

An Elective down under, a report

by Ajay Mehta



Why I picked Australia?

Ever since I visited Perth in 2010, I knew I wanted to go back to Australia. I don't want to run the risk of sounding like a travel brochure, but Australia is quite simply an amazing country. A mix of culture, sun, wildlife, beaches and activity sports: for me, it was the perfect location to do my elective.

I was subconsciously planning my elective a few years before I actually went and my desire was to travel the East coast of Australia.

Myobrace

It was late July in the summer of 2016 and my elective began in the Gold Coast after a 29-hour journey from London. On placement the very next day, I felt like a cast member of the 'Walking Dead'; the long flight really does take its toll! I met Dr Dan Hanson at a BDSA conference in year 3, a University of Sheffield expat who now resides in the Gold Coast.

The lecture he delivered on Myobrace was so interesting that I immediately felt like my elective had fallen into place. Myobrace is an alternative orthodontic treatment that aims to use myofunctional orthodontic techniques to correct malocclusions. It is a different approach to conventional orthodontics which is why it caught my interest. Patients are taught myofunctional exercises and are provided with a series of removable appliances which are usually worn for 1-2 hours a day and overnight.

There are only a limited number of clinics in the U.K that offer this treatment and it was pioneered in the Gold Coast.

Tongue tie frenectomies

I also observed Dr Dan at a clinic in Brisbane, 'Enhance Dentistry'. Here, I saw tongue tie frenectomies performed with a laser, a practice that is mainly carried out on babies. The main reason to do this procedure was to improve feeding in babies, thus improving infant health. Furthermore, research has shown that

breast-feeding may improve jaw development, which is one reason why Dr Dan became interested in this treatment. This procedure is done by only a few dentists in the U.K and what better place to see it than the vibrant city of Brisbane. It was incredible to witness this procedure being carried out on such young babies, (some only a few weeks old!) and this required a whole team approach including a lactation nurse.

Griffith University

Whilst in the Gold Coast, I decided to spend time at the local university: Griffith University. I met local students, which provided me with an insightful perspective on the differences in dentistry between the U.K and Australia.

One of the main differences I noticed was that Australia does not have a dental foundation training year after students are qualified; with a majority of students immediately entering private practice.

University of Sydney

After my time in the Gold Coast, I took a flight to Sydney to complete the rest of my elective. I spent time at the University of Sydney in the endodontic department. I was mainly with recent graduates and an endodontic specialist; Omar Ikram-who also has a practice called Specialist Endo Crows Nest.

The University of Sydney dental hospital offers a programme whereby a newly qualified dentist can work in the hospital completing general duties, rather like dental core training. This can help bridge the gap between new graduates and practice.

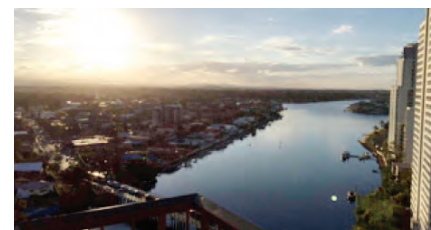
Travelling

I thought I would save the best till last: travelling! I travelled to Australia alone, an experience I thoroughly recommend. Solo travelling is fun: it makes trip planning easier, you can master your own schedule, meet

incredible people along the way and learn a lot about yourself. I went snorkelling, whale watching, sky diving, fed koalas and kangaroos and even attempted a pancake challenge. In Sydney, watching a symphony at the iconic Opera House was mesmerising! ■



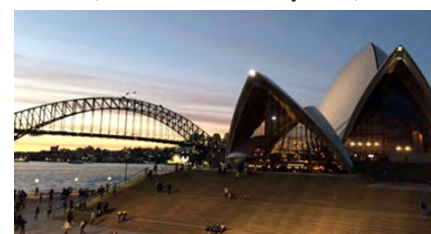
Caries alert! The pancake challenge I unfortunately failed to complete. The view from my room in the Gold Coast



The view from my room in the Gold Coast



A pair of humpback whales (the video does it more justice!)



Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge