Fool’s gold
People brought their dentures to a Nottingham antique dealer after reading an advert wanting to purchase false teeth. But the type of false teeth wanted by dealers, M. Kemp, were crowns and palates, which in former days were completely made from gold. A far cry from modern dentures, a whole palate could be worth hundreds of pounds.

Nowadays, prices offered vary from £2.50 to £3.50 per gram of nine carat gold.

UDA increase
The Department of Health has released data under its Dental Reform Monitoring programme, which shows the number of Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) commissioned for 2008-09. The key findings, from the 152 PCTs and Care Trusts, were that 81 million UDAs were commissioned for 2008-09, as on June 30 this year. This is an increase of 1.4 million (1.7 per cent) on UDAs commissioned for 2007-08.

Company pull-out
Dental company, Primecare, is leaving an NHS contract covering thousands of North Yorkshire residents after only a year. The contract in Leyburn, Knaresborough, Harrogate, Wetherby and Bedale, terminates on October 31.

Councillor John Blackie, North Yorkshire health scrutiny committee chairman, said the firm told him the deal signed with North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust (PCT) was ‘fawed’ due to a huge backlog.

He explained: Primcare set up in areas without NHS dentists, so there was a large backlog of dental work and the way the contract rewards dentists meant they were unable to pay for it.

He called on the PCT to find an alternative provider before new dentists take over in April.

Financial re-think
The DII has launched a proposal for maternity payments as set out in its draft GDS statement of dentists’ financial entitlements from April 2008.

spy…
Is your practice looking a bit flat? Why a feature wall could be the answer – but there’s no room for disorganisation!

Wasted effort?
Nobody wants to deal with an emergency but you can’t afford to take the risk. Sharon Holmes explains why you have to use your time wisely.

The government rebuffs HSC report

dental practitioners have condemned the government’s response to the Health Select Committee report on NHS dental reforms for being in ‘total denial’ and ‘failing to accept any criticism.’

Derek Watson, chief executive of the Dental Practitioners’ Association called the response from the Department of Health ‘fairly predictable’ and said: ‘The Health Select Committee has done all of this work and it seems to have been ignored’.

In its interim response to the report on dental services in July by the Health Select Committee, the government said that the ‘new dental contractual arrangements provide a better basis for Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to commission services, as the new system equips them with greater powers and flexibility to meet the needs of local people’.

It did accept the ‘Committee’s view that progress on improving access has been disappointing to date’ and pledged to ‘work with the Committee in its interim report’.

However it added: ‘The evidence shows that the NHS is now commissioning a growing volume of dental services, which we are confident will feed through into higher levels of access.

There were 2.7 per cent more courses of treatment in 2007/08 than in 2006/07 and the number of dentists doing NHS work increased by 6.5%.

The government admitted that the change from the old dental contract to the new one had been ‘a difficult transitional period, both for PCTs and for dentists’.

It claimed that an increase of funding by 11 per cent in 2008/9 will enable PCTs to commission a far greater range of new services and will further improve access.

Back in July, the Health Select Committee found that ‘the introduction of units of dental activity (UDAs) as the measure of dental activity and the basis for remunerating dentists has proved extremely unpopular with dentists’.

However the government claimed in its response that ‘the available evidence supports the view that this has, as intended, to a reduction in workload’.

It added: ‘For instance, statistics published by the NHS Information Centre on 21 August 2008 suggest that dentists’ working hours are shorter than they were in 2000.’

In response to the report by the government, Susie Sanderson, executive board chair of the British Dental Association said: ‘This response acknowledges the many issues facing NHS dentistry in England and Wales’.

The BDA recently called for the ‘reintroduction of effective and constructive consultation with the profession which was so lacking in the development and implementation of the new contract’.

Ms Sanderson added: ‘We hope that the positive response to the BDA’s call for dialogue with the profession and patient groups signals the start of a more constructive period in the relationship between the government and the profession.’

John Benshaw, co-founder of Challenge, a campaign group of general dental practitioners, said: ‘The Department of Health is in total denial of the problems because, in their terms, their planned changes have been totally successful. Their response to the Health Select Committee says as much in so many words.’

He added: ‘The Health Select Committee looked at the problems in the service from a patient’s point of view – as indeed they should. They also looked at the problems from the point of view of the providers of the service – again, not unreasonable. Their conclusions were clear and accurate. The system is not working.’

Switch to sterile
Pre-sterilised at no extra cost
Use straight from blister pack: Added convenience, save time and costs
Stainless steel brands: Colorline K-Flexllines, Hestromems & K-Flexreamsers
Nickel-Titanium brands: ProTapere Universal Rotary Flies & Profliee Rotary Flies

Other accessories also available sterile. Click to learn more