At the end of January, Dentaid welcomed four final year students from the School of Dentistry at Cardiff University, all of who, with the end of their studies in sight, were looking forward to embarking on their careers.

During the trip, Mike Phil-lips, one of Dentaid’s volunteer retired dentists, showed the students some of the tools which had been donated to the charity. He explained how even old equipment, once cleaned and refurbished, is invaluable in countries where even second-hand kit is beyond the means of most health providers.

The students also had a tour of the workshop where all the donated equipment is stored and refurbished. They were particularly impressed by manager Dave Effamy’s incredible practical ability. Dave is able to take three non-working pieces of equipment and transform them into two working pieces of equipment; by mixing and matching the working parts he can produce two pieces of equipment that are perfectly viable and ready for shipping.

Another skill Dave has is that he can strip out the more complex sections of electronic equipment and make it useable in countries where there is an unstable electrical supply.

The students learned a lot from their day and by the end of it they recommend other students to visit Dentaid. Any students interested in visiting should contact rob@dentaid.org.

Trek with a purpose

Dentaid, a well-known dental charity, collects unwanted equipment from surgeries and hospitals for refurbishment and shipping to the developing world to equip clinics and teaching hospitals.

Like all charities, Dentaid needs funds and one way of raising cash is to organise sponsored treks. Last year’s expedition took 12 people to Vietnam; six were dental professionals, the other six included a beautician, a roofer and a chartered surveyor.

This year’s trek from 1-14 October is to North East India. The opportunity offered by this expedition is one you simply won’t find anywhere else. The first two days are spent assisting at a dental clinic in a home for disabled children in Calcutta, and gives the chance to see at first hand the difference that our work makes. This is followed by a 60km trek through West Bengal’s mountains, forests and villages and a visit to a Buddhist monastery. Apart from hotels at the start and end of the trip accommodation is in mountain huts or tents, so this is a unique chance to get close to the country and the people and see village life at first hand.

The all-inclusive cost is £2,450 which you can either pay yourself or raise from sponsorship. Intimate contact with the people we meet is what makes our trips completely different from commercial operations, so we restrict numbers to a dozen and we’re always booked up early.

If you want to find out more contact Dentaid’s head of fundraising, Diane Platt on 01794 324249, email diane@dentaid.org or visit our website www.dentaid.org.