Back to the future for anniversary event

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

Always popular with the members 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.

Managing director Stephen Gates kicked off proceedings with a lively presentation looking at what’s been happening at Denplan over the last 18 months. Ty ing it in with the filmic 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 01-05. Finally Roger presented the launch of Denplan’s new training programme.

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 easily-going Northerner. He gave some extremely amusing anecodes, 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 Conservative party winning the next General Election.

One interesting point he looked at was the quest for aestheti cs 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 Vis iting Research Fellow in 1998; Research Director of the Colgate Australian Clinical Dental Research Centre in 1989 and Research Consultant of the Centre in 2005; Associate Professor, working in the fields of Dental Biomaterials and Minimal Intervention Dentistry in 2003.

Prof Ngo discussed the philosophy of minimal intervention; putting the patient in control of the disease process. He was very entertaining speaker, with some well 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 regime. 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 on 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 Aijit Banerjee and Dr Richard Pilkington, which 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 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 St Mary’s Hospital, London.

Dental Institute. Not only is Martin on the board of Dental Protection and chair of the Den tal 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, which he had titled 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 shoves of the head he asked: “Then why do it to some one else?”

After the lunch break, there were two sessions by Prof I llen 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