Many people in dentistry are still unaware of the enormous amount of work done by the professional associations. Many dental nurses, for example, who claim tax relief on their laundry don’t realise they can only do so because BADN® negotiated on their behalf – when we realised that tax relief on the laundering of uniforms was available to general nurses, but not to dental nurses.

All the professional associations are funded primarily through members’ subscriptions, so it’s important that they are supported by their constituent groups so they can continue fighting for those specific DCPs – BADN® for dental nurses, BSHT for hygienists, BADT for therapists, DTA for technicians, CDTA for clinical dental technicians, HLA for lab owners and the BDA or DPA for dentists.

And it’s about what you can put back in – apart from three office staff, BADN® is run by volunteers, working dental nurses who give up their free time to support other dental nurses. They don’t get paid for doing this – they do it to put something back into their own profession. Being a BADN® member means you get a chance to influence how dental nursing adapts over the years, to make sure your views are heard.

Doing the right thing is all very well, but in these times of recession, what do you get from joining a professional association? I can only speak for the BADN® – Full Membership includes a quarterly journal, legal advice, up to eight hours verifiable CPD, a million pounds’ worth of indemnity insurance (which not only covers damages awarded to a patient but also your legal costs, including those for professional misconduct cases related to a professional indemnity claim; and is your personal cover, so you can take it with you if you change jobs (subject to policy conditions) – not the case with many other schemes), £70 off the cost of attending the National Dental Nursing Conference (another eight hours or so, verifiable CPD) or any other BADN® Study Day – not to mention money off holidays, hotels, flights, car hire, home/travel/car/life insurance, wine, flowers, CDs and DVDs, gym membership, days out (Alton Towers, anyone?), office supplies, dental sundries, textbooks…

That’s all very well, I hear you cry, but poor, underpaid dental nurses can’t afford £70! Well, £70 a year works out at £1.35 a week – or 19p a day! If you put 20p a day into a jar for a year, you would be able to pay your next year’s membership fees, as you do on your GDC registration fee – again, something BADN® negotiated with the Inland Revenue! In fact, one more service offered to BADN® members is our tax refund service – to date, BADN® members have received a total of nearly £56,000 in tax refunds – an average of over £140 per claim, or two years BADN® membership!

Can you afford not to join?!

The above was written by, and represents the personal view of, Pam Swain, chief exec of BADN®. BADN® Membership forms are available from 01253 338360, membership@badn.org.uk or www.badn.org.uk.