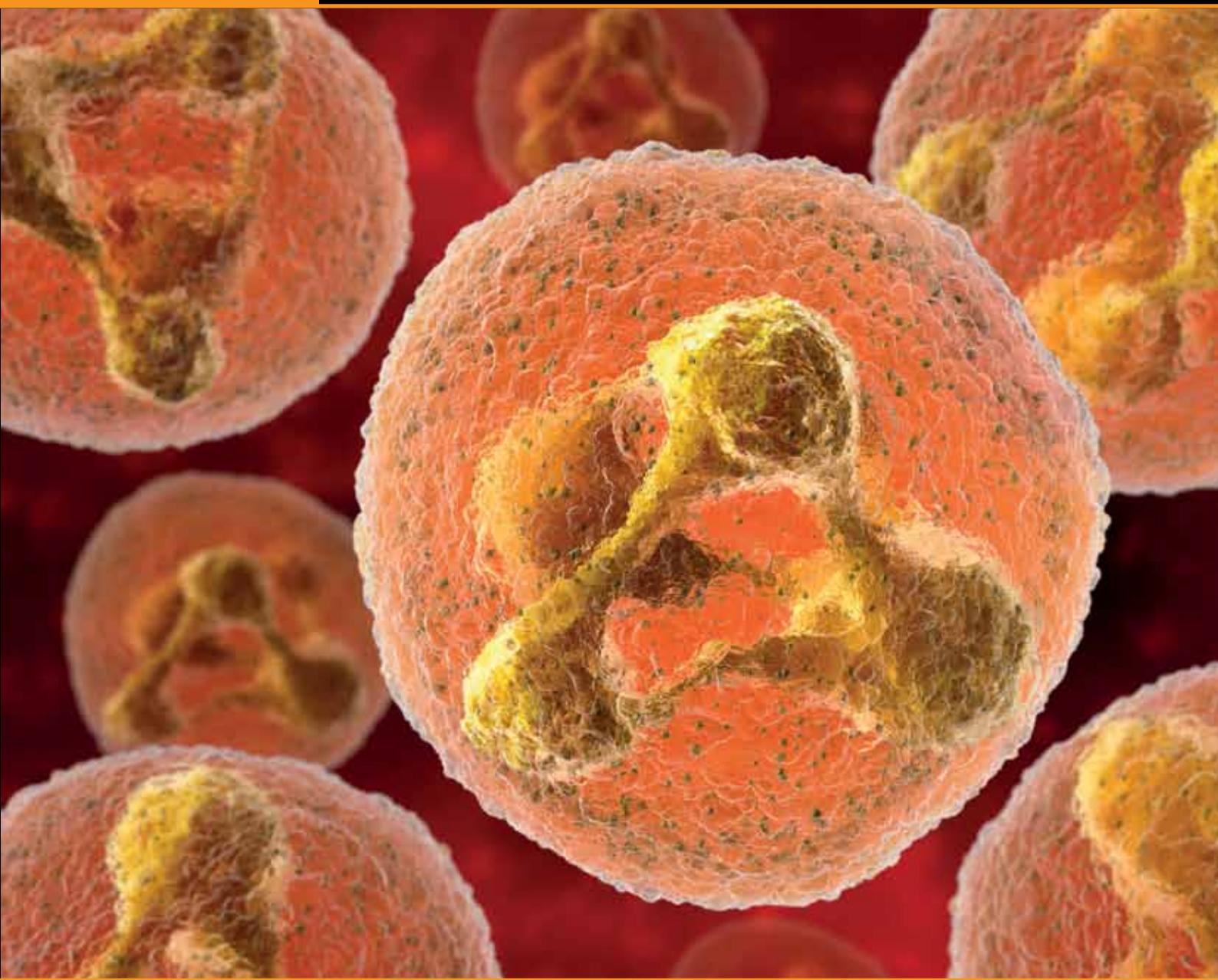


UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Dental ROOTS

Issue 3 2012

The Dentistry alumni magazine



The war against gum disease

Also inside: Dentistry's new home on track for 2014;
Community dental expert recalls life in the Firm



Welcome

Welcome to the 2012 edition of *DentalROOTS*, our annual publication intended to keep alumni informed on developments in the School of Dentistry during the past year.

We continue to take a forward-looking approach to provide our students with a distinctive high-quality experience. Our students stand tall with no side lean, given the end of the student cabinets and also their performance in the national recruitment process and finals. This year saw the introduction of a new national recruitment system for foundation training. Any change can be stressful and one such as this even more so given the potential for having a profound impact on the graduates, future careers. The 2012 Birmingham final year students fared well, all passed finals and all were offered a foundation training place; a fortunate position to be in given that not all UK graduates managed to secure a place at the time of writing.

Last year saw the ten-year anniversary of our postgraduate taught Masters in Advanced General Dental Practice. Originally set up by Professors Trevor Burke and Peter Marquis' this course draws broadly on internal and external speakers. We are now developing a distance learning version, which you can read about later along with a profile of Professor Burke.

This year has been an exciting year for research. Our staff have enjoyed particular success in securing funding from the National Institute of Health Research, the EU and industry. We have seen our College collaborations increase especially through the Chronic Disease Research Centre at University Hospital Birmingham, and we look forward to further work with the School of Cancer Sciences in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences. Our research, although diverse, is focused into clinical scientist partnerships, and a flavour of it – including work with fruit and vegetables – is included in this edition.

The biggest project by far over the past year has been the new build project with a planned relocation to the old Pebble Mill site. Stage One business case approval has been granted by the Department of Health, and we hope to have gained Stage Two approval by the time of writing *DentalROOTS* next year.

Most years we see staff retire. Two legendary contributors to the School and Hospital leave us this year, Carolyn Evans and Don Spence. Carolyn gave many decades of service to the NHS and also the School through teaching and student support. Don Spence leaves us after 48 years of service, as research technician, dental instructor, admissions tutor and welfare tutor. We wish them both long, happy and healthy retirements.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *DentalROOTS* and that it gives you a feel for the commitment of staff and the diverse nature of work at the School of Dentistry.

My very best wishes.

Philip J. Lumley

Professor Philip Lumley
Head of School of Dentistry

Fruit and vegetable compound offers hope against gum disease

Scientists at the University of Birmingham have found that supplementing the diet with a special combination of fruit and vegetable juice powder concentrates may help to combat chronic gum disease when combined with conventional dental therapy.

The results of a preliminary randomised controlled study show that taking a daily dose of capsules containing concentrated phytonutrients improved clinical outcomes for patients with chronic periodontitis (deep-seated gum disease) in the two months following non-surgical periodontal therapy, with additional beneficial changes recorded at five and eight months after therapy.

'In recent years it has become clear that refined sugar intake drives inflammation in the body, it is called 'meal-induced inflammation. Certain diets, such as the Mediterranean diet rich in fish oils and natural fruits and vegetables appear to protect against that inflammation, and we wanted to see what the impact would be on severe gum inflammation. This was a very complex study to analyse and we were surprised to see these outcomes, because when the standard therapy works so well, it creates a "ceiling effect" whereby it is difficult to improve further,' says Professor Iain Chapple of the Periodontal Research Group at the University's School of Dentistry, which led the study. 'It is difficult to assess the size of the additional clinical benefit, because these patients were well nourished, and had the highest quality standard therapy anyhow, such that the placebo group achieved excellent outcomes and it is hard to show benefit over and above that. We are very interested in what the effects will be in people who are nutritionally depleted, and in those who do not or cannot access high-quality gum care.'



Front cover image: Neutrophil white blood cells



Dentistry's new home on track for 2014

Plans for Birmingham's brand-new dental hospital and School of Dentistry have taken a significant step forward after the Department of Health approved the first of a two-stage planning process.

Outline planning consent for the £31 million development on the former BBC Pebble Mill site at Mill Road, Edgbaston, was granted by Birmingham City Council last November. Now ministerial approval has been given for the Stage One business case to create a new hospital and school, replacing the 50-year-old buildings in the St Chad's Queensway area of the city centre.

The proposed development, led by Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust with partners the University of Birmingham, Birmingham and Solihull Local Initiative Finance Trust (BaS LIFT) and Calthorpe Estates is intended to deliver the same range of quality services currently provided at the existing site in a modern, fit-for-purpose building.

The outline proposals were shared with local residents, staff and students at three public exhibitions in June 2011, providing details of where the five-storey building would be located and how the site would be accessed. Their feedback was then incorporated into the outline proposal.

In March this year the design and development teams began to consult further with staff, students, patient groups and the local community to scope out the next stage of design.

The Department of Health has been unable to say how long a full planning decision will take but if permission is granted, it is hoped that construction could start as early as this winter, with the new hospital and School of Dentistry open to patients and students at some time during 2014.

The artist's impression shows the design of the proposed building with the hospital divided by a central entrance and atrium, a larger area for medical use and a small section used as an educational centre.

Birmingham Community Healthcare medical director Rick Roberts commented: 'The existing hospital and School has a strong international reputation for specialist care, high-calibre graduate and postgraduate training as well as significant research in dental methods,

equipment and materials. It is anticipated the investment in this new facility will add to this reputation, especially when considering a comparable facility has not been constructed within the last 40 years.'

He added that the design of the building was intended to meet the changing needs of specialist modern dentistry and teaching practice.

The hospital, one of ten of its kind in England, will deliver the same services as the present one, which treats around 115,000 patients a year. This could increase to more than 120,000 a year in future, the Trust reported. The city's first dental hospital was created in 1858, and the current building is the sixth incarnation.

The new Dental School plan follows the recent upgrading and renovation projects that have created a state-of-the-art Prosectorium at the Medical School and seen the transformation of the Barnes Library and School foyer, both of which directly benefit dental students and were helped to fruition with generous donations from alumni.

Dental School Instrument Cabinets – No More!

Dr David Attrill reports on the end of an era at Birmingham



As the joke has gone over the last few years, you can always tell a Birmingham graduate because one arm is two inches longer than the other.

The reason – the student instrument cabinets. In 2011, and not before time, the student instrument cabinets were finally phased out. We were one of the last dental schools to continue with the policy of issuing instruments at the beginning of the clinical course and making students responsible for their sterilisation.

I know that many of our older students and members of staff will lament the loss of the instrument cabinets. They have instilled a

sense of responsibility among our graduates for caring for instruments. It was always up to the student to ensure that they had the appropriate piece of equipment to hand.

We do however have to move with the times and rightly so. The impact of HTM 01-05 in General Dental Practices has been immense. So too the impact on the way the hospital works.

Instruments are now sterilised at a state-of-the-art facility in Kings Norton; this serves not only the Dental Hospital but also a large proportion of the acute hospitals within the West Midlands. Instruments arrive in beautifully packed trays, students use them



David Attrill

and then they are sent back to the sterilisation facility. A 13-mile round trip with a 24-hour turnaround. You can only imagine what the impact has been on the numbers of instruments we need to stock and where we need to store them. Of course our students continue to be taught the principles and practice of local decontamination.

The original wooden cabinets were passed on from year to year and have been incredibly resilient. When the odd one got broken it would be replaced with a plastic version and these typically broke within a couple of years. There was a certain sense of pride among those students who were issued with the 'traditional' wooden cabinets.

Over the last couple of decades, the numbers of instruments that students were expected to carry has increased substantially, and consequently so has the weight of the cabinets. We found ourselves getting up to the point where students were being expected to carry nearly 10kg of weight because of the introduction of new instruments and the need to carry multiple sets.

I know that many former students will fondly remember the way they customised their cabinets. In some schools, students were given the opportunity of purchasing them and the instruments within when they graduated. Our 2012 graduates are the last to know the joys of the wooden instrument cabinets. Unanimously they favour the new system. Future cohorts will graduate with symmetry. RIP instrument cabinets.

Dr David Attrill is Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Restorative Dentistry

Oral health as a marker for poverty

Tooth decay is at an all-time low but social inequalities persist, reports Professor Deborah White.



Although the latest evidence demonstrates that there have been further improvements in adult oral health since 1998, which have been hailed by government, the same evidence identifies a serious underlying issue of social inequalities and particularly the link between poverty and oral health.¹

The markers of an improvement in oral health over the past 40 years are the increasing number of people retaining their teeth into old age, the falling proportion of people who are experiencing dental decay and its sequelae of pain and discomfort, and the limited experience that younger adults have of dental fillings. Increasingly two divergent groups in the population are being seen – the older 'heavy metal' generation, adults over the age of 45 who have had recurrent dental treatment, and a younger generation with limited experience of dental decay, but for whom the quest for a 'perfect smile' and cosmetic dental procedures is increasingly the goal, spurred on by a variety of TV and media articles.

This trend of improving oral health has also been shown in children and it is encouraging to see that for older children with permanent teeth, dental decay has reached an all-time low². It is hoped that further research will be commissioned in the next year or so to confirm these trends will continue.

The advent of improvements in oral health is attributed to an increased awareness of its importance and a better understanding of the causal link between dietary sugars, plaque bacteria and dental caries as well as improved oral hygiene practices and the widespread use of fluoridated toothpaste for the last 30 years.

However, inequalities persist and the recent British Adult Dental Health Survey has shown that people from lower socio-economic households fare worse across a number of oral health indicators than their counterparts in higher socio-economic groups. They are more likely to have dental decay, fillings, poor gum health, pain and sepsis. Additionally they are less likely to visit the dentist and brush their teeth effectively. In fact, although the overall prevalence of decay has fallen, among those adults who have it, the levels of decay are disappointingly similar to 11 years previously.

However, socio-economic background cannot be regarded as an individual risk factor for oral disease, but as part of a complex causal process that links factors related to where an individual was born, grew up, lives and works alongside national factors such as distribution of money, power and resources. A variety of theoretical models have been proposed to try and make sense of these

inter-factorial relationships, but they are still not well-understood.

Globally, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is working through the Commission on Social Determinants of Health to tackle health inequalities and at a recent conference in Brazil, the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) launched a global oral health inequality research agenda (GOHIRA). This recognises the need for further research into the social determinants of oral health and aims to support the WHO goals by effecting a measurable reduction in oral health inequalities in a generation.

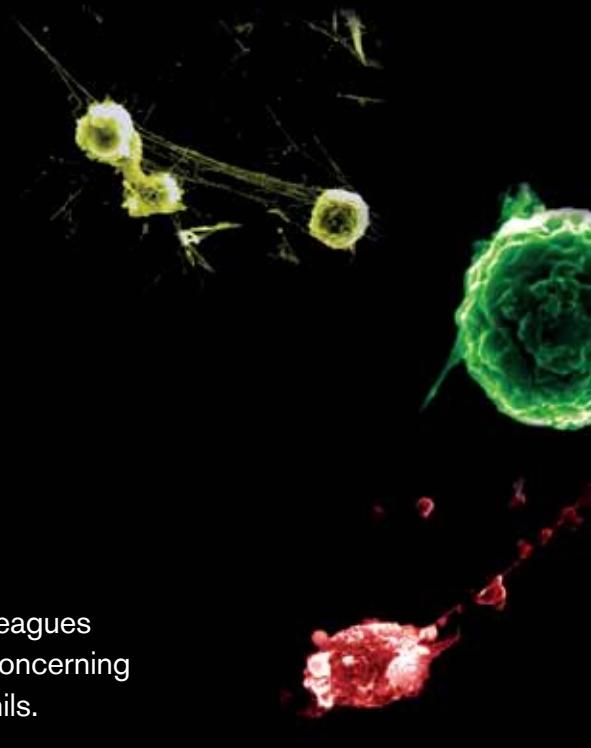
Professor Deborah White is Head of Public Dental Health and Director of Education in the School of Dentistry.

¹ 'Adult Dental Health Survey 2009. Theme 2: Disease and related disorders.' The NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care.

² 'Children's dental health in the United Kingdom, 2003.' Office for National Statistics

'Spider's web'

DNA findings offer hope in war on gum disease



Back in 2005, a landmark piece of research by Brinkmann and colleagues published in the journal *Nature Medicine* led to a major discovery concerning the most destructive white blood cells in the human body: neutrophils.



Professor Iain Chapple

Neutrophils are white blood cells which act as a first line of defence against bacterial infections. They represent the more sophisticated arm of our immune system and accurately target the destruction of micro-organisms.

Traditional knowledge was that neutrophils kill bacteria by engulfing them – a process known as phagocytosis – and then use oxygen radicals and powerful enzymes to destroy the bacteria within the safe confines of the neutrophil cell membrane.

Sometimes, if bacteria are too numerous to engulf, these destructive oxygen radicals and enzymes are released outside the neutrophil to damage and kill as many bacteria as possible.

Scientists at the University of Birmingham have now found a way of triggering the release of a powerful 'spider's web' of disease-fighting DNA in the body's protective neutrophils.

Researchers in the School of Dentistry used Hypochlorous acid to produce the webs, known as NETs (Neutrophil Extracellular Traps), by the white blood cells of patients who have a condition in which their cells are unable to produce oxygen radicals and NETs naturally. These findings were reported in the journal *Clinical and Experimental Immunology*.

Recent studies have shown that when neutrophils are heavily challenged by microbes, they start to die in a specially controlled way. As a last-ditch measure, they expel their entire DNA from within their nucleus into the surrounding tissue. It is this DNA that forms

a sticky 'spiders' web' or NET, which also contains enzymes that destroy the bacteria once they are trapped by the NET.

We know that oxygen radicals are needed for NETs to form and CGD patients cannot effectively produce oxygen radicals from their neutrophils



Dr Paul Cooper

Scientists, led by Professor Iain Chapple and Dr Paul Cooper in the Periodontal Research Group at Birmingham, discovered that Hypochlorous acid stimulated NET release in patients suffering from the condition Chronic Granulomatous Disease (CGD), who fail to routinely make NETs. They also discovered that Taurine reduced NET formation and may thus prolong neutrophil survival.

Professor Chapple comments: 'Our interest is in the role of NETs in combating bacteria that initiate periodontal disease (gum disease), but the fundamental biology surrounding NET formation is common to many infectious-immune conditions.'

'We know that oxygen radicals are needed for NETs to form and CGD patients cannot effectively produce oxygen radicals from their neutrophils, therefore cannot produce NETs or respond as well to certain infections.'

'This work helps us understand those processes a little more and may in the future

lead to new therapies that increase, or indeed in some cases decrease NET formation.'

The research has also highlighted a perplexing paradox surrounding NETs. 'In some patients NETs appear to be very important in bacterial killing,' reports Professor Chapple, 'but in others they appear to generate auto-antibodies against NET components which are being associated with certain immune-mediated diseases like Rheumatoid Arthritis and auto-immune vasculitis.'

It appears that NETs may be a double-edged sword for some patients, but research in this new area of immune control is very active at present and exciting

'It appears that NETs may be a double-edged sword for some patients, but research in this new area of immune control is very active at present and exciting discoveries are likely to come thick and fast over the next five to ten years.'

Dr Cooper goes on to say: 'Our recent work has shown that some bacteria from the mouth that cause gum disease are able to break down NETs. As NETs are made of DNA we checked over 30 oral bacteria to see if they were able to make the DNase enzyme which would break down the NETs.'

'Perhaps not surprisingly we found that many of these bacteria were able to make this enzyme. Not only may this enable individual bacteria which cause gum disease to evade NET killing but as these bacteria cohabit with other bacteria in complex ecosystems within the mouth it may also mean that other bacteria are protected. It will be interesting to work out how important these bacteria-NET interactions are in causing gum disease.' These findings were reported in the *Journal of Periodontal Research*.

He adds: 'We've also gone on to look at whether we ourselves may be making this DNase enzyme so that when the NETs have finished their bacterial killing, does our body then remove the NET DNA? Interestingly preliminary studies found that during later stages of disease this enzyme may well be switched on and this may be very important in making sure NETs do not 'hang around' within our body and go on to cause immune-mediated diseases.'

Jenni Ameghino

BUAFTA success for Gay Smith



Congratulations to Gay Smith, Research Technician, who recently won the award for 'Best Support for Research' at the BUAFTAs (Birmingham University Awards for Tremendous Achievement). Gay received her award at a gala dinner and awards ceremony in the University's prestigious Great Hall.

'My initial reaction to being shortlisted was shock and surprise and as the gala evening approached I got quite excited, largely due to the support and good wishes I had received from my friends and colleagues, both here and overseas.' said Gay.

'The event itself was a great experience and it's nice to think that your efforts are appreciated. Although it's my name on the award, it could equally have been given to our whole team, who make the School of Dentistry such an interesting and rewarding research environment.'

Gay has worked on many and various research programmes over the years. Currently she is involved in looking at the effect of dentine matrix components on pulpal stem cells and setting up a model to study the invasiveness of oral squamous cell carcinoma cell-lines.

The BUAFTA award recognises an individual or team whose work in support of research reflects the values of the University: excellence, distinctiveness, impact, confidence and pride. Consideration is given to those who work directly with academic staff and students as well as those whose role indirectly supports research.

Alumni profile

Community dental expert recalls life in the Firm

If there is one aspect of dentistry training – apart from the hard work – that Dr Janet Clarke MBE remembers most some three decades after becoming an alumna, it is the intense camaraderie enjoyed by the members of her 'Firm.'

'You trained as a team, and with 80 of us in my year split into four "Firms," that meant you got to know people really well,' she recalls. 'I remember the dental course being very hard work. It took up so many weeks of the year and we'd still be working when friends doing other courses were enjoying long holidays, so it was good that we formed such strong friendships during our training.'

'In the year that I qualified, nine of us went on holiday together to Paris. We took the train, then the ferry, then the train the other side of the Channel, and I remember us all having breakfast in the station at Gard du Nord early in the morning. We had great fun.'

A keen sense of fun, coupled with a driven personality, seem to characterise Janet, a mother of two who is today Clinical Director of Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust's Community Dental Service (CDS) and Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer with Birmingham Dental School.

She has recently stepped down from the Presidency of the British Dental Association (BDA) after a year that she describes as 'incredibly busy but full of highlights. I got to travel all over the country as a guest of BDA branches and non-dental organisations and met a fascinating selection of people.'

'There is a fabulous BDA chain of office which opened so many doors. I went to Highgrove and met Prince Charles. I was a guest of honour at the Army Medical and Dental Training Corps in Camberley. It was my birthday and the military band played 'Happy Birthday' for me; that was very special.'

Janet arrived as a dentistry undergraduate in Birmingham after studying the first year of

the course at Bristol. 'I got engaged to a Birmingham medical student (David Clarke, MBChB 1982, now a consultant psychiatrist) and decided to transfer here. I didn't regret it for a moment,' she grins.

After graduating in 1981 she completed a Master of Community Dental Health in 1989 and worked as a clinical dental officer in a range of Midland health authorities before taking up her current post in 1991. Today, she manages an NHS dental budget of more than £6 million and oversees the provision of community dental services for vulnerable people in Birmingham, Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall. This includes providing mobile dental units in areas of social deprivation, complex dental treatment on a domiciliary basis and intravenous sedation for severely anxious patients.

Her career has included chairing the BDA's Central Committee for Community and Public Health Dentistry and leading negotiations to introduce the new contract for salaried primary care dentists, establishing a new pathway for career progression.

In 2010 Janet was awarded the MBE for services to dentistry having 12 months previously been appointed by the government to work alongside Professor Jimmy Steele in his Independent Review of NHS Dentistry.

'It was the hardest thing I have ever done,' she laughs. 'We started on December 19, 2009, and it was published on June 22 the following year. When I was asked to be on the review team I said 'no problem' and mentioned it to my boss. Then it turned out there were only three of us working on it. The pace was relentless.'

Looking ahead she believes dentistry faces enormous challenges, not only in a tough



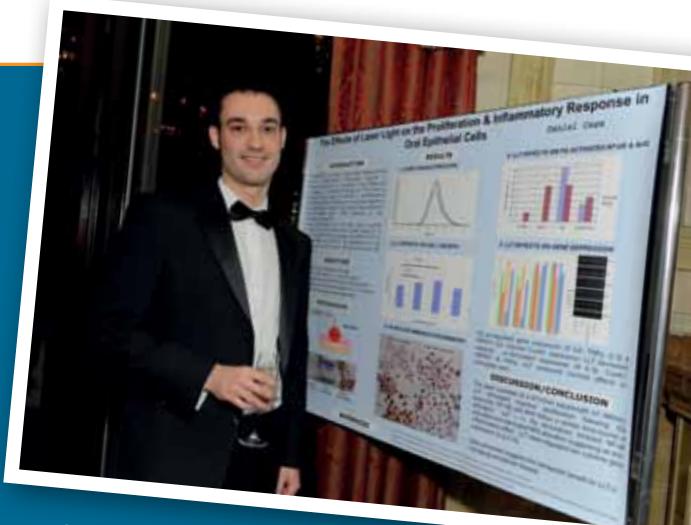
economic climate but from increasing demand, particularly from people with special needs, people with disabilities and older people. 'Community services are becoming better known,' she says, 'but we have to work out how we 'fit' in the new NHS and how we will be providing our services in future.'

She is refreshingly optimistic. 'Locally we are in the same organisation as the dental hospital and we need to work together to maximise our resources so we can be the community arm of the new hospital. I have very good staff and we are in a strong position,' reflects a woman who, when she's not at the biting edge of her profession, enjoys what she jokingly refers to as the 'shallow pursuits of shopping and holidays.'

Jenni Ameghino

Student profile

Daniel Caga



Birmingham-born Daniel Caga has just graduated with a BDS, qualifying with Honours and Distinction in Clinical Dentistry. Daniel talked to *Dental ROOTS* about his time at the University, his experience on the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme and what dentistry holds for him in the future.

'I began studying at Birmingham in 2004 after applying via the A2B scheme for my BSc in Biological Sciences (Genetics). In 2007 I graduated with First Class Honours and began studying for my BDS at the School of Dentistry.

'A2B is one of the first fair access schemes of its kind designed to enable students from the West Midlands who come from underprivileged backgrounds with little or no family history of higher education to study at Birmingham. The scheme encouraged me to achieve the grades needed to enter the course. I could see the opportunities I would miss if I did not work hard for my exams. I have continued to work with the A2B scheme throughout my time at University, and I have also been an ambassador and mentor for the scheme – something I am most proud of.'

'I have wanted to be a dentist since I was 12 or 13. I completed work experience at my local dental practice throughout my school and college periods. Many of the dentists I shadowed studied at the University of

Birmingham School of Dentistry, and they encouraged me not only to follow my dreams but to do so at Birmingham.'

'There have been several highlights during my time at Birmingham. I was nominated by Professor Philip Lumley to represent the Dental School at the University's first ever Vice-Chancellor's Seminar Group, which involved students from across the University debating key topics and culminated with a dinner at the VC's residence. Another highlight was being awarded the 2011 Frank Ashley Prize from the British Society of Periodontology (BSP). Alongside a certificate from the BSP, I also received a £500 research grant towards my project, a year's membership to the Society and was invited to attend the Second Pan Dental Conference in Liverpool. I was also nominated to represent the School of Dentistry at the prestigious BDA/Dentsply DDU Student Clinician Awards 2012 in London. I presented my fourth-year elective project, which investigated the effects of laser light exposure on the proliferation and

inflammatory responses of an oral epithelial cell line, I attended a black-tie dinner, and I was awarded a certificate of recognition and membership to the International Association of Student Clinicians – American Dental Association. It was an honour representing Birmingham at this event and was a fabulous experience – one of the ultimate during my time at University – and highlighted aspects of dentistry and academia that students rarely experience.'

'I wanted a responsible, demanding and rewarding career and dentistry provides that. The great thing about dentistry is it provides you with so many career pathways. I am keen to complete further training either at the hospital or in practice, I have research interests in the area of periodontology and I also wish to teach at the School of Dentistry.'

'University life has been the best time of my life, and I am very proud to be a Birmingham graduate.'

Congratulations

Congratulations to Nigel Carter (BDS, 1975) Chief Executive, British Dental Health Foundation, who was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honors for services to dental and oral health.

Congratulations also to Zuber Bagasi (BDS, 2005) and Shakti Gandeche (BDS, 2006) who were shortlisted as Best Young Dentist for the North West and Midlands respectively in the Dentistry Awards 2011.

Barry Cockcroft (BDS, 1973) and Julian Webber (BDS, 1974) also featured in Dentistry's top 50 for 2012.

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Trevor Burke profile

When you first meet Trevor Burke, he strikes you as an unassuming man, with his soft Irish accent and friendly smile. But after just a few minutes with Trevor, it quickly becomes apparent that he has much to boast about, although he rarely does.

His 42-year career as a dental practitioner is only the start of his portfolio of achievements, and his passion and dedication shines through from the outset. Juggling an academic career in research, teaching on both undergraduate and postgraduate dentistry programmes, and still seeing patients is all in a day's work for Trevor.

Trevor graduated from Queen's University Belfast. Following appointments in the School of Dentistry, Belfast, Trevor worked in general dental practice for 22 years in Manchester and as a Professor of Dental Primary Care at the University of Glasgow before moving to Birmingham.

'Coming to the Birmingham Dental School was a breath of fresh air,' Trevor commented. 'They're a close-knit team here and somehow just always pull together. This doesn't happen everywhere and is probably down to having such strong leadership.'

Trevor's key research interests focus around practice-based research, specifically fillings and how well and how long they survive. Back in 1993, Trevor's interest in materials led to the development of the Product Research and Evaluation by Practitioners Group (PREP Panel). This group started off with six dental practitioners who were interested in materials. They worked with Trevor to review the use of materials for fillings in their practice. Manufacturers now use his research group to review the success rate of new materials in clinical trials. Over the years this group of professional researchers has now grown to 33 and is still going strong.

Trevor was involved in the establishment of a database of a half-million restorations in the early 1990s. The restorations were followed for 11 years, with the results shedding light on the factors involved in restoration survival

in England and Wales. Most recently, he is hoping to commence work on a much expanded version of this database and is seeking further research funding for the analysis stage.

When asked what Trevor felt was his biggest achievement, he humbly replied, 'perhaps the setting up of the index for oral health,' which was published in 1995 and is now used across the world and specifically by Denplan in the UK, to assess the oral health of patients. The index assesses patient oral health by using a points system to give an oral health score.

Trevor explained that what he enjoys most about his career is working with patients. 'I still enjoy treating patients after all these years. My interests focus on patients with worn teeth as it fuels my other interest in dental materials. I work closely with the excellent Materials Science department in the School of Dentistry and love to see research being translated directly into the clinical care of patients. Dental practitioners should always have access to the best possible materials so that they can do the best job they can. I've also always enjoyed the integration and interaction with dentists in practice – I can certainly empathise with them!'



Trevor's latest venture is the development of a new postgraduate programme in the University. He's been successfully leading the MSc Advanced General Dental Practice programme for 11 years and during this time had endless requests from both overseas students and those in the UK who live too far away to travel regularly to Birmingham. In response to this Trevor is launching a distance learning version of the programme in 2013 to meet the needs of this specific audience. Trevor said: 'Dentists have a thirst for structured postgraduate learning, and much more so than in the past. This distance learning programme means they won't have to leave their practice unattended to come and study. It's totally flexible as they can study from anywhere at a time to suit them. We're really looking forward to welcoming our new students onto this programme next year.'

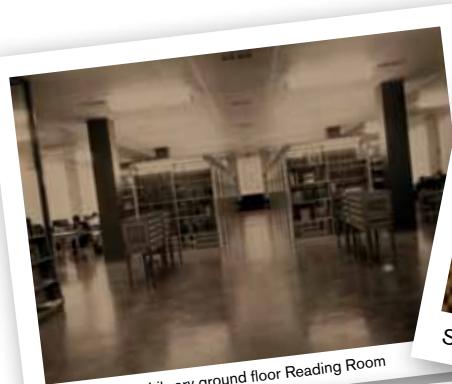
For more information about Trevor, see his staff profile at www.birmingham.ac.uk/trevor-burke

Visit our website for more information about the new distance learning programme www.birmingham.ac.uk/dentalpractice-distance



New ventures: the Distance Learning team

Major refurbishment benefits medical and dental students



Before: Barnes Library ground floor Reading Room



Sir Doug Ellis OBE



After: Foyer leading to Barnes Library and Doug Ellis Learning Hub

On Monday 5 March, medical and dental alumni, donors, staff and students attended a reception marking the completion of the Medical School Foyer and Barnes Library refurbishment project.

Alumni and donors were given a unique opportunity to see the new facilities and meet with students who are already making use of this exemplary space, which has transformed the ground floor of the building for the benefit of medical and dental students for years to come.

The original facilities were built on land given by the Cadbury family. At that time, more than 1,500 donors gave amounts ranging from 6d to £250,000. The total cost of this refurbishment project, which has brought the original 1939 design of the Medical School building into the 21st century, was £2 million.

Dentistry students spend much of their first two years doing coursework in the Medical School and will directly benefit from this renovation, the latest in a series of major refurbishment projects including the Wolfson Common Room, the Leonard Deacon Lecture Theatre and the Prosectorium.

Professor Lawrence Young, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, remarked on the evening that: 'students are rightly demanding of us. They want wonderful teaching and learning facilities. Tastes and requirements change over time and we must respond to that.'

Thanks to the generosity of the project's donors, the ground floor of the Barnes Library has now been transformed into an innovative hub for all student services, with dedicated student welfare support services and confidential meeting rooms. In addition there are flexible study areas with WiFi access, and space for informal and formal student group working, including the latest IT and audiovisual facilities.

Lead donor Sir Doug Ellis OBE spoke on the occasion saying: 'I have been involved in many charitable projects over the years, but the University of Birmingham has a special place in my heart. In fact, I owe my life to the research and the staff here. Along with all the others who gave, I am delighted to be able financially to support this wonderful project.' The College of Medical and Dental Sciences would like to thank all the supporters of this project.

Birmingham hosts 2013 ADEE conference

The University of Birmingham School of Dentistry is pleased to be hosting the 39th Annual Meeting of the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) on 27–31 August 2013.

Founded in 1975, ADEE is comprised of European university dental schools and specialist societies, and it supports dental education and research and the professional development and training of oral health personnel. Birmingham's Professor Damien Walmsley is currently Secretary General of ADEE.

The hosting of the annual ADEE meeting is a big plus for Birmingham, and Professor Walmsley helped push to get it here. 'Birmingham is a leading international establishment and education centre for dentistry. We will utilise Council House, the Great Hall and our College facilities such as the CPD centre, so it will be very exciting to showcase both the city and the University.'

The title of the 2013 conference is 'Electronic Learning @ ADEE' and will focus on using and advancing e-learning in the field of dental education. Speakers will be drawn from dental schools in Chile and Los Angeles, the EU commission in Brussels and European IT entrepreneurs. The conference promises to be innovative as it will utilise both social networking techniques and phone apps in its organisation.

The annual meeting is open to ADEE members and non-members alike. More information is available on www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/mds-cpd/conferences/adee-2013/index.aspx



Professorial wedding celebrations

Professor Deborah White married Professor Giles Perryer in August 2011. Congratulations!

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In remembrance: John Gilmour



John Gilmour

The School of Dentistry was saddened to learn of alumnus John Gilmour's untimely passing on 23 July 2011.

John was the Associate Dean of the West Midlands Postgraduate Dental Deanery, and a passionate supporter of dental education. A 1980 graduate, he returned to Birmingham to celebrate his 30th class reunion in October 2010. John also earned a Diploma in Medical Education and was looking forward to starting a Masters degree.

For many years John ran a successful partnership in general practice with Philip Burnell (BDS, 1974) in Chasetown, where he was a popular and highly effective vocational trainer for newly qualified dentists. He later became the VT advisor for Stafford before taking on the role of Associate Dean in 2009.

John was a keen footballer when younger. He was a good midfielder who played for his year team 'The Dregs' and for the Dental School team while a student. He continued playing in the Wolverhampton leagues after qualifying, and on more than one occasion dental meetings were rearranged based on the England and Oldham Athletic fixture lists.

John was an upstanding, caring and scrupulously honest man who was devoted to his wife and three children. He was also committed to helping our profession, and is sorely missed by his colleagues.

Contributed by Giles Perryer (BDS, 1982) and David 'Dai' Gingell (LDS, 1981)



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