require time for consideration.

As to who is the intended audience? I would suggest that anyone who wishes to engage from a knowledgeable position in the debate about the future provision of healthcare. While the book is not about dental policy the principles are the same. Indeed, the opening chapters on policy analysis should be on any academic reading list. Dental policy is in a mess. The lucid and engaging manner in which themes are discussed cannot but help. Thoroughly recommended.

P. BATCHELOR