Four days in London: MSc Residential

Ken Harris tells all from the second Residential of the MSc in Restorative and Aesthetic Dentistry

Wow, what was I drinking last night? Ah, I remember now, it’s the second MSc residential course, and I’m not in Kansas anymore. I’m in London, and the upcoming four days constitute one of the highlights of this MSc course. The venue nestles close within the shadow of the Tower of London, and just a rinse and spit from the iconic Tower Bridge.

Answers on a postcard
First question, first day; “why are we filling white teeth with silver filings?” answers on all three sides of a postcard please to the quixotic Professor Trevor Burke. Posterior composite theory from the good prof with practical skills demonstrated by his faithful sidekick, Sancho Panza, in the shape of the excellent Dr Louis McKenzie; then it was our turn.

Using an entirely new battery of instruments and matrix retainers it was “Shout-Time” with a hands-on session where our composite work was critiqued by our colleagues; squeaky bum time, but great fun was had by all. As suspected, it’s not just me who spends an inordinate amount of time carefully placing posterior composites.

Eye-opening!
After a few drinks it’s suddenly it’s bedtime. Funny how time races when you are enjoying yourself. “What art thou that usurpest this time of night?”, a fire alarm had us all outside at 3:00 AM appreciating Tower Bridge by moonlight, as well as a few other eye-opening sights. An ecstasy of fumbling then back to bed.

However, Aurora in her saffron robe soon gave way to Apollo in his flaming chariot, and I made my way snail-like to school, complete with shining morning face, to begin the afternoon session, irrigation and irrigation. “Plus ça change” I thought again. Such a feeling of abstracts. I was mightily uplifted to see such dissent for once, as a normally placid profession erupted hilariously into adolescent mutterings and finally losing its patience and erupting hysterically into almost outright disbelief. It appears that almost all research is fatally flawed, especially the abstracts. I was mightily uplifted to see such dissent for once, as a normally placid profession rose up as one to express good-natured hoots of derision. We stood against them, as proud clinicians, and sent them (the academics) homeward, to think again. Such a feeling of togetherness is rare in dentistry; altogether now … “I’m Spartacus!”, Inspirational, but we all know what happened to him don’t we.

A hugely enjoyable four days with top flight speakers and thought provoking discussions amongst colleagues, (with the occasional large sirloin thrown in!). However, I still wonder if we have learned enough yet to placate the savage beast that is the “once in a generation phenomenon” known as Dr Martin Kelleher. Check your screen for the latest odds!!!

A horse, a horse! I suspect not, and with the news that yet another disillusioned dental colleague (name deleted to protect your ears from the harsh clang of a name being dropped) is selling his practice, I’m thinking; maybe we should all be choosing the primrose path of dalliance rather than studying (are you listening GDC?). Maybe right now is the winter of our discontent; “a horse, a horse my practice for a horse!”

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Standing room only
Richard III with the excellent Mark Rylance in the title role, what a piece of luck, but standing room only available, at the admittedly bargain price of just £5.00. However, after more than three hours of standing (it’s Shakespeare’s second longest play) I needed a very large steak and something red and chateau-bottled as a reatorative. A memorable evening was complete with a stroll home along the south bank of the Thames, through certain half-deserted streets with the city stretched out against the darkening sky, like a patient etherised upon a table.

The final day began with a hands-on root canal session in the company of the irresistible Dr Daniel Flynn and some extracted teeth. Despite a wide range of nickel titanium to play with it still seems the 5 most important tools remain irrigation, irrigation and irrigation. “Plus ça change”

Fatally flawed
The afternoon session introduced us to the wacky world of Research Methods. We listened first in bemused silence, progressing into unsettled musings and finally erupting hilariously into almost outright disbelief. It appears that almost all research is fatally flawed, especially the abstracts. I was mightily uplifted to see such dissent for once, as a normally placid profession rose up as one to express good-natured hoots of derision. We stood against them, as proud clinicians, and sent them (the academics) homeward, to think again. Such a feeling of togetherness is rare in dentistry; altogether now … “I’m Spartacus!”, Inspirational, but we all know what happened to him don’t we.

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About the author
Ken Harris graduated from the dental school of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1982 and passed MFDSR(P) in 1996. He maintains a fully private practice with branches in Sunderland and Newcastle upon Tyne specialising in complex dental reconstruction cases based upon sound treatment planning protocols. He is one of only two Accredited Fellows of BACD, holds full membership of BAAD and remains a sustaining member of AAD. He is currently UK Clinical Director for the California Center for Advanced Dental Studies and the only UK Graduate and Master of the Lasers Center in Seattle.

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