



Chatting with the chairman

From bagpipes to dentistry's digital future – **Diana Spencer** catches up with outgoing Alpha Omega chairman **Richard Horwitz** about not sweating the small stuff

Diana Spencer

Chairman of Alpha Omega society
(London)



DS: What excites you most about the business/practice of dentistry?

RH: It's a forever evolving and changing profession, new techniques and styles of working. Even as a specialist, there is a never-ending path of knowledge to follow... nothing ever really stays the same.

DS: Tell me about your culture fix... How do you unwind?

RH: I bake a lot... sourdough, pitta bread, walnut loaf. I do loads of gardening, and really enjoy tending my veggie patch. I am also guilty of watching far too many TV series – there are just too many good ones to choose from!

DS: What advice would you offer an upcoming dental student?

RH: The advice is simple – join Alpha Omega (AO)! I was a student member of AO, which opened up access to so many mentors. I was able to explore different specialities and finally find my niche in periodontics and implant dentistry.

DS: Where do you see dentistry in five or 10 years?

RH: I believe dentistry will become even more digitally based, and there will be a greater scope for more specialisation and working in a wider dental team.

DS: What's been your greatest challenge to date?

RH: Realising that general dentistry was not for me

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I was very lucky to have mentors to guide me through a specialist training pathway. Thankfully, it has resulted in me going on to do what I really enjoy.

DS: Who was your mentor? And what was the best piece of advice you ever received?

RH: The best advice I was given was to do work you enjoy and 'not to sweat the small stuff'! There are so many mentors of mine within Alpha Omega – too many to name, but outside of dentistry I would say my father.

DS: What's the funniest thing that happened to you in a dental surgery?

RH: I was taking my specialist exams in Scotland. Halfway through, bagpipes started to play from Edinburgh castle nearby – and did not stop for the duration. It was funny... if only in retrospect!

DS: What advice would you give to someone setting up their own surgery?

RH: Make sure you set yourself apart from anyone else... work on a USP. Think about what you can offer that is different from other practices. Most importantly, enjoy what you do!

DS: Do you have any regrets?

RH: None – only life lessons! **D**

Dr Richard Horwitz qualified as a dentist from the University of Sheffield, and as a specialist in periodontics from UCL (Eastman Dental Institute).

He was awarded with the Certificate in Periodontology and Implant Dentistry from the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP), and is a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh for periodontics.

He spends most of his time between private practice and lecturing nationally and internationally on the subjects of periodontics and implant dentistry.

He is a visiting lecturer at the Eastman Dental Institute (UCL) and Queen Mary University London (QMUL).

His specific clinical and research interests include treating gum recession and implant dentistry.

Dr Horwitz was the chair of the Alpha Omega Dental Society London Chapter 2019/2020.

Diana Spencer (DS): Why did you choose dentistry?

Richard Horwitz (RH): Strangely, I always enjoyed going to the dentist when I was young and from that thought it would be a great thing to do – and even more strangely, I loved going to the orthodontist!