

## Members of the Action Group against Infant Oral Mutilation

Chair: Andy Jong, CEO Dentaid. <http://www.dentaid.org/aboutus/thestaff>



**Thelma Edwards**, from Wiltshire, retired in 2010 after working as an Oral Health Promoter for 21 years. She graduated with an MSc in Public Health in 2008.

The skills of designing and creating resources, evidence-based OHP programmes, and her passion for integrating oral health awareness into generic health, education, social care and community programmes provide transferable skills to be used to benefit developing countries, beginning in 2003 in partnership with Barbara Koffman (CRU) and Dentaid in the development of dental health education resources.

Thelma continues to be heavily involved as Trustee/Treasurer/Chair for the charity YOUTHWORX-East Africa ([www.youthworx-ea.org.uk/](http://www.youthworx-ea.org.uk/)), and serves on the national committee of the British Society of Gerodontology. She has had an interest in IOM since 2003 and developed the Action Group's strategic plan for the IOM work. Her analytical mind enables her to liaise both with those already overseas and with UK personnel undertaking short-term visits, providing research ideas, surveys and resources.

**Nicky Heather BA MSc**, from Dorset, has worked in the charity sector for the last six years, predominantly in a project development and fundraising capacity for several small international charities in London and the Southampton area.

Her interest in IOM began whilst working for Dentaid from 2007 - 2008. She is not dentally trained, but has developed a deep interest and passion in seeing the eradication of IOM and is happy to be now working in a voluntary capacity to help Dentaid to achieve this. Nicky was heavily involved in getting Dentaid's work with IOM off the ground and coordinated the formation of the Action Group.



She is currently considering undertaking a further study project into the subject.



**Barbara Koffman**, from Hale, Cheshire, trained at Manchester Dental Hospital as a Dental Hygienist.

Retiring in 2000, she is now one of the full time Volunteer workers for Christian Relief Uganda (CRU). She travels to Uganda twice a year coordinating Dental Missions into the rural areas of Uganda.

Barbara organises IOM education days when in Uganda and works alongside Mango Tree publishers, a Ugandan based company, to develop the IOM book and posters. Examples of these can be seen on the website.

Dentaid has formed a good working relationship with CRU which is developing work in the field for the IOM campaign. Barbara assists dental volunteers on her trips to Uganda and students are welcome. As we are acquiring partners in other affected countries, such as Kenya, Barbara is able to meet these groups in person and this has an important part to play in advocacy and the development of pilot projects that Dentaid can support.



**Rosemary Longhurst** from Exmouth, Devon, qualified BDS at Birmingham University Dental School in 1963. Following retirement from general practice in 2001, she was able to assist Dentaid from home in a succession of administrative tasks such as the inkjet recycling programme and the UK aspect of the Ugandan Schools Sponsorship Scheme. At present she writes Dentaid and CRU articles for the dental press, and is the Volunteer Speakers' Coordinator.

Within the IOM Action Group Rosemary is at the centre of activity. She has collated a Literature Analysis on IOM and this can be found on the Dentaid website. This document is regularly updated as more evidence and reports are found, and it provides an invaluable source for people wanting to research on IOM. It has aided in the production of the IOM Overview document ensuring our work is evidence based.

Rosemary has written numerous articles for various dental publications to help with the advocacy of IOM and is the main point of contact for our partners in action overseas and in the UK. She manages a huge amount of administrative work for the IOM Action Group and Dentaid is indebted to the time she regularly puts in as a volunteer.



**Maggie Sherborne**, from Surrey, graduated BDS at Bristol Dental Hospital and has worked in general dental practice, and in hospitals where she gained her FDS and specialist in oral surgery status.

Her CV is littered with trips working overseas, including a year on the Mercy Ship Anastasis in 1991, time working as a logistician for Medair in Armenia and possible project evaluation in Kabul during the time of the Taliban. Her last job overseas was working in South Sudan where she realised the need to deal with the health issues surrounding IOM.

She currently works 4 days a week for Special Care Dentistry in Surrey, treating severe dental phobics, adults with special needs, and doing NHS oral surgery.

Maggie joined the Action Group in 2008 and offers sound advice as she has had first hand experience of working in countries that are affected by IOM. She has put together a Google map illustrating areas where IOM has been reported in the literature. This can be found as a link from the Dentaaid website.



**Jonathan Gollings** from Poole, Dorset and works in general dental practice. He graduated BDS from Bristol University, where he first became interested in IOM whilst doing an elective in Tanzania. During this elective Jonathan researched the prevalence of IOM in a rural population and performed a literature review. The results showed such a recurring problem with this cultural belief that being an advocate against IOM is something about which he feels strongly .

In 2007 Jonathan developed the initial strategy for Dentaaid's work on IOM and wrote a document outlining the need for action. From this an Action Group was formed and the project taken forward. Jonathan advises this group, communicating closely with Andy Jong (CEO, Dentaaid) for decisions on the group's work as it develops.

