

## **Denplan Ski Conference 2011 – A Dentist’s Eye View**

The 2011 Denplan Ski Conference took place this year from the 22-29 January in the beautiful Zell am See resort in Salzburg, Austria. The event is organised for Denplan member dentists and not only included six exciting days of superb skiing, but also a variety of apres-ski activities and daily clinical seminars. Denplan dentist Louis Mackenzie shares his diary of the event...

At the end of January, 50 Denplan dentists and a few family members escaped the CQC and the snow at home for the picturesque ski resort of Zell am See in Austria. Denplan has sent six of their team to look after us and during the journey to the mountains, team leaders Sandy and Julia get the conference off to just the right start, by distributing little bottles of a potent digestif called Jägermeister. Yes indeed, the après ski has started while we’re still on the coach!

Our Event Organiser, Gemma, has managed to almost completely book the sought after four-star Stadt Wien hotel. We spare a thought for the few families already installed in this charming hotel as 50 dentists descend on their holiday!

### **Day 1 - Sunshine and Skiing**

Sunshine wakes us early and we take to the slopes. Skiing abilities within the group range from beginner to advanced, as well as the extremely rusty (with one snowboarder proving we’re progressive as a profession!) A wonderful day is spent exploring the pistes in bright sunshine.

Denplan host a welcome dinner. The food at our hotel is outstanding and copious and we quickly realise that no matter how many calories we burn on the slopes, none of us is going to go home any lighter. Our group comprises dentists from all over the UK and, as usual, we all form an instant bond based on Denplan, dental school, shared acquaintances, experiences and professional nightmares.

### **Day 2 - Snow and Amalgam**

Snow falling night and day transforms the resort and offers challenging skiing for all. Today Denplan have arranged for ski guides to give us a tour of the mountains. Bizarrely the black-run guide is a snowboarder in a Pink Panther costume...?

In the evening the formal part of the conference commences with a lecture on Amalgam, which stimulates a vigorous debate that carries on into dinner (an unusual 'carnivore heaven' fondue!).

### **Day 3 - Kaprun and Composite**

Today Denplan Events Manager Simon has arranged for a large group of us to be transported to neighbouring resort of Kaprun. Here the skiing is less picturesque but offers some terrifying gradients for the brave (and foolish). The real reason for the trip is revealed in the late afternoon as we visit an igloo, high on the glacier that's been made into a champagne bar boasting the world's highest car showroom.

We return just in time for the lecture on posterior composites, but to the lecturer's delight everyone is too tired to subject him to intense interrogation!

### **Day 4 - Implants and Crazy Daisy**

Another fabulous days skiing is followed by a lecture on maintenance by famous implantologist Willie Jack. After this is we all walk down the mountain to where Denplan have booked the best restaurant in town.

After a wonderful meal it's Denplan's Cathy who leads us to *Crazy Daisies* nightclub. Here we show the locals a thing or two about dancing and challenge them at a peculiar local game involving a log, a hammer and some six inch nails. The merriment goes on very late, rendering several of our group incapable of skiing the next day.

### **Day 5 - Anterior composites and Balloons**

Those with restraint (and the requisite number of liver enzymes) enjoy another fine day skiing and we all meet up for a lecture on anterior composites. This ignites lively discussion around the unhealthy battle between minimally invasive dentistry and the rising epidemic of (Porcelain) 'venerial' disease.

In the evening we all climb the slopes to attend a local festival which features music, hot air balloons and a display of synchronised skiing and ski jumping.

### **Day 6 - Adhesive bridges**

The entire group, from beginner to advanced, is loving every minute on the slopes of Zell am See and today we're guided to a hidden lunch destination, offering gourmet food and 'interesting' wall adornments!

Fortunately, since day two's heavy snow, we've been able to ski right back to the hotel doorstep and thus we can return just in the nick of time for this evening's lecture on resin bonded bridgework.

### **Day 7 - Hot tips and Quiz night**

Perfect conditions grant us another long fantastic day, as we ski the entire resort. This is followed by a highly entertaining evening hosted by Martin Fallowfield. Tonight it's the dentists turn to take to the stage, sharing their dental 'Hot tips'. Diversity abounds as we're treated to such delights as a method of preventing patients from swallowing crowns, a fool-proof cure for toothache, an expensive cure for back ache and what to do if you accidentally post your entire weeks takings into a post box!

Team leader Sandy is our host for the traditional final night quiz and a raucous evening ensues as we flex our intellectual muscles and reveal the limitations of a science based degree!

The conference was a massive success, hugely enjoyed by a close group of new friends, who now return home thoroughly refreshed by what will most certainly be one of the best weeks of the year. Thank you to Denplan for your customary organisational precision and for forcing six of your employees to spend the week in the company of 50 dentists on the loose!

Event Organiser, Gemma Mills, added: "The Denplan Ski Conference is one of the many outings in the Denplan members' events calendar and it's always one of the most popular. Everyone had a great time at this year's event, with both fantastic skiing conditions, networking opportunities and a comprehensive conference package offering 5 hours of verifiable CPD. We're already planning the next event so watch this space for more information."

Report by Louis Mackenzie (Denplan dentist, lecturer, survivor)

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**1,014 words**

**About the Author: Louis Mackenzie**

Louis Mackenzie is a general dental practitioner in Birmingham and is a Clinical Lecturer at the University of Birmingham School of Dentistry. He provides post-graduate teaching to British and overseas dentists, via a series of original 'hands-on' courses and lectures, on direct and indirect restorative techniques and conversion to private practice. He was awarded the 2009 University of Birmingham School of dentistry award for teaching excellence.