Steve Lomas discusses his experiences of the Dawson Academy UK

This year has been my 20th in dental practice, and without a shadow of doubt it has been the most professionally rewarding, having spent most of it learning the concept of Complete Dentistry with the Dawson Academy.

Over the last twenty years I have dedicated myself to learning the most up-to-date restorative and cosmetic techniques. Despite being able to provide beautiful looking fillings, crowns etc. there was still something missing, a burning set of questions to which I needed answers.

Why am I seeing so many patients from their thirties onwards with short-ened, worn front teeth? How can I provide some early intervention to stop this wear and restore the smile before the problem and the solution become complicated and expensive?

Why do so many patients have repeatedly breaking teeth, fillings, crowns and bridges? Is it just wear and tear? Or is it the result of teeth being filled one by one over the years, making small alterations to the bite without ever really looking at teeth and jaws as a whole?

Why do I see so many patients with clicking or locking jaws, headaches, migraines, sensitive teeth? Why is this? How can I help? Why do I clench my own teeth every night?

How do I make sure the complex work lasts as long as possible?

The answer became increasingly clear. I needed to go and solve the mysteries of the dental occlusion or “The Bite”.

Occlusion is an area of dentistry largely ignored in undergraduate dental teaching, not just in the UK, but worldwide. Generally dental graduates come out of dental schools without any real comprehension of occlusion beyond it being difficult and that it doesn’t really matter. However, providing a correct occlusion not only provides the solution to my questions, but provides long lasting protection to the teeth.

After a lot of research it became clear that the further education lay in the USA, either with the world famous Dawson Academy in Florida or the Koos Centre in Seattle. I could not believe my luck when I discovered that one of the Dawson Academy’s Faculty members, Dr Ian Buckle, had set up a European branch of the Academy here in the North West. I enrolled immediately for the full year long course.

After three months of almost melting my brain with reading about and learning the concepts of Complete Dentistry, I attended the first module of the course in May. It was amazing to find just how global the programme was, with UK dentists being very much the minority. The majority of delegates throughout the year came from Scandinavia, but you have to be impressed with the guys who commuted from Brazil and Australia to undertake the course. Over the next six months and three more intensive courses, Ian, along with his amazing team of mentors and staff, delivered the most beautifully constructed educational programme I have ever been involved with. Each module lead smartly into the next, with continual reinforcement of the concepts and methods along the way.

So what have I learnt? Well that the answers to all of my questions can be met by having a thorough understanding of the whole masticatory system, the teeth, jaws and muscles, and that just about every problem can be solved by following a disciplined, structured method for diagnosis and treatment plan in every appropriate case.

The aim is to provide a healthy, comfortable, stable and beautiful smile with the least amount of dentistry possible. The key is to be thorough and never skip a step or move on to the next step until you have completed the one you are on. After a comprehensive assessment of the jaw joints, facial muscles and teeth has taken place, I sit down with specially mounted models of the mouth, full x-rays and clinical photographs, and work through twenty six stages of treatment planning, and at the end of the process there is a solution to whatever the problem may be, there is actually an answer just like 2 + 2 = 4.

Now at the end of the course I can reflect on what I have learnt and realise that the Dawson Academy has helped me to make a quantum leap with my dentistry, moved it to a totally different level. After twenty years everything finally makes sense, and I have a systematic approach that will allow me to solve just about any dental problem I am faced with.

Richard has followed my progress closely this year and has been equally amazed at the changes Dawson has bought to diagnosis and treatment planning. So much so, that he has enrolled for next year’s course, and has our new colleague will follow too.

This is fantastic for our patients at The Old Surgery. Only 90 dentists in Europe have completed this whole programme, and at the Old Surgery there will be three of us, plus the immense skills provided by specialised members of our team!

Many many thanks to Ian Buckle and his team.

‘After 20 years, everything finally makes sense’