



Bristol Dental Alumni Association Newsletter, March 2018

From: Reg Andlaw, BDAA Chairman

Dear members,

Do you sometimes ask yourself 'what do I get out of my BDAA membership?' In terms of direct personal benefit your answer might be 'not much'. But if you ask yourself 'what benefit accrues from my membership?' your answer must surely be 'quite a lot'. In fact, everything we (your committee) are able to do – contributing towards student activities and worthy causes in the dental school – is down to you. That really is 'quite a lot' – and I can assure you it's very much appreciated by students and the school.

Most of you will be aware of our annual donations towards the purchase of books for the dental library, the total now amounting to over £18,000. Most of you will also know that the library was moved up the hill to the medical school a few years ago to make way for the Computer Assisted Learning Centre. Our students recently discovered that a few dental books were being stocked in the library of the NHS Education Centre, just round the corner from the dental school, which clearly is more convenient for them. They asked us if we might be able to fund the purchase of more books for that library. So Gary Mendham (our Secretary, for those who don't know!) made contact with their librarian and we have now agreed to donate funds for that purpose.

You don't need me to remind you that one of our regular donations has been to dental students embarking on elective projects in the summer of their pre-graduation year. All of those we supported produced reports that we published in our annual newsletters from 1992 to 2014, and on our website since 2014. I thought it would be interesting to recall where the students carried out their projects, so I have trawled through the reports and come up with the following list:

| | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 1992 | India | 2005 | Uganda, Fiji |
| 1993 | Australia, Rwanda | 2006 | Australia (2), USA, Argentina, Ukraine |
| 1994 | USA, South Africa | 2007 | Bristol, Australia (2), Germany, Malta, Thailand |
| 1995 | Australia, USA, Romania | 2008 | Cambodia, Ghana, Mongolia, UK, Australia |
| 1996 | USA, France, South Africa | 2009 | Bristol (4), Croatia, Kenya, India |
| 1997 | Brazil, South Africa, USA, Russia, Kenya | 2010 | Bristol (2), Canada, Cambodia |
| 1998 | Bristol, South Africa, Australia | 2011 | Bristol (2), USA |
| 1999 | Bristol, Australia (2), Peru, Singapore | 2012 | Bristol, Canada, Nepal |
| 2000 | India, Uganda, UK | 2013 | Bristol, Peru, Nepal |
| 2001 | USA, Australia, Peru | 2014 | Bristol (4), New Zealand, Australia |
| 2002 | Tanzania, New Zealand | 2015 | Bristol (2), Tanzania, The Philippines |
| 2003 | Bristol, USA, Australia | 2016 | Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, USA, Nepal |
| 2004 | Tanzania, Spain, New Zealand, Barbados | 2017 | Bristol, Cambodia |

I make that a total of 94 electives, of which 71 were (at least partly) overseas. It's interesting to note that of the 23 UK-based (all but two Bristol-based) electives only 6 were during the 17-year period up to 2008 whereas 17 were during the following 9 years. The reason for this imbalance is not clear – possibly financial pressures resulting from the introduction of higher tuition fees? If you would like to read any of the reports (some are a good read, and most even include an acknowledgement of BDAA support) all past newsletters may be found on our website www.bristoldentalalumni.co.uk, clicking on ARCHIVES. (Please note: electives up to 2013 appear in the **following** year's newsletter.)

Having got into full swing digging out facts and figures about the electives I'll keep going and give you a few more – about reunions this time. In the early 1990s we promoted the idea of graduate-

year reunions rather than the open-to-all events that had been held previously. This has become hugely successful. Since 1992 there have been approximately 120 reunions, an average of over four a year, some meeting at 5-year intervals, others at 10-year or more. The figures would be even more impressive if the 1966 reunions were added – they (at least a hard core of them) have met every year since graduation. Only two 'years' appear not to have held a reunion (I will not name-and-shame them as they may, after all, have met on the quiet or, sadly, just hated one another!). Overall, it's an impressive reflection of how our alumni feel about their student days and about their dental school – long may it continue.

Some years ago the Students' Common Room (SCR) was a popular venue where students and staff met on a Friday evening and where reunion groups made first contact before their weekend activities. In 2008 we contributed towards its refurbishment and presented the students with a new sound system (which was appreciated by the students but drove many of us out!). Unfortunately, for reasons that remain in the dark, the SCR was closed down a few years ago. I reported in our last newsletter (August 2017) that plans were afoot for another big reorganisation in that area, but I'm sorry to say that nothing has happened yet – the wheels of change turn very slowly. But the hopeful news is that the plans are still 'on the table', as is our offer to contribute – I hope we can report some progress with this before too long.

I have to end, not for the first time, on a sad note. We have been informed that David Baker (1965) died on 20th February. He suffered a devastating stroke in December 2015, followed by a long illness, but he died peacefully at home. We offer our condolences to his wife Joy and family. (An obituary will appear on our website)

Best wishes to you all

Reg