Back to the future for anniversary event

The Denplan National Conference held in the Forest of Arden

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

The Right Honourable William Hague MP entertains delegates at the conference

Managing director Stephen Gates kicked off proceedings with a lively presentation looking at what’s been happening at Denplan over the last 18 months. Talking in the full house theme of the Friday evening entertainment, Stephen borrowed heavily from the ‘Back to the Future’ film to illustrate the changes since the last Denplan conference.

Following Stephen was Denplan’s Chief Dental Officer, Roger Matthews. Roger spoke of the latest developments in the political situation. He discussed the release of the review into NHS dentistry by Prof Jimmy Steele and his team, and the work being done on the Dental Access Contract by Mike Warburton and his team. In addition he spoke about the implementation of the HTM 01-95. Finally Roger presented the launch of Denplan’s new training programme Stairway.

This is a structured postgraduate development initiative, relevant to all dentists in every sector of general practice, it gives clinicians an opportunity to gain vCPD and earn educational credits towards their MSc from Birmingham University in Primary Dental Care.

Biggest draw

But of course the biggest draw on the Friday was the guest speaker, the Right Honourable 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 sharp 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 Keller. 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 very direct style to his presentation. However, he didn’t stop there being a packed audience with a lively question and answer session.

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 I have 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, who delegates could choose which one to attend. Dr Banerjee qualified from Guy’s Hospital in 1995 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 BDS 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 Royal London Dental Hospital. 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 special 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 18 months time!