Back to the future for anniversary event

Dental Tribune editor Lisa Townshend looks back on the recent Denplan National Conference held in the Forest of Arden

The Denplan National Conference, held last month at the luxurious Forest of Arden Marriott Hotel near Birmingham, was the tenth anniversary of the event.

Always popular with the member dentists, the conference was full which gave the whole event a buzzing feel. As always team members and families had been thought of, with a full practice team programme and family activities, including horse riding, archery and a visit into the heart of Birmingham.

William Hague MP. I am not the biggest fan of political speakers, but this was no ordinary speech! It was the first time I really appreciated Hague’s extremely sharply mind behind the facade of the easy-going Northerner. He gave some extremely amusing anecdotes, not only from his time in politics, but as an extremely keen historian he related stories he had discovered in his research for his historical books. He then answered questions from the audience – there was a real mix of serious political questions about the chances of the Conservatives at the next General Election.

One interesting point he looked at was the quest for aesthetics over longevity in modern restorative dentistry; where the way a restoration looks can often be the first concern with durability left behind. He discussed the gradual change to a patient-centred dental environment, with an emphasis on evidence-based care.

Following the refreshment break, where delegates had an opportunity to look at the stands in the trade exhibition, was Martin Kelleher. Martin is a consultant in Restorative Dentistry at Kings College, London University he was appointed Visiting Research Fellow in 1998, Research Director of the Colgate Australian Clinical Dental Research Centre in 1999 and Research Consultant of the Centre in 2005; Associate Professor, working in the fields of Dental Biomaterials and Minimal Intervention Dentistry in 2005.

Prof Ngo discussed the philosophy of minimal intervention; putting the patient in control of the disease process. He was very entertaining speaker, with some self directed humour at how he got into the research side of dental materials and cariology, which kept the audience engaged. Much of what he discussed was about behavioural change and being able to help the patient to comply with a treatment regimen. He advocated the "traffic light" method of explaining what was going on in the mouth of the patient with regards to dental disease and helping the patient decide what they could do to maintain good oral hygiene.

High-class reputation

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the rest of the conference the Saturday evening gala dinner and entertainment and the following day’s clinical programme – but from the feedback received the event maintained its high-class reputation in terms of speakers, organisation and relevance to attendees.

The Saturday programme consisted of two split sessions by Dr Avjit Banerjee and Dr Richard Pilkington, which delegates could choose which one to attend. Dr Banerjee qualified from Guy’s Hospital in 1993 and after completing Max-fac SHO jobs in Portsmouth and the Mount Vernon rotation, he came back to Guy’s as a MRC Clinical Training Fellow to study Cariology at PhD level. He then obtained FDS RCS (Eng) in 1995, followed by a Masters from UCL in 1998. After completing his PhD in 1998, he became Clinical Lecturer in Conservative Dentistry at Guy’s and started his Consultant training, culminating in his current position as Senior Lecturer / Hon Consultant in Restorative Dentistry at the Dental Institute.

Dental Institute. Not only is Martin on the board of Dental Protection and chair of the Dental Claims Advisory Board, he is also on the GDC specialist lists in Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics. An expert in his field, he also continues to work in private practice in Bromley.

Land of the Fee

I had heard some interesting things about Martin, so was looking forward to his presentation, as he had delivered Makeover Myths from the Land of the Fee. And he certainly didn’t disappoint; he has a very direct style to his presentation and was almost evangelical about the preservation of natural tooth structure. He showed pictures of makeovers and asked the uncomfortable question: “Would you do this to your own daughter/son?” Following vigorous shakes of the head he asked: “Then why do it to someone else?”

After the lunch break, there were two sessions by Prof Illen Chi Ngo. Prof Ngo has extensive experience in private practice, research and education. He has completed a Master of Dental Surgery in fixed prosthodontics and a PhD. In research, he is active in the areas of dental materials and cariology. At Adelaide University he was appointed Visiting Research Fellow in 1998, Research Director of the Colgate Australian Clinical Dental Research Centre in 1999 and Research Consultant of the Centre in 2005; Associate Professor, working in the fields of Dental Biomaterials and Minimal Intervention Dentistry in 2005.

Consultant in Restorative Dentistry, with a special interest in the restorative rehabilitation/management of Head and Neck oncology patients.

Dr Banerjee is currently Head of Pre-clinical Conservative Dentistry at the KCL Dental Institute and holds a visiting chair in Restorative Dentistry at the Oman Dental College. He also works as a specialist private practitioner in four NHS/private practices, on a sessional basis.

Dr Pilkington is currently working as a General Practitioner in Tyne & Wear. He also writes and lectures postgraduates on musculoskeletal problems in dentistry and teaches a “Happy backs for dentists” postgraduate course. This covers back pain rehabilitation, dental ergonomics and four handed training for the dental team. Dr Pilkington has published research from the Biomechanics Department and Dental School, University of Newcastle after assessing posture in dental students before and after they have been ergonomically trained. He has written numerous articles in dental literature in respect of this subject and has presented more than 100 postgraduate courses throughout the UK.

This is the third Denplan conference I have attended and the team have always organised a fantastic conference with lively and engaging speakers, and this was no exception. I look forward to the next one in 16 months time!