



# New Divisional Director



*Adrian Bennett*  
Editor

Welcome to the Spring edition of Pathway North West. As usual there is much to report on, most recent of which is the AGM which was held on 6th April at MANDEC. Sunil Panchmatia officially handed over the Director's role to Jon Rees. The Board would like to extend its gratitude to Sunil, who has worked with great enthusiasm as our Director for the past three years. His involvement with the MJDF study group alongside Andrew Shelley has helped many candidates to pass the exam. He remains an active member of our board where his experience will no doubt prove to be invaluable.

As outgoing Director, Sunil gave his report at the meeting along with George Rodgers (Treasurer) and Ian Wood (Divisional Representative on National Board):

There has been a reduction in Divisional membership from 407 to 288 over the last 12 months; however, DCP membership is on the rise. The reduction in membership as has attributed to several factors, most likely of which is financial/economic factors related to the recession and new additional costs such as HTM01-05 and CQC compliance.

The Board made the decision not to run a Divisional study day last year due to a high risk of making a loss. Course attendances have been very poor nationally for all courses and thus competition to attract delegates is very high. It was decided to have a CPD-eligible lecture after the AGM. The Division has also collaborated with the Manchester

Odontological Society on a day of core CPD, which proved to be a great success.

Sunil also reported that the Board had officially corresponded with the GDC to convey its opinion on the registration of additional qualifications, the Board being strongly in favour of their registration, especially if awarded from accredited institutions.

The launch of Touchstone (see inside for further details) has been a great success, particularly for candidates of the Diploma in Restorative Dentistry. The program is available at no cost to Faculty members.

Ian Wood, our Divisional representative, reported that DCP recruitment is also on the rise nationally and there could be a separate DCP Faculty in the not-too-distant future.

The Royal College of Surgeons of England has also hosted a national conference, led by the dental faculties, to set out a vision for robust standard-setting to inform the revalidation process. The process had been scheduled to begin in 2014, but this looks like being delayed, particularly as the process, when it was applied to our medical colleagues, proved to be both time-consuming and expensive.

Looking to the future, the dental faculties have agreed to establish a cross-professional standard-setting board, to give the profession a stronger, united voice.

Inside this issue you'll find more detailed information on Touchstone; a report from our new MJDF Study Group Tutor, Stef Williams; and further enlightening insight from (Dr) Grumpy Old Dentist.

Adrian Bennett  
adey.bennett@zen.co.uk

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Info about upcoming national events is available at [www.fgdp.org.uk](http://www.fgdp.org.uk)

*At the highest level, the Government has recognised the importance of the manner in which information is accessed, collected, analysed and used. In the document setting out the Department of Health's consultation 'An Information Revolution', Andrew Lansley writes "Good information.... enables care professionals to make the process of care safer and more efficient."*



# Touchstone launched upon the world

It is into this context that the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)'s new e-portfolio, Touchstone, was officially launched at the Faculty's Open Day on 3rd February 2011. Lawrence Mudford, Chair of the Faculty's Education Committee, addressed an audience of over 200, extolling the virtues of this new and innovative member benefit.

*In his speech Lawrence Mudford said:*  
**"The FGDP(UK) is keen to develop more and better services for its members. We believe that our services should contribute towards our aim of improving standards of patient care."**

**Touchstone is a truly significant new benefit for FGDP(UK) members, and potentially for the whole dental community. We hope you like it."**

The FGDP(UK) believes that Touchstone is a tool that has the potential make a very real, positive difference to the

working lives of dentists and dental care professionals (DCPs). Touchstone is based on software developed by Pebble Learning and has been tailored to meet the needs of the dental profession.

At its core is the ability to store any number of documents on Touchstone, from Word files to audio/visual files. These can then be used for multiple purposes. Users can record, reflect on, store and manage their CPD records. Records can be retrieved at any point, or exported using templates designed to meet the needs of the MJDF Portfolio of Evidence, the General Dental Council, Care Quality Commission and ultimately, revalidation.

A key feature of Touchstone is its 'gateways'; areas for members to publish comments or documents for viewing by other members of the gateway. Members can use gateways to converse with one another and collaborate on projects. Thoughts can be blogged within the gateways or users can create their own personal blogs.

Touchstone is being integrated into

the Faculty's postgraduate training programmes. Students undertaking a programme of study with the FGDP(UK) will be able to organise and submit their coursework through Touchstone, share documents with tutors and interact with them.

In order to make Touchstone as intuitive and easy to access as possible, users can log in from the FGDP(UK) website with just one click. Touchstone can also be accessed from any computer with an internet connection, and on handheld devices such as the iPhone.

The next stage for Touchstone is to build the user base. From around 300 users on the pilot phase, the FGDP(UK) hopes to increase the number of users to over 2000 by the end of 2011. At the same time the Faculty will be working with external bodies in order to ensure that Touchstone remains relevant to the needs of modern dental practitioners and DCPs. Touchstone has been launched but there is much more to come from it in the future.



# MJDF Study Group news

*The successful MJDF North Western Division study groups have recently undergone some changes. In 2010, I took over as the tutor for this division and started the first Study Group earlier this year.*

I qualified in 2006 at The University of Manchester. After completing Vocational Training in Stockport, I then moved practice, also in Stockport, where I have remained for three years.

I chose to complete the MJDF North Western course and successfully passed the examinations and portfolio in 2009. At the end of 2010, I took over as the new tutor for the North Western Division and I am keen to continue the excellent reputation that the previous tutors have built.

There are currently two options available to potential candidates who wish to have guidance through the MJDF assessment. The first option is to complete the 8 month course (as was previously held each year) starting in September 2011. This will consist of 8 two hour sessions (from 6-8pm), held each month. They will usually be held on the first Monday of the month at 126 Wellington Road North, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2 LL. During these sessions, candidates will be guided through all three components of the assessment via a structured plan and will also be given a CD with useful information on how to successfully complete the MJDF. It is also possible to mark portfolios that candidates bring with them to the Study Group.

## *The course structure consists of the following:*

1. Introduction to the MJDF, course structure and selection of presentation case
2. Key Skill - Medical Emergencies
3. Key Skill - Cross-infection-control
4. Key Skill - Record Keeping
5. Key Skill - Radiography
6. Key Skill - Staff Training
7. Audit, Presentation Case, CPD, PDP, CV
8. Preparation for Part 1 and Part 2 of the examination

The second option which has recently started is the introduction of one-off study sessions. In these sessions, priced at £50 per session, candidates will also be guided through the assessment. However, as these sessions are going to be for smaller groups, the meeting plan can be more specific to candidates' needs. Some individuals may, for example, prefer to have more guidance on the portfolio, which can be arranged.

I have recently started maternity leave, so the study sessions will stop temporarily. However, I plan to begin them again in September when I will also be starting the new 8 month course. The actual dates will be confirmed nearer to the time.

*The next exam dates are as follows:*

### **Part 1**

Monday 3rd October 2011

Last date of application  
and fee  
Friday 22nd July 2011

£522

### **Part 2**

Tuesday 15th – Thursday  
17th November 2011

Brit Oval Cricket Ground

Last date of application  
and fee  
Friday 2nd September 2011

£660

To register for the Study  
Group, starting in  
September, Contact Stef  
ASAP

I look forward to starting the new course in September and I am confident that it will be a success!

# "Trust me, I might be a doctor..."

*Doctors aren't really doctors either! (If you know what I mean)*

So why on Earth are the GDC dragging up the title of doctor again? This makes me exceedingly grumpy. Surely they have some sensible things on which to spend their time. What's the matter with them? Back in the mid-nineties I thought we settled all this. The BDA voted in favour of the courtesy title 'doctor' to be used by dentists and the GDC agreed that they wouldn't take action against dentists who did. Job done, you might think.

*Do the GDC think that the public are stupid enough to try and get their appendix done by someone with a PhD in media studies?*

Let's get this straight. The only people who rightly use the title doctor are those who hold doctorates. For example, if I held a PhD I could correctly be addressed as Dr Grumpy. There's somewhat of a ring to that, I think. Then there are our medical colleagues, most of whom use the title doctor as a matter of courtesy. In other words doctors aren't really doctors either, if you know what I mean; well not unless they hold doctorates anyway. Everywhere in the world, apart from Great Britain, dentists are afforded the same courtesy. For example I met an American veterinary surgeon in a hotel in Barcelona. We introduced ourselves.

*The majority of our medical colleagues don't have doctorates either so what's the difference?*

"Good to meet you doctor!" he proclaimed enthusiastically. It's all very nice and it's respectful. The same thing happens if you go to conferences in any foreign parts. "Ah but", say the GDC, "this is all very confusing to the public. Dentists misrepresent themselves by calling themselves doctor". Well if that's the case then so do the majority of our medical colleagues who don't have doctorates either so what's the difference? Interestingly there seems to be no dispute about dentists who hold PhDs calling themselves doctor. So if the GDC think that the public will be confused about dentists using the title doctor then how is it okay for them to be confused about the ones who hold doctorates? This raises a bigger question anyway. What about all the PhDs and other doctorates in physics, maths, engineering, the arts etc. If the GDC really think that the public are stupid enough to mistake a dentist for a physician or surgeon, maybe they also think that they are stupid enough to try and get their appendix done by someone with a PhD in media studies. Patronising or what? This all looks very much as if we are being treated like second-class

medical professionals by our own governing body. This might not be so surprising because we now have a council in which only 8 out of the 24 members are dentists. Of those 8 we could probably say that 4 of them are what we would recognise as general dental practitioners. We pay dearly for this too. Our annual retention fee for the General Dental Council has just increased by nearly a third to £576. Also, particularly unfair is the increase in the retention fee for our staff, a 25% increase from £96 to £120. Some of us do the decent thing and pay for our nurses to register so we are facing a huge increase in the fees we pay. They are muddled about many things but our

*If the GDC is there solely for the protection of the public, maybe it's time that the public started paying for it.*

governing body is very clear about one issue. The GDC is there solely for the protection of the public. Well if that is the case then maybe it's time that the public started paying for it.

Yours grumpily



*Is this man appropriately qualified?*

# Riding the Avalanche of Change

*A presentation by Simon Hocken of Breathe Business Limited*

*(summary by Adrian Bennett)*

Nowadays, patients are buying dentistry like other retail items and the big companies can see it changing: the past mistakes of the failed Boots attempt have been learned and they are ready to try again. Supermarkets, for example, will be offering dentistry in-store. The convenience factor alone will be enough to Hoover up large numbers of patients e.g. young families doing the weekly shop/visit to the dentist. It could change the face of dentistry in the UK forever.

So how can independently owned general practices counter such massive companies, with their seemingly bottomless pots of investment capital?

*Here are some ideas:*

- **Provide exceptional client service**
- **Look after your existing clients as if they were old friends**
- **Have everyone join a compelling Membership Scheme**
- **Add value to everything you do**
- **Provide convenient opening hours**
- **Be passionate about what you do**
- **Don't hurt/upset/annoy your patients**
- **Make it easy for your clients to pay**
- **Offer a wide range of services**



*Dentistry is changing and the rate of change is increasing day by day.*

*It was once accepted that you could place a sign above the door of a converted terrace or semi-detached house and the patients would obediently come trudging through the door to be treated.*

*Advertising? No need, dentists were a rare commodity and Joe Public would queue around the block when a new practice opened.*



On top of these strategies, owners need to get to grips with the numbers: The big companies know how much they turn over on an hourly basis; you have to be prepared to play at the same level. Knowing your profit margins, materials expenses, staffing costs etc etc may seem very unexciting, but if you don't (and the only time you do is when your accountant lets you know at the end of the year) it may be too late to implement changes. Small companies can change quickly: anything from opening hours and prices to decor and staff uniforms. These things take larger companies months to implement. Embrace change and stay ahead of the game!

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*"We are doomed to a slow and lingering death as a profession if we refuse to recognise the paramount importance of the patient as our sole means of revenue generation and set out to build a delivery system they find attractive, pleasant and cost-effective."*

*John Renshaw. August 2010 - Ex-Chairman. BDA*



## The North Western Divisional Board

### Contact details

Divisional Director  
**Jonny Rees**  
jonnyrees@mac.com

Secretary and Newsletter Editor  
**Adrian Bennett**  
01457 821800  
adey.bennett@zen.co.uk

Treasurer  
**George Rodgers**  
01942 242620 - practice  
01257 421288 - home

Nationally Elected Representative on Faculty Board  
**Joe Rich**  
0161 926 8115  
joerichbds@aol.com

Board member  
**Andrew Shelley**  
0161 485 3609  
andrew@andrewshelley.com

Restorative Diploma Course Director/  
MJDF  
**Ian Wood**  
0161 962 9864  
ian.wood@minx.co.uk

MJDF Tutor  
**Stef Williams**  
stefwithanf51@yahoo.com

Board member  
**Sunil Panchmatia**  
0161 336 2710  
spanch@lineone.net

Board member  
**Nick Ward**  
0161 428 4824  
nick.ward@virgin.net

Board member  
**John Moorhouse**  
01925 759123  
johnmoorhouse@eaglebrow.com

Board member  
**Paul McDonald**  
paulmcdonald dentist@hotmail.com

Board member  
**Simon Anderton**  
simonanderton@mac.com

Board member  
**Ian Hunt**  
mapedental@googlemail.com

Board member & Regional Adviser in Vocational Training  
**David Read**  
01204 573100  
david.read@dial.pipex.com

Audit Facilitator  
**Pip Thomas**  
0161 973 0565  
pip-thomas@hotmail.com

## Become a member of the FGDP(UK)

Over 4,000 dental professionals are members of the FGDP(UK). Membership is open to all dentists and dental care professionals, and e-ssociate membership is available free of charge to dental undergraduate students.

The main benefits of membership are as follows:

- Reduced fees on FGDP(UK) books, courses and study days.
- Participation in the Career Pathway, our career development framework and route to Fellowship of the Faculty.
- Touchstone, a free online portfolio for recording and organising your CPD evidence.
- Quarterly subscription to Primary Dental Care, the FGDP(UK)'s peer-reviewed research journal (dentists only), Team in Practice, our CPD journal for DCPs, and First-Hand, the Faculty's newsletter.
- Access to The Royal College of Surgeons of England's online library, providing access to OVID Medline and Embase.
- Access to a UK-wide network of study groups and peer support.
- 20% discount on books from Oxford University Press and PasTest.
- Member rates for College accommodation and a range of hotels.

Visit [www.fgdp.org.uk/members.ashx](http://www.fgdp.org.uk/members.ashx) for membership rates and more benefits.

## How to join The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)

Memberships packs are available from the College, from Jean Cook at the MANDEC office or at the fortnightly Advanced Refresher courses at MANDEC on Tuesday nights.

### Costs

#### Full membership - £265

Available to registered dentists who have been awarded a relevant postgraduate diploma by any of the four Royal Colleges.

#### Associate +3 membership - £184

Available to registered dentists, qualified for more than three years, who do not hold an appropriate postgraduate diploma.

#### Associate membership - £64

Available to registered dentists within three years of their graduation.

## Special offer for Faculty Members from the Dental Directory

Please don't forget that the Dental Directory have generously offered a special deal to faculty members. North Western Division members are eligible for a preferred Faculty member discount of 10% off all catalogue prices (excluding mini-catalogue and promo offers) plus 1.5% for all orders placed via the computer ordering system, Desktop. In addition if you hold MFGDP(UK)/MGDS/MJDF or Fellowship there will be a further 1%. This could amount to a significant discount of 12.5% off already low master catalogue prices. Should you become a new member of the Faculty the Dental Directory will credit your account with £50 which you can spend on the house-preferred range (Unodent, Degussa, Perfection Plus)

We are most grateful to the Dental Directory for their generous support of the faculty division and sponsorship of this newsletter. Northern Sales Manager Steve Brown may be contacted on e-mail - [swbrown@dentaldirectory.co.uk](mailto:swbrown@dentaldirectory.co.uk). Also see web site: <http://www.dentaldirectory.co.uk>

### Retired membership - £85

Available to dentists who support the aims and objectives of the FGDP(UK) but who have retired from all forms of general dental practice.

### DCP Affiliate membership - £29

### Student/Career Break/Maternity - £64

### MJDF - £245

#### Contact details

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)  
The Royal College of Surgeons of England,  
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields,  
London. WC2A 3PE

Telephone - 020 7869 6754

Fax - 020 7869 6765

Website [www.fgdp.org.uk](http://www.fgdp.org.uk)

e-mail [fgdp@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:fgdp@rcseng.ac.uk)

You can download previous issues of Pathway from [www.fgdp-nw.com](http://www.fgdp-nw.com) - very handy for reviewing previous MFGDP(UK)/MJDF case studies.

## PATHWAY NORTH WEST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH WESTERN DIVISION OF THE FACULTY OF GENERAL DENTAL PRACTICE (UK).

