Taking the plunge
Ken Harris takes the first steps towards gaining an MSc

Along with the news of my upcoming 50-year reunion came the realisation that I am actually in the twilight of my career, much to my children’s glee, and their regular quips about my advancing years (and receding hairline) seem all the more appropriate these days. Should I go gently into that good night or should I try to raise the enthusiasm to rage a little more against the dying of the light?

One thing I’ve learned after 50 years in dentistry is everyone’s an expert. The advent of the evidence-based dentistry movement, possibly driven by government and perhaps fuelled by dry-fingered academics (OK, I’m prepared to concede moist) has often been given short shrift by the army of general practitioners such as myself who is working in the ultimate “in vivo” laboratory. After all, we’ve all been there and done that, even if for many of us the T-shirt no longer fits.

It is a truth universally acknowledged (at least by wet-fingered dentists) that an academic dental colleague in possession of a “learned” opinion must be in need of a soap box) as to what relevance the fact of opportunity out there. Using an example about Holland exports (although I’m lost for technology’s sake, preferring the more intellectual pursuits of a good book or a stimulating conversation (or so I tell myself) and my usual online. I have never seen the attractions of technology online. I have never seen the attractions of technology

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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 MFGDP(UK) in 1986. He maintains a highly renowned establish- ment. I was looking for a course with serious aspiration and the confidence in itself to challenge its delegates; I was also looking for a university with the courage to set the bar high enough to gain respect within the academic community at large! After a scepticism held me back. But I soon discovered that you could sign up for an MSc in almost any branch of dentistry with guaranteed success if you had both a pulse and a credit card (with the latter being most important).

Two years ago I first noticed the MSc in restorative and aesthetic dentistry at the University of Manchester; a highly renowned establishment. I was looking for a course with serious aspiration and the confidence in itself to challenge its delegates; I was also looking for a university with the courage to set the bar high enough to gain respect within the academic community at large! After a

praise me for my open mind and the willingness to take up a new challenge, yet when I told my family, my friends, and even my patients, they could scarcely disguise their amuse- ment! Only one of my friends, who actually has 57 watch- es (almost as many, as Nigel Saynor) said he recognised a kindred impulsive spirit, and congratulated me on my deci- siveness.

Consequently, I now find myself reading about the in- fluence of air abrasion on Zirc-onia ceramic bonding; unusu- al, I’m sure you’ll agree, but it’s more unusual given that I’m sitting on an exercise bike at the very swanky Baltimore Hotel in Miami, while every- one else is relaxing by the pool! This MSc thing is start- ing to take over my life I’m afraid… maybe I should be very afraid?

I have always been suspi- cious of dogma from either side and have an infinite ca- pacity for doubt; I blame my Irish-Catholic Liverpool back- ground, but my long-suffering family just call me a grumpy old man. However, I’m still passionate about my pro- fession, and I’m always look-