News in Brief

**BAND founder dies**

The founder member of the British Association of Dental Nurses (BAND) has died at the age of 89, Madeleine Lee, who was known as Bunty, suffered a fall before Christmas and had been recovering but died peacefully in her sleep. Ms Lee, who worked at a dental practice in Leyland in Lancashire during the Second World War, was inspired to set up the BAND when an American serviceman told her about a similar association in America. Despite wartime restrictions, Lee immediately set to work travelling around the British inviting nurses to join the new BAND. It held its first dental nurse examination, which was resided over by the newly created National Examining Board for Dental Nurses and Assistants, in November 1945. Lee was the first nurse to receive a certificate. She stayed on at the BAND as an honorary life member.

**Most loved dentist**

High Street Dental Practice in West Sussex has been voted the UK’s best loved dentist in a recent nationwide poll. The survey was carried out by the TheBestOf and saw the practice in East Grinstead come top in the dental sector for its unbeatable customer service. It also came 20th Most Loved Business in all categories. Practice owner Jan Sandhu said: “Our aim has been to create an environment in which people will feel relaxed and comfortable. We never forget how intimidating it can be to sit in a dentist’s chair, so every conceivable care has been taken to make sure they are completely at ease. We have invested in the latest dental technology to give them the ultimate in modern, pain-free dental care. It is fantastic to know that we are getting our customer care right.”

**Dentist ‘accidental death’**

An inquest into the death of a dentist in St Helena, Merseyside, has delivered a verdict of accidental death. Kenyan-born Simon Ayoo, 46, who worked at Newtown Camberley, St Helena, had died at his flat in Sale in February 2008. Coroner John Pollard delivered a verdict of ‘accidental death’ after investigating the cause being positional asphyxia with alcohol intoxication. The inquest at Stockport Magistrates’ Court heard how he had been drinking heavily before his death and when he came home afterwards, it is believed he fell down the stairs.

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Olympic screening

The IOC has established a screening programme for athletes at the recent Winter Olympics. The number of people able to access NHS dental care has returned to the level it was at before the implementation of the 2006 reforms, according to statistics released by the NHS Information Centre.

The figures show that 28,163,000 patients in England accessed NHS dental care in the 24 months ending 51 December 2009, compared to 28,145,000 in the 24 months ending 51 March 2006. The day before the implementation of the current arrangements for NHS dentistry in England.

Health Minister Ann Keen called it ‘great news for patients who are now seeing the benefits of over £2bn of investment in improving NHS dental services’.

She added: “There are now nearly 1,200 more dentists working in the NHS than two years ago and practices are opening and expanding all the time across the country.

“We have committed to ensuring that every person that wants to see an NHS dentist is able to do so by March 2011 and this data shows that we are in a good position to deliver that.

“Visiting a dentist regularly is important for maintaining good oral health and anyone who wants to find a dentist in their area should visit www.nhs.uk.”

Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft also welcomed the news and said: “We introduced new contracts in 2006 to give the local NHS more control over services and it is fantastic that this is now making a real difference for patients. We also know that the NHS is still increasing the amount of dental services it plans to provide in the next two years so we expect the increase in access to continue.

“We’re not just looking at increasing the amount of dental services out there. We’re currently pilot testing recommendations from last year’s review of dental services which will help us to measure also the quality of services and make sure we are reaching those who they need the most.”

However the British Dental Association has warned that a great deal of hard work remains to be done to address the issues facing NHS dental services in England. Dr Susie Sandersson, chair of the BDA’s Executive Board said: “This increase is long-awaited news for the patients who can now see a NHS dentist. However, challenges remain. There are still people who would like to see an NHS dentist who cannot do so and primary care trusts have been charged with delivering access to these individuals by March 2011.

The Department of Health must also look beyond those who seek access to reach out to those who need dental care but do not ask for it. Thirdly, the Steele Reformation process must deliver a new preventive, patient-focused contract that helps dentists provide the care their patients deserve.”

In March 2006, 55.8 per cent of the population had visited a dentist in the previous 24 months. At the end of 2009 54.7 per cent had done so in the previous 24 months.

The pledge to provide access to NHS dentistry to all who demand it in England is made in the 2010/11 NHS Operating Framework.