Dental Tribune

The World's Dental Newspaper · United Kingdom Edition

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News in Brief

Ortho solution for turtle
At the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies a local dentist is carrying out some unusual dental work on a sea turtle! The Kemp's Ridley turtle, which is an endangered species, suffered a broken shell after being hit by a boat propeller and a previous shark bite. Dentist Dr Norowski has been using dental techniques to re-build the endangered Rocky's broken shell, which is made from keratin, and although this is different from tooth enamel, his dental knowledge is nevertheless helping the turtle's recovery. According to reports, the dentist has built a series of acrylic pieces to help rebuild the turtle's damaged shell using dental techniques, and has even used orthodontic appliances, such as a palatal expander while the shell heals. Wendy Hatchett who has been helping treat the injured turtle with the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies and Dr Norowski both said in a report that Rocky had been a good patient and didn't seem to mind the dentist!

Important announcement
Molar Ltd has announced that as of January 2012 ownership of Molar Ltd will be transferred to TePe Munhygienprodukter AB. In a letter to their customers, Molar Ltd said that they believe the change "will deliver significant improvements" to all their customers. The letter also said that the ownership of Molar by a "much larger and successful global company" will allow them to "invest more heavily behind [their] already very successful brands and expand opportunities for TePe." The letter explained that Molar Ltd "will continue to trade exactly as before with its customers in the dental sector and there will be no disruption to the level of service" or products that customers already receive. It also said that there are no changes to ordering, deliveries, telephone numbers or their location; however, customers have been informed of new banking details. The main change to the company is the resignation of Stefan and Marianne Viklund and their replacement by Directors from TePe. All other personnel will remain the same. Customers of pet and veterinary products will from now on be supplied by a new company "InformPet Ltd".

News

Ugandan expedition
Start the year with a mission

page 4

Implant Tribune

Implant therapy
Nilesh Parmar describes treatment planning

pages 15-16

Practice Management

New Year, new image
Cathy Johnson on rebranding

pages 22-23

Events Preview

CIC 2012
Preparing for the future

page 26

New Year's Honours List brings smile to dental world

The New Year's Honours list brought smiles onto many people's faces, and those in dentistry were hardly left out of the celebrations!

The 2012 New Year Honours List has once again been published, recognising some of the outstanding achievements and services made by extraordinary people working for their communities, and those in dentistry were hardly left out of this year's celebrations! Those honoured with the award were recognised because of their efforts to help make a real difference in their communities, through various charitable and fundraising ways.

Professor Jimmy Steel Dean, Newcastle Dental School, has been honoured a CBE for services to dentistry and oral health. Among his many roles as practicing dentist and Head of School, Prof Steele led the *"Review of NHS Dental Services in England"* for the Government in 2009, which subsequently led him to work with the Department of Health to pilot and consider his recommendations.

Another well-known name in dentistry to receive an honour was Dr Susan Sanderson, of Oakham, Rutland, and chairman of the executive board of the British Dental Association. Dr Sanderson, who was a GDP for most of her career, will receive an OBE for her services to dentistry. Over the years Dr Sanderson has contributed in a wide variety of areas, including education and standards, healthcare policy, and has been involved in the BDA at local and national level for a number of years.

After many years of being "wholly committed to improving patient care through lifelong learning", Professor Stephen Lambert-Humble, Head of Dentistry, University of Kent, will also be honoured an MBE for his services to dental care and education.

Prof Lambert-Humble, who is a Postgraduate Dental Dean in the UK, had a full career in the Royal Navy as a GDP, a Specialist in Dental Public Health, and has continued to deliver and manage dental training at all levels, producing highly successful e-learning programmes such as DNART, which enabled nearly 10,000 experienced dental nurses to become registered.

Angie McBain, British Association of Dental Nurses, who began work as a dental nurse in general practice in Scotland, but changed track to gain an HND in Fashion, will also receive an MBE for services to dental services. After returning to dentistry and holding various teaching posts, Angie became a member of BADN Council, and held various posts such as Regional Coordinator, President and Chairman; Angie also represented the Association on several working groups and Committees.

BADN President Nicola Docherty said on Angie's award: "We are absolutely delighted that Angie's hard work on behalf of dental nurses throughout the UK and abroad has been recognised."

Former GDP David Collington GDP from, North Road Dental Practice, Glasgow will also be honoured an MBE for his services to dentistry. DT

2012 BDA/DDU/DENTSPLY Student Clinician Awards

The BDA/Dental Defence Union (DDU)/ DENTSPLY Student Clinician Awards programme supports international undergraduate study, focuses on original research and accentuates the strong and continuous bond between the profession and the dental industry.

DENTSPLY is proud to sponsor this prestigious programme, which gives students a valuable opportunity to gain research experience and the chance of a trip to San Francisco next October as an honoured guest of DENTSPLY and the American Dental Association. In addition to this, the winner's school will receive a £10,000 research grant.

The DDU is also proud to be involved in the prestigious awards as Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, Head of the DDU explains: "The Student Clinician Awards act as a showcase for some of the best young talent in British dentistry and it is always great to see how many intelligent, hardworking and talented dental students there are in the UK. The awards themselves provide a unique opportunity for the winning dental student and their school. The DDU is committed to undergraduate and postgraduate education, and is delighted to be involved in such a prestigious event."

Fourth year students are invited to create a small presentation (in poster form) based on any topic relevant to the world of dentistry. It should include the student's own research and should be prepared with minimal input from dental school staff. The presentation should show clear, logical thinking and be delivered in a professional manner.

Each dental school in the UK will appoint one fourth year student to represent them in the competition. The student whose project is judged to be best in the school will be chosen to present to a distinguished panel of judges in London on 2nd February 2012 and will receive two exclusive invitations to the black tie Clinicians Awards ceremony on 3rd February, including two nights in The Royal Horseguards Hotel.

Now in its 35th year, the BDA/DDU/DENTSPLY Student Clinician Programme Awards will be held at The Royal Horseguards Hotel in London in February with judging on February 2nd and the awards ceremony the following day.

The event will be a chance to celebrate not just the achievements of the student clinicians, but also DENTSPLY's on-going commitment to the future of dentistry and the practitioners of tomorrow.

For more information, please call 0800 072 3313 or visit www.dentsply.co.uk DT

Could a change in diet help prevent Alzheimer's?

Research has suggested that a diet rich in vitamins and fish may help protect the brain from ageing.

The *Neurology* study found that elderly people who had high levels of vitamins and omega 3 fatty acids in their blood had a better mental performance and less brain shrinkage. On the opposite end of the scale, the research suggested that a diet of junk food produced opposite effects; in the case of this study, Trans fats, which are found in processed foods, were linked to lower test scores and more shrinkage of the brain, a factor typical of Alzheimer's.

For the study US experts analysed the blood samples, which were taken from 104 healthy people with an average age of 87; the participants had few known risk factors for Alzheimer's.

According to a report, the results revealed that those participants who had more vitamin B, C, D and E in their blood performed better in tests of memory and thinking skills. Those participants who had high levels of omega 3 also had high test scores. However, those participants whose blood samples had more Trans fats had the lowest scores.

The researchers, from Oregon Health and Science University, Portland; Portland VA Medical Center; and Oregon State University, Corvallis, then carried out brain scans on 42 of the participants.

The results showed that the individuals with high levels of omega 3 and vitamins in their blood were more likely to have a large brain volume. Those participants who had high levels of Tran's fats in their blood had a smaller total brain volume.

According to study author Gene Bowman of Oregon Health and Science University, the results still need to be confirmed, however, as a result of the findings, a UK medical charity has called for more work into diet and dementia risk. DT

Trust fund awards £160,000 in GDP research grants

Two grants, worth a total of almost £160,000, have been awarded by the Shirley Glasstone Hughes Trust Fund for research projects that will examine the role of dentists' anxieties in clinical decision making and the impact of the choice of linings under amalgam fillings have on outcomes for patients. The winning projects were selected by an international panel of experts, following a comprehensive peer review process of all the applications received.

Dr Peter Thornley, a Birmingham based general dental practitioner, has been awarded £81,849 for a three-year randomised controlled trial to identify whether different lining materials used under amalgam restorations have a significant effect on clinical outcomes. It is hoped that the study's results will make it easier for dentists to select the optimum treatment options for their patients.

Dr Helen Chapman, a dentist based in Solihull, has been awarded £77,357 to carry out a 15-month study to explore the issues that contribute to dentists' anxieties in a primary care setting and how these influence patient care.

Dr Chapman also intends to develop and pilot a 'coping skills' package to mitigate the 'fear' factor that may play a role in the clinical decisions made by dentists.

Commenting on behalf of the SGH Management Committee, Chair of the Trustees of the Fund, Professor Liz Kay, said: "The grants provided by the Shirley Glasstone Hughes Trust Fund seek to advance the role of evidence in everyday clinical practice and expand the research base that underpins dental care.

We are delighted to be providing grants to two further projects which seek to achieve exactly those goals. Our congratulations go to both winning bids, which have been selected from a very strong pool of entries."

For more information visit the Shirley Glasstone Hughes Trust Fund website. DT

GDC pushes for further changes

The GDC is pushing for legislative change with regards to handling complaints

The General Dental Council (GDC) is pushing for legislative change to bring in a range of further reforms aimed at streamlining the way it handles complaints about dental professionals.

The proposed changes mark Phase Two of a raft of reforms of the GDC's Fitness to Practise (FtP) processes.

In September 2011 a number of policy changes were agreed that didn't need legislative amendments and these are currently being implemented. However, there are others that will require alterations to the provisions of the Dentists' Act and its accompanying rules. These include the introduction of 'case examiners' who will be able to:

• conclude a case with no further action

• issue a letter of advice

• issue a warning letter (and where appropriate direct that the letter be published)

• refer the case to one of the Practice Committees

• request an assessment of health or performance

• refer cases to the Interim Orders Committee

• revoke orders made by the Interim Orders Committee (in certain circumstances)

• agree and monitor undertakings (in certain circumstances)

• make decisions on requests for voluntary removal from the register when a registrant is under investigation

• cancel a referral (in certain circumstances)

Recently, the Council agreed that the reforms should be put to the Department of Health for inclusion in a Section 60 Order– the instrument necessary to change the Dentists' Act.

The GDC has conducted a preliminary consultation with key stakeholders already and a full consultation will be conducted in early 2012.

Neil Marshall, Director of Regulation at the GDC, said: "These changes mark the latest steps in a complete overhaul of the GDC's complaints handling processes. They are aimed at improving timeliness and proportionality and ultimately ensuring patient protection."

The Department of Health has indicated that a Section 60 Order will be published in early 2012 and priority will be given to changes aimed at increasing public protection and reducing costs. DT

Editorial comment

Happy New Year and best wishes for 2012! I hope that all of our readers were able to enjoy the festive break and that the new year has started well. Here at *Dental Tribune* we have recharged our batteries and have come into 2012 refreshed and ready to face a monumental year.

There's the Olympics and Paralympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, of course; but we can also look closer to home with issues such as direct access, the future role of the GDC (I hope you heard the programme broadcast last week on Radio 4 – look out in next week's issue for more about it!), education and foundation training, the CQC and its role in dental regulation... I could go on but I think I've given a flavour of just how much is going on in the wider context of dentistry.

I'd also like to extend my congratulations to the profession's recipients of New Year Honours – Prof Jimmy Steele (CBE) Susie Sanderson (OBE) David Collington (MBE), Angie McBain (MBE) and Prof Stephen Lambert-Humble (MBE) – each very worthy recipients who have done much for dentistry. Well done to all of you. DT

Do you have an opinion or something to say on any Dental Tribune UK article? Or would you like to write your own opinion for our guest comment page?

If so don't hesitate to write to:
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Campaign launched to help smokers quit

New NHS Smokefree research reveals that many smokers are largely underestimating how damaging smoking is to their personal health and finances.

The research shows:
- More than half (53 per cent) of smokers underestimate the number of people who die annually from smoking related diseases by at least 70,000 (the actual figure is over 80,000 deaths a year in England as a result of smoking)
- More than half (58 per cent) of smokers underestimate how many long term smokers die early from smoking related disease (the actual figure is that 1 in 2 of all long-term smokers will die early from smoking related disease)
- More than a third (35 per cent) of smokers underestimate the number of cancer deaths caused by smoking (the actual figure is that smoking is estimated to be responsible for almost a third of all cancer deaths in the England
- And surprisingly, 8 per cent of smokers still do not believe that smoking can seriously damage their health and lead to premature death
- Smokers also underestimate the financial costs of smoking - on average smokers estimate that smoking 20-a-day habit is costing them £1800 per year. With a packet of 20 cigarettes now costing on average £6.59, smokers are underestimating this by more than £600. In reality, a 20-a-day smoker could save £2,405 a year if they quit

In reality, research shows that smoking causes more stress and anxiety than not smoking and that quitting can help to reduce stress. Evidence also shows that you can increase your chances of quitting successfully by using NHS support and that your willpower can be boosted with simple exercises available in the new and improved Quit Kit. DT

To find your nearest Quit Kit pharmacy stockist text SEARCH and your postcode to 88088 or search online at nhs.uk/smokefree

The ADAM Awards: recognising excellence within the dental team

The Association of Dental Administrators and Managers (formerly the BDPMA) is delighted to announce the first ever ADAM Awards to recognise practice managers, administrators and treatment co-ordinators who perform above and beyond the call of duty.

The ADAM Awards, generously sponsored by Denplan, are very special; they are awarded by the industry to individuals within the practice administration team who demonstrate commitment to their ever-changing roles.

Each category winner will receive a cheque for £500, an engraved award and a framed certificate, which will be presented at the ADAM Conference Dinner and Awards Ceremony in Harrogate on Saturday, May 19.

ADAM president, Jill Taylor, said: "There is no other association in the UK specifically for practice managers and administrators and the ADAM Awards have been launched to recognise and acknowledge excellence within dental practices.

"Practice managers, administrators and treatment co-ordinators play a vital role and can make a tremendous difference to the success of a dental practice. We feel that their hard work and dedication deserves to be officially recognised."

The judging panel consists of Denplan's chief dental officer, Roger Matthews, Jill Taylor and ADAM's honorary vice-president, Hew Mathewson, who brings with him a wealth of experience as a past chairman of the GDC and an adviser to the MDDUS.

Individuals can enter the awards themselves or can be nominated by a colleague. The deadline for entries is February 14, 2012 and an application form is available to download from www.adam-aspire.co.uk. DT

Smiles for Total Orthodontics at the Sussex Business Awards

Total Orthodontics was recently announced as the winner of the Best Customer Service category at the Sussex Business Awards 2011.

A group of specialist orthodontic practices based in Sussex and Kent, Total Orthodontics is the largest provider of NHS orthodontic care in the South East. To compete against a wide range of local and national businesses from the private sector and to be crowned the winner was a huge achievement.

Total Orthodontics directors receive the award

The awards ceremony, which was held at The Grand Hotel in Brighton in December, was hosted by Ruth Badger, business woman and star of TV's The Apprentice.

Director Richard George, said: "The whole team was thrilled when Ruth announced us as the winner. Providing exceptional customer service to our NHS and private patients has always been a major focus for our company. Our aim will now be to defend the title in 2012!" DT

Dentaid Ugandan Expedition in June 2012

Dentaid is organising a 17-day dental mission to Uganda in June 2012. This will be led by Barbara Koffman whose experience in taking similar missions (for Christian Relief Uganda) will be very valuable. The team will conduct pain relief clinics on Kalangala Island during the first week, followed by a free weekend in the Ssese Islands with the options of visiting the Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary and other attractions. The second week will include oral health education by the team in Entebbe schools, and the visit will be concluded with an optional 10 km run.

The fees of the trip will be £2500 (£1500 to cover individual expenses; £1000 for transport and other expenses).

Oral Health lesson in Uganda

Places are limited and applications should be made by 1st February. DT

For further details telephone Barbara Koffman on 07970 163 798 or email bkoffmancru@hotmail.com

Oral bacteria linked to risk of pneumonia

Thousands of vulnerable people are being reminded they should look after their oral health this winter after scientists further linked oral bacteria to an increased risk of pneumonia.

The study found changes in bacteria in the mouth preceded the development of pneumonia, and lead author Dr Samit Joshi of Yale University School of Medicine concluded this process "suggests that changes in oral bacteria play a role in the risk for developing pneumonia".

It is thought pneumonia affects over 620,000 people in the UK and claims the lives of around five per cent of those who contract the disease2.

Although further research is required to determine the exact relationship between oral health and pneumonia, it is not the first time the two diseases have been linked.

Poor oral health has been associated with respiratory diseases for a number of years, as bacterial chest infections are thought to be caused by breathing in fine droplets from the throat and mouth into the lungs. This can cause infections, such as pneumonia, or could worsen an existing condition. Studies have even suggested a higher mortality rate from pneumonia in people with higher numbers of deep gum pockets3.

The findings of the study present further evidence that there's a significant health risk to the elderly and the young, according to Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter.

Dr Carter said: "During the winter months we're all susceptible to colds, coughs and chesty viruses due to the drop in temperature. What people must remember, particularly those highlighted as vulnerable, is that prevention can be very basic.

"Systemic links between gum disease and overall health have been well documented, and at this time of year keeping up good oral health can really help stave off illness.

"Simply brushing your teeth for two minutes twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste, cleaning in between teeth daily with interdental brushes or floss, cutting down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks and visiting the dentist regularly, as often as they recommend will be a great starting point. If you have swollen gums that bleed regularly when brushing, bad breath, loose teeth or regular mouth infections appear, it is likely you have gum disease.

Oral bacteria could be linked to serious health problems

"If any of these symptoms persist, or signs of pneumonia develop, visit your dentist and GP immediately."

The research, presented on at the Infectious Diseases Society of America annual meeting in Boston, looked at 37 subjects who were followed for a one-month period. The subjects included 19 healthy adults with an average age of 60; and those at risk for healthcare-associated pneumonia including 10 nursing home residents (average age 86) and eight mechanically ventilated ICU patients (average age 51). DT

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AOG Annual Ball 2011 – Special 30th Anniversary Celebration

Pictures Provided Courtesy Of Kanvas Photography (Kanvasphotography.Com)

In honour of its 30th anniversary the AOG held its ever-popular Annual Ball at London's Mayfair on Saturday 10th December 2011. The event was an all-round success, befitting the organisation's three decades as one of the UK's leading dental community groups. The celebration is the highlight of the AOG's social calendar. All the proceeds of the ball, will go to the AOG's charitable projects in the UK and abroad.

Last year, the AOG travelled to Chitrakoot in India, where the AOG supports a cleft lip and palate treatment centre. The facilities provide dental care to 500 nearby villages. Money raised by the AOG was also used to provide blankets and musical instruments to tribal children. After funding the creation of a fourth full dental surgery and laboratory in one of the most deprived areas of India, the AOG are currently raising funds for the building of a rehabilitation centre for disabled people in Musoma, Tanzania. The AOG has already donated £5,000 towards the centre. AOG President Dr Pomi Datta, who was delighted at the Association's ability to continue supporting this worthy cause, made the announcement at the Ball. Speaking on the charity work done so far, Dr Datta said, "Thanks to the generous support of members at events such as this, 40,000 patients have already been assessed and treated by staff and volunteers of the project. Cases have included oral cancers and the repair and treatment of hundreds of cleft palate presentations. Improvements to the Chitrakoot Dental Institute have also made possible the rehabilitation of many burn victims and more complex facial prosthesis procedures."

The 2011 charity ball was the most successful to date. As well as a sumptuous Indian dinner provided by Ragasaan, there was a fund-raising raffle, classical Indian music from Simran Ghalley while contemporary music and DJ H of Kudos kept everyone on the dance floor until the small hours. The atmosphere was set off by mood lighting sponsored by Dentsply, while Dental Directory ensured the party was in full swing by providing a free bar and complimentary drinks throughout the evening.

The AOG is a welcoming group and a magnet for like-minded dentists, their staff and families. It has grown, both in numbers and stature, attracting colleagues with a calling for giving. Although there is a committee structure, there is no social hierarchy. Coincidentally, 'aog' in Hindi means 'welcome', hence 'AOG' is no longer an acronym and now means simply that: 'welcome'.

The AOG is well known for its packed dinner dances, fun family days, international trips and worldwide charitable projects. Its motto is, "Everyone is welcome and everyone is equal."

Next year will see fund-raising trips such as a trip to South Africa and a charity trip to open the Disability Centre in Tanzania and Nairobi. During the last 30 years, all AOG activities have led to a charitable contribution as a matter of habit, with the idea to give something back in gratitude for all they had received. DT

• For further details on forthcoming trips and events, or to join, visit www.aoguk.org.

A tough year for oral health?

2012 is set to be a challenging year for oral health

A UK oral health charity is expecting 2012 to be a challenging year for the nation's oral health as the NHS starts to make savings of £20 billion.

The British Dental Health Foundation is expecting 2012 to be a challenging year for oral health as the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Chancellor's budget announced in March last year begin to take effect.

The NHS in England was one of the few Government departments not to see its budget cut in the Comprehensive Spending Review published in October 2010. However, its £106 billion budget is only planned to rise by 0.4 per cent over the next few years and will decline from 2015 onwards.

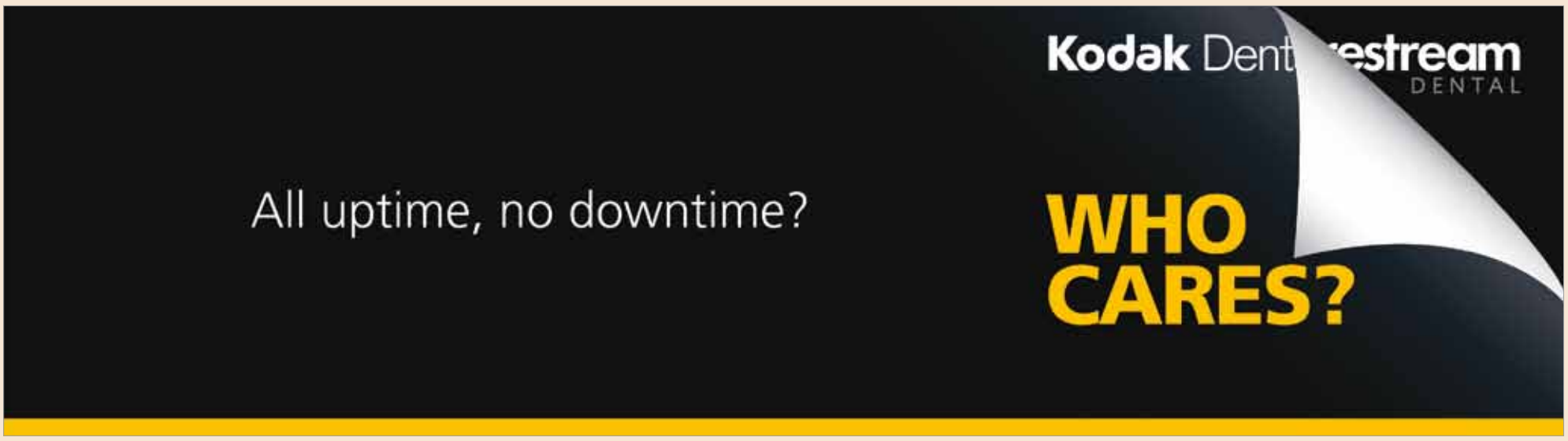
More pressingly, the NHS needs to make productivity and efficiency savings of £20 billion by the end of the current Parliament as a result of reducing expenditure and rising demand.

The Foundation is concerned that oral health promotion budgets will come under increasing pressure within the NHS as cuts begin to be made in the next financial year, resulting in a significant negative impact on the nation's oral health.

Chief Executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, said: "It is really important that all dental and health professionals responsible for improving oral health continue to lobby hard to protect their budgets and keep oral health a priority. Once the money has been lost from local budgets it is unlikely to return for the foreseeable future."

The British Dental Health Foundation is playing its part in 2012 to help cash-strapped budget holders, and ensure that oral health education is seen as affordable, effective and value for money.

To find out more about National Smile Month 2012, including registering for free resources, visit www.smilemonth.org DT



BDTA welcomes new president

BDTA president Edward Attenborough (R) hands over role to Simon Tucker

The BDTA returned to the elegant One Great George Street, London on 8 December 2011 for its annual Midwinter Meeting. As in previous years, the event attracted representatives from across the dental industry, with many interested in the business and social programmes on offer.

As unsuspecting delegates gathered for morning refreshments, networking guru Will Kintish kick started the day with an interactive session demonstrating how to break the ice and work the room at a business event. This was followed by an entertaining and enthusiastic presentation filled with practical tips on how to become a more confident and effective networker.

After a short break, Alden Arnold provided an overview of the activities of the Audit Bureau of Circulations, highlighting that their independent audit of media performance gives advertisers a valued stamp of trust.

BDTA President, Edward Attenborough, then delivered a BDTA update summarising the achievements during his presidency before handing over to the incoming President for 2012-13, Simon Tucker. Simon thanked Ed on the Association's behalf for his dedication and hard work as President, and announced the dates for the next BDTA Annual Conference as 21-23 June 2012, which will take place at the conveniently located Runnymede-on-Thames hotel.

The event concluded with a drinks reception and a delicious three-course lunch. The delegates agreed that the day was thoroughly enjoyable and informative, and in particular the relaxed atmosphere meant it was the perfect opportunity to catch up with old contacts as well as meeting new ones. DT

GDC launches learning outcomes

The General Dental Council (GDC) has published its new learning outcomes for dental education with the aim of increasing patient protection and meeting current and future oral health needs.

The new learning outcomes are designed to:

- have a greater patient focus and put their interests and needs first
- meet current and future oral health needs
- cover the full range of skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to work in dental practice (ie clinical, professionalism, communication, and management and leadership)
- cover all registrant categories in one publication with a consistent approach
- allow more flexibility for training providers

Both the dentists' curriculum *'The First Five Years'* and the dental care professionals' (DCPs) curricula *'Developing the Dental Team'* are being replaced by a combined publication; *'Preparing for Practice – Dental Team Learning Outcomes for Registration'*.

It is planned that the learning outcomes will be incorporated into training programmes and assessments for the first time in the academic year 2012-13.

Workshops are planned for February 2012 to allow education and training providers to discuss with the GDC the implementation of the learning outcomes and the GDC's new outcomes based quality assurance process.

The new learning outcomes can be found at www.gdc-uk.org DT

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DENTAL TRIBUNE United Kingdom Edition · January 16-22, 2012

A day of recognition for DCP champions

Dental Tribune speaks to Professor Stephen Lambert-Humble and Angie McBain about their contribution to the dental profession and their recognition in the New Years Honours' List

Angie McBain

Prof Stephen Lambert-Humble

Both Stephen Lambert-Humble and Angie McBain's services to dentistry have undoubtedly had a positive impact with helping the role of DCPs gain both recognition and support throughout the profession. Stephen's contribution to DCPs began through teaching dental nurses and hygienists at what was then the Navy's dental training School before he became an examiner for the National Exam Board for Dental Nurses (NEBDN); he has also written and produced numerous dental nursing education programmes. Angie, after working her way through various council and presidential positions, not only wrote the first foundation degree for dental nurses, which was a big step forward for the education of dental nurses, but also wrote modules for the first dental nurse qualification in Dubai, helping raise the profile of dental nurses. She is, without doubt, an ambassador for dental nurses through her past posts in the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) and her current post in the East of England Deanery. But the road to change hasn't been an easy one.

The position of the DCP in the dental team has been overlooked for many years. In the past a dental nurse was seen as somebody who cleared up after the dentist, whilst a hygienist was there to clean the patient's mouth and a therapist was an extended school dental nurse. As Angie said, dental nurses were the "Cinderella's of the dental team, they were the non-professional that assisted everyone else" and for years no one seemed to be pushing the DCP role further. What's more, due to a lack in registration, dental nurses were given little respect and their perception in the dental team hardly reflected their work.

"I felt for a long time that DCPs were undervalued and underused within the profession," Stephen explained: "It wasn't until around 1980 dental care professionals (or dental auxilliaries as they were called at that time) were mentioned in the first Nuffield report and it was 1993 before there was a second Nuffield report, which spoke about an expansion of therapists and a proper role for clinical dental technicians.

"It wasn't until registration for DCPs was introduced that dental nurses became hugely professional, with hygienists dealing with periodontal disease and therapists being permitted to treat adults and perform a huge amount of straightforward dentistry."

Of course, receiving professional recognition was a huge step forward for DCPs, but it was only just the beginning. "Getting professional recognition of dental nurses was wonderful," Angie said, "but the ultimate goal was patient protection and delivering high quality patient care; that's what registration is all about, and a by-product of that is to get professional recognition."

As changes in registration were established throughout the profession, it soon became apparent that education was playing a vital role in continuing the change of the role of the DCP. Programmes such as DNSTART and DNART, which were written by Stephen and produced by Smile-on in conjunction with KSS Deanery, were having a dramatic impact on DCPs and it is believed that DNART, which was access to registration training, helped more than 10,000 dental nurses to get on the DCP register.

Education

The role that education has played in implementing these changes saw Stephen, who as the Postgraduate Dean for Kent Surrey and Sussex (KSS) is also the National Lead Dean for DCPs, become the driving force behind programmes such as DNNET, which was also developed by Smile-on and KSS. The programme not only provides the full curriculum for all dental nurse examinations, but also provides a huge quantity of verifiable CPD for their further education.

Another historic change within the profession has been with Clinical Dental Technicians (CDT). In response to the introduction of the DCP register in 2008 and a training course set up by Stephen, who has helped see more than 200 CDTs get on to the GDC register, the once illegal activity of CDTs has been transformed into a true clinical profession.

The National Examining Board for Dental Nurses (NEBDN) has also made some modern changes, moving from the old traditional qualification to a new qualification and new diploma. With registration this change has opened up avenues in the form of foundations degrees and BScs in Primary Dental Care (the first BSc was set up by Stephen at the University of Kent) and as Angie explained, there's also the City and Guild Diploma, which comes equipped with apprenticeship funding (an area that has always been an issue for dental nurse education).

For Angie, the honour of her MBE will help continue the path of gaining recognition and respect for DCPs: "For me it's a huge recognition to the BADN, for Barnfield College and for dental nursing as a whole", she said. "There are a lot of people who have played a part in all of this, like Alex Baxter (from the East of England Deanery), Pat Harle and Paula Sleight (both BADN Past Presidents) and Pam Swain (BADN chief executive).

"Even though I'm not a council member I still have a role to play for the Association. I will continue to be an Ambassador for both BADN and dental nursing as a whole. I still work for the East of England Deanery and Barnfield College and although education is challenging, it's rewarding and I'll continue to develop things for the East of England and contribute nationally wherever I can."

Future change

With regards to the future role of DCPs Stephen believes that we're going to see another explosion of change: "I believe that with the Department of Health emphasising prevention in the new dental contract, dental nurses who have undertaken additional training can play a big part in improving patient's health. I also see the role of the hygienist and therapist expanding so they are able, in some circumstances, to see patients before they go to see a dentist. For clinical dental technicians, I think there will be changes too, with them not only being able to see edentulous patients without them first seeing a dentist, but also dentate patients, again in certain circumstances"

For Angie, her plan is simple: "I just want to see genuine respect and true recognition by other members of the dental team towards the dental nurse. There are a lot of people out there in the dental team that truly appreciate what a dental nurse does, but unfortunately there are still some who don't." DT

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Perverse incentives

Neel Kothari on budgets, business and reality

Our ability to provide dentistry under a National Health Service is highly respected in some parts of the world, with many countries going so far as to emulate aspects of the NHS in order to protect their most vulnerable in society. However, the uneasy amalgamation between healthcare and business clearly separates dentistry from the other services encased within the NHS. Whilst the blend between capitalism and socialism will always leave someone feeling aggrieved, the real question governments across the world have to answer is: "how can we meet the demands of the population without bankrupting the country?"

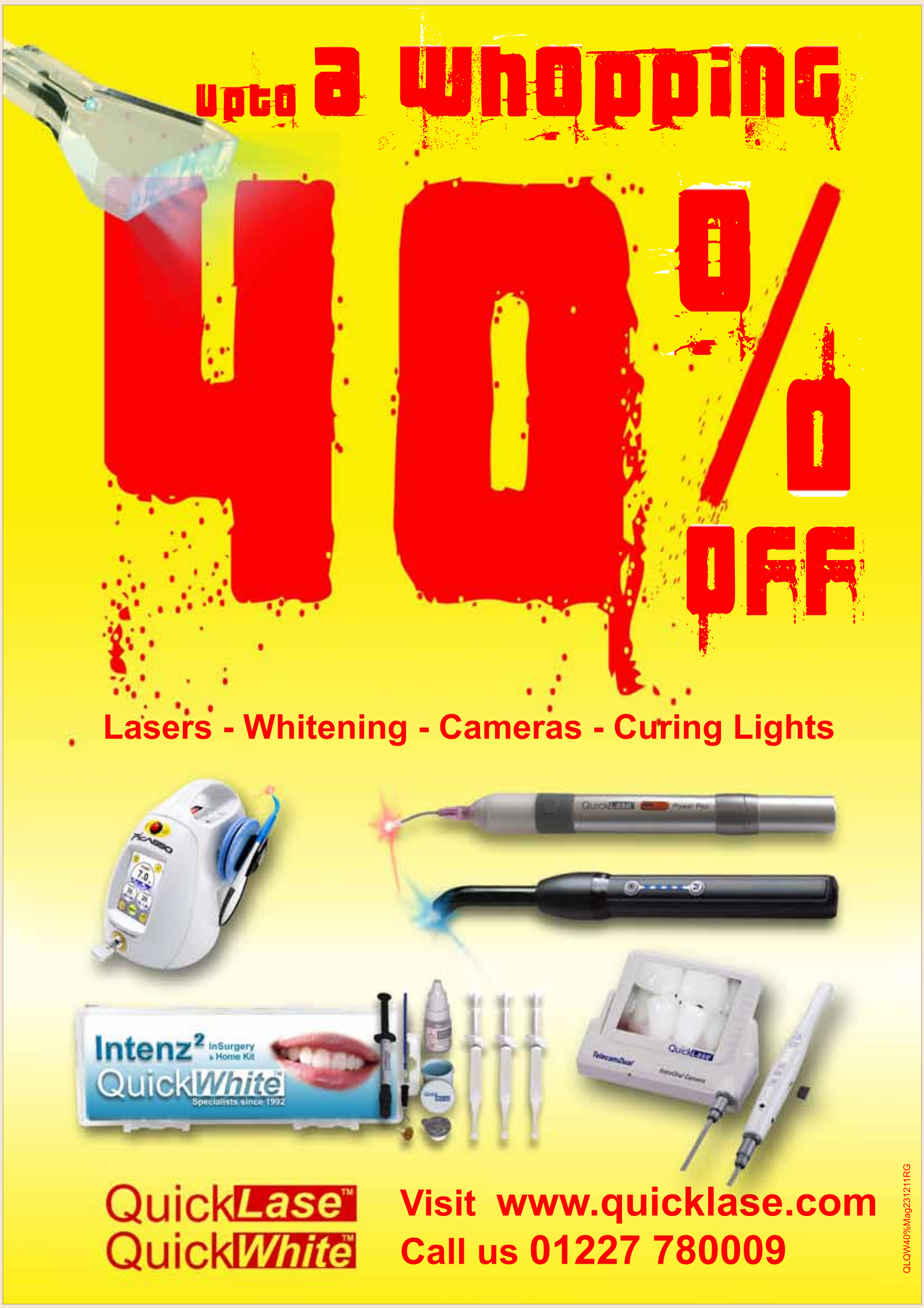
Despite the best of intentions, working within a budget throws up some serious constraints. The financial reality of providing dentistry en masse must at some point influence the front line service of dentistry. Now as a profession our obligation clearly lies with our patients' health and this is supported by the GDC as seen in section 1.1 of the *Standards for dental professionals*, which states "put patients' interests before your own or those of any colleague, organisation or business." Mission statements like these are common to many organisations within healthcare and the business world. Having codes of conduct which seek to govern the actions of those working within them is an admirable way of setting the standard, but it is more often than not the way that the system is structured that determines the likely outcome.

In previous articles I have debated the impact of the 2006 contract, including the swings and roundabouts approach to financing treatments. The allocation of treatment options to one of only three bands carrying one, three or 12 UDAs coupled with an overall yearly target creates a situation where dental practitioners are unwittingly being exposed to "perverse incentives" – or an incentive that has an unintended and undesirable result which is contrary to the interests of the incentive makers.

Perverse incentives are a phenomenon which is in no way unique to NHS dentistry. Here are a few examples found on Wikipedia:

"In Hanoi, under French colonial rule, a program paying people a bounty for each rat pelt handed in was intended to exterminate rats. Instead, it led to the farming of rats."

"Funding fire departments by the number of fire calls made is intended to reward the fire departments that do the most work. However, it may discourage them from fire-prevention activities, which reduce the number of fires."

"19th century palaeontologists travelling to China used to pay peasants for each fragment of dinosaur bone

→ DT *page 10*