

BDA enjoys record-breaking conference success



The BDA celebrated another highly successful conference this year attended by record numbers of dental health professionals and a wide variety of speakers and exhibitors.

More than 5,488 attendees visited the [British Dental Conference and Exhibition 2013](#), 9% up on last year's figure.

In addition to the varied line-up of expert guest speakers, the association's officers and staff gave talks, updating delegates on vital changes over the last year. This included the BDA's important victory in securing legislation making it illegal for anyone other than a dental health professional to carry out tooth whitening. Dr Stuart Johnston, who led the

BDA's work, issued a fresh call for illegal practitioners to be stamped out and urged dental professionals to [play their part](#) in forcing the demise of the whitening cowboys.

The sessions on the [new contract pilots](#) proved very popular and Dr John Milne, Chair of GDC, stressed the needs of elderly patients must not be forgotten as the development of the new contract in England continues. Dates for next year's conference are the 10 to 12 April. Booking will open in the autumn.

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BDA welcomes vulnerable patients Task Group

NHS England has launched a task group to look closely at how dental services can be improved for vulnerable patients and individuals who are not accessing care. The initiative, which was announced at the 2013 British Dental Conference and Exhibition by Department of Health Minister Earl Howe, will mean the establishment of a new group that will report to the new National Dental Commissioning Steering Group. The task group will be led by former BDA President Dr Janet Clarke.

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Northern Ireland GDP Barry McGonigle assumes Presidency of the BDA



Dr Barry McGonigle, a General Dental Practitioner from Omagh, Northern Ireland, officially assumed the Presidency of the British Dental Association at the British Dental Conference and Exhibition on 25 April, succeeding Dr Frank Holloway.

Coming from a dental family, Dr McGonigle was brought up in Omagh, Co Tyrone. He undertook his dental education at the University of Manchester and the Turner Dental Hospital and then worked as an Assistant Dental Surgeon with a practice in the Republic of Ireland. He then did further training as an SHO in Manchester Royal Infirmary and held an associateship in general practice in York. He returned

to the family practice in Omagh in 1982 and has worked there ever since, where he is currently the practice owner.

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New Director of Policy and Professional Services for the BDA



Martin Woodrow has been appointed as the new Director of Policy and Professional Services for the BDA. He will take up the post in August 2013, taking over from Linda Wallace.

Martin joins the BDA from the British Medical Association, where he has worked in a number of senior roles. He is currently National Secretary for the BMA in Scotland, with responsibility for leading the Association's Scottish policy, member advice, and public affairs functions. Martin was previously head of the BMA's secondary care division, with responsibility for consultant contract negotiations. He is a graduate of University College London and has an MBA from Warwick Business School.

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Education, Ethics and the Dental Working Group meeting

The Education, Ethics and the Dental Working Group met on Friday to discuss a wide-ranging agenda including: how the Association responds to Direct Access; Foundation Training; CPD, revalidation and appraisal; the Francis report of the Public Inquiry into Mid Staffs; the Law Commission review of the regulation of health care professionals; transition to independent practice; developments in the Dental Professional Board of Health Education England; and the Department of Health England review of cosmetic interventions. The Group also reviewed its work plan and policy document.

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BDA launches student debt survey

A survey of final-year dental students to examine the impact of study-related debt on access to the profession and career plans was launched this week.

Final-year student members of the BDA across all four countries of the UK are being urged to complete the survey so that a comprehensive, up-to-date picture on the levels of borrowing and debt among dentistry students, and the impact they have on them, can be formed.

The survey will build on [qualitative research carried out by the BDA](#) that has been published today. This research indicates that the impact of increased tuition fees could act as a deterrent for some students interested in pursuing a career in dentistry.

Concerns were also expressed about the Student Loan Company's failure to take into account the longer terms experienced by dental students. Their formula appears to be based on a standard degree involving 30 academic weeks per year, whereas dental students are expected to survive on the same loan over a 40-week period.

The research highlights that some dental students may postpone or abandon their ambition to become a specialist in areas such as maxillofacial surgery and periodontics, due to the extra costs involved.

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BDA launches online exams

Saturday 27 April saw the first online examination for the BDA's online course in Dental Radiography for Dental Care Professionals. 140 students sat the preliminary exam on computers across the UK with one candidate joining us all the way from Poland. BDA Education is leading the way by holding the first, truly distributed, global examinations for dental care professionals, and this may be a first for the dental profession.

Saturday's examination went well and analysis suggests the test was 'gold standard' in terms of educational reliability. The results are now in the process of being signed off by a panel of experts from the dental radiography field.

The next examination will take place on 1st June and successful candidates will be the first DCPs to be awarded the BDA Education Certificate in Dental Radiography.

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Prize opportunity for special care dentistry in Belfast

A prize fund worth £500 is being offered to dental students studying Special Care Dentistry in their penultimate year at Queen's University, Belfast.

The prize is the result of a partnership between BDA Northern Ireland, sponsors First Trust Bank and the dental faculty at Queen's University, Belfast which aims to recognise the distinct abilities required to manage the care of patients with special needs, such as those with some form of physical, medical or sensory impairment.

Fourth-year students are encouraged to compete for the prize by submitting a poster presentation considering how challenges presented in the care of a patient with special needs may be managed effectively.

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Richard III's teeth leave a lasting impression

Analysis of the teeth of Richard III has shed new light on the life and death of the last English monarch to die in battle, according to an article published in the latest issue of the British Dental Journal.

The discovery last year of human remains under a council car park in Leicester, and their subsequent identification as Richard's through DNA taken from several back teeth, has thrust a spotlight on medieval dentistry and the oral health of the historically unpopular king who died at the battle of Bosworth in 1485.

The author of the article, Richard III – the final act, suggests the king, who reigned for just two turbulent years, had generally poor oral health and may have suffered stress-related bruxism as there is evidence of tooth surface loss on a number of back teeth and upper right central incisor.

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