

Orthodontic Technicians Association Annual Conference 2010

The annual Orthodontic Technicians Conference (OTA) was held in the Low Wood Hotel in the beautiful scenic Lake District in England. The hotel entrance was a few metres from Lake Windermere with the hills and snow covered mountains in the background where the breakout area for the trade stands / coffee stations overlooked.

The conference commenced on Friday afternoon with the annual Forestadent Golf Competition at Windermere Golf Course. Then 2 CPD courses a new ventures for the conference



committee these and other topics will be available next year. The “Adult Basic Life Support” (CPR) with tutors Kevin (OTA member) and Alison Wilson from Dundee where delegates learned the basic life support. The other course was on “Rapid Maxillary Expansion Appliances” which was to have been presented by John Brown. Registration opened early evening and afterwards a welcome and re-acquaintance dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Professor David Bearn opened the OTA annual conference (fig. 1) and then presented the Aldridge Award to Neil Nairn. The “Aldridge Medal” is an annual award presented to the best lecturer at the previous conference in the opinion of votes cast by the delegates at that conference (Milton Keynes 2009).

The opening lecture was presented by Professor Dr. Edmund Clement Rose of the University of Freiburg in Germany (fig. 2) who also has a private practice in Dietikon in Switzerland. His topic was the “Evaluation of dental hard / soft foils for orthodontic treatment” in which he described the use of these foils for the long term treatment of sleep apnoea where these foils are prone to discolouring if used for long periods. He described his research into these materials and how they tested them in different solutions. He went on to describe an alternative technique he uses to manufacture durable a hard soft compound splint. For delegates who manufacture sleep apnoea appliances they maybe considering adopting different materials and techniques to avoid the problems associated with discolouration etc. James Abbott (fig. 3) topic was on the “Use of coloured acrylics in orthodontic appliances” followed on from a presentation last year on “Factors affecting twin block fracture”. Non compliance came high on the reasons for fractures and the simple act of personalisation can have a positive effect on the patient’s attitude towards treatment and coloured appliances can help in the area. James went on to describe the power of personalisation with the use of colours and designs and the multiple

of combinations possible. In the first of a trilogy of short lectures Keith Evans presented a “Different Approach to a Roberts Retractor” a method of “removable” components first describing a Roberts Retractor and then a Buccal Retractor. Where if a fracture of these components occur they can be removed and replaced without trimming the acrylic baseplate resulting in an immediate replacement of these components. Later he described the technique he uses for the manufacture of “High Impact Mouthguards” Keith has competed in martial arts and is now an international referee so has the experience of wearing and receiving blows in competitive martial arts competitions and he shared his first hand knowledge of his interpretation of suitable mouthguards for different sports. His last presentation was on “So you can’t afford a laser welder! Why not try resistance soldering?” Keith described how resistance soldering worked by wrapping the solder round the joint and by attaching electrodes at either end of the wire something like the heat treatment of wires using an orthodontic welder passes a current causing the wire to heat up and melt the solder resulting in a joint with the correct amount of solder and retaining the properties of the wire. He has had an excellent success since he was taught the technique by his mentor x number of years ago. Next Michael Welch lecturer in Dental Technology at Lambeth College London (fig. 5) presented a bleak view of dental technology education in the colleges today. He said neither the GDC or the government seem to have the political will or commitment to fund dental technicians the same way as other dental team members are funded. Michael said there clearly needs to be a national strategy to address this drastic situation and ensure a modern sustainable and competent workforce is maintained for the future. Daniel Shaw presented “Appliance Satisfaction – An Audit of the Standard of work” which he conducted in his hospital laboratory. His survey contained 7 key sections: traceability, impression standard, appliance ready on time, fit of the appliance, adjustments necessary, time to rectify these adjustments, further comments / feedback. Daniel explained the results and how they are going to rectify any problems that emerged. Steve Prime’s presentation on “Orthodontics and the K9” Where do the Dalaks fit into an orthodontic conference? If it is K9 it does fit in – orthodontic appliance for a dog! Steve took us through how he made the appliance and the problems he encountered. “Impression disinfection in the UK – Report of a survey” was presented by Noor Al-Mortadi from Jordan who conducted the survey when she was a student at Dundee Dental School. The results were a little disturbing as she found debridement and disinfection fell short of the 2009 BDA guidance standards. Although good practice set out by the BDA states that the laboratory should be informed that impressions are disinfected 25% of respondents did not comply. This can lead to a breakdown of trust with the laboratories and may result in unnecessary extra disinfection resulting in possible inaccuracies and dimension stability. A visit to a dental historic museum in Germany which has possibly the greatest collection of dental related artefacts in the world at the present time was presented by John Brown. Next Christine Ramian (fig. 4) gave a resume of our sister organisation GK in Germany. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of her organisation cumulating with a conference in Bad Lauterberg from the 22nd to 24th October 2010. It is interesting that they are half the age of the OTA which marks its 40th birthday next year at their annual conference in Southampton from the 10th to 13th March 2011.

The annual conference dinner was well attended by delegates, partners and guests where after a delicious meal chat and re acquaintance the formal proceedings commenced with Forestadent Golf Shield which was presented to Bruce Mathieson from Edinburgh, David Bearn presented the BOS Student Technician Award to Fiona Aldcroft from Peterborough Hospital, then the induction of our new President Dr Les Joffe (fig. 6) and after his acceptance speech drew the raffle tickets of which the proceeds sponsors two or more student dental technicians to attend next years conference. After dinner music was provided by Mn4 and sponsored by Eurodentics. This rounded off a very successful annual conference evening dinner at the Low Wood Hotel overlooking Lake Windermere.

The Sunday programme commenced with Lucia Amato who trained in Italy but now working in the UK presented the “Fast Back a non compliance distal device” an Italian designed appliance. Lucia commenced her lecture with a resume of several distal devices including First Class, Veltri, Pendulum, Distal Jet before concentrating on the Fast Back appliance. Lucia treated us to a detailed lecture on the construction of the Fast Back appliance and all the critical areas where problems could occur. A very entertaining lecture on a European appliance. Next Gavin Carmichael presented two innovations he had invented commencing with a screw positioning device of which he invented after seeing several lectures and presentations on badly positioned orthodontic expansion screws. His next innovation was another method of retaining lower Twin Block appliances or possibly other types of orthodontic appliances. He makes the Twin Block as usual but forms Acetal Resin Clasps which are injection moulded with a small bump for a composite lump. When the appliance is fitted the orthodontist places a small amount of composite on the clasp arm the appliance is inserted and light cured through the Acetal Resin. This results in a perfectly formed composite bump on the tooth to which the appliance clicks onto. The last lecture was presented by Dr Colin Melrose (fig. 7) on “Problems and Errors in Orthognathic Planning”. Colin discussed the following areas in his presentation, the interdisciplinary team, clinical assessment, cephalometric analysis, clinical procedures prior to surgery and ensuring the plan is executed correctly at surgery. He stressed the importance of the impressions and how a poor impression can lead to problems at a later stage in the procedure.

This closed a very successful conference coordinated this year by Paul Mallet and as always helped by the OTA council and friends.

The Orthodontic Technicians Conference is an excellent way of Orthodontic Technicians keeping up to date with current techniques and materials. It is also an excellent way of accumulating CPD hours to ensure their registration stays intact. Encourage your colleagues either working with you or near you to join the OTA. Technicians wishing to join the OTA you can find further information and details how to join on the OTA website at: www.orthota.co.uk. The OTA conference and related events run by the OTA throughout the year are open to all members of the dental team. Our colleagues in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, France, Belgium, Holland, Greece attend conferences etc in Europe and details of these events and future UK events will be posted in the members area on the OTA web site at: www.orthota.co.uk.

