

77th Congress of the European Orthodontic Society, Ghent, Belgium



Luc and Katrien Dermaut.

For the past 18 years I have reported on the Annual Congress of the Society. When we arrived in Ghent on the Saturday morning there was heavy rain and it was cold. However when the Congress started the temperature rose, the sun came out and remained for the duration. Each Congress has the stamp of the President on it and this year Luc Dermaut made it another unforgettable experience.

The Congress centre was in the middle of a park a short distance from the centre of town with its beautiful buildings and churches. At the opening ceremony the President reminded us that we only had 4 days to sample over 400 beers. He then described the story of the beer mug with three handles, a replica of which was given to each lecturer. When Charles V who had the famous Hapsburg jaw went and ordered beer from an inn he could not take the tankard because the landlord held it by the handle. He therefore requested that next time he came another handle was added. The next time he still could not take it by the handle because the landlord held it with

two hands. He therefore asked that next time it should have three handles. When he next visited the inn he still could not hold the tankard because the third handle pointed to the landlords chest! Following the President's speech we were then treated to a miming display. The actors were superb and at the end of their display conducted us to the trade exhibition.

The scientific programme opened with the Sheldon Friel lecture given by Professor Jüri Kuroi on 'Tooth eruption problems'. This was a superb lecture illustrated with some excellent results. The programme continued with the Houston Award papers and the winner this year was Dr M. Delatte for her paper on 'Growth stimulation of mandibular condyles and femoral heads by IGF-I *in vitro*'. After coffee the programme continued with papers on Free Topics. In the afternoon Professor Bjorn Zachrisson gave an excellent keynote lecture on 'Orthodontic treatment in elderly patients—is there an age limit'. Once again it was a stimulating paper giving us hope for our old age!

The President's reception was held in the evening at the famous castle of the Counts of Ghent. Here the President and his Lady and various members of the castle in costume welcomed us. The jugglers, fire-eaters and the falconers with their birds of prey circulated through the crowd. It was a time for catching up on old friendships and making new ones.

The next morning the keynote speaker for the topic on 'Disturbances in occlusal development, aetiology, diagnosis and treatment' was Professor Anne Marie Kuijpers-Jagtman. This was a stimulating lecture with some interesting insights into the subject. In the afternoon the subject was 'Biomechanics in Orthodontics' and Dr Robert Isaacson from Virginia Commonwealth University and Professor Birte Melsen gave keynote lectures.

The postgraduate students were entertained in the evening at a party sponsored by the *European Journal of Orthodontics* and Oxford University Press. The wine and beer flowed and several hundred students danced until the early hours of the morning. Prior to the Congress a special postgraduate course had been run on Biomechanics and Adhesives. The lecturers were Professor R. Verbeeck and Drs G. De Pauw and L. Trimpeneers of Ghent, Professor B. Melsen of Aarhus and Dr M. Koning of Amsterdam. This course was very much appreciated by all who attended and the results of the questionnaire that was circulated following the course indicated how much the students thought of these courses.

On Friday the keynote lecturers were Professor Hans Pancherz who spoke on 'Iatrogenic effects in orthodontic treatment' and Professor Jon Årtun who gave a lecture on 'Orthodontics in a multidisciplinary approach—possibilities and limitations'. These were both excellent introductions to the subjects and the papers that followed. The final event of the afternoon was the Business Meeting of the Society.

In the evening the Gala dinner and dance was held in the Congress centre and we were treated to the delights of Belgian gastronomy. The food was excellent. During dinner two artists drew caricatures of various members of the European Orthodontic Society. The President is keeping copies of them to produce on a future occasion. We were entertained by some excellent musical artists and at midnight the dancing commenced. At the dinner Professor Roberto Martina was installed as the new President and Professor Luc Dermaut was given his past President's badge and his wife, Katrien, a bouquet of flowers by the new President's wife, Ambra.

On Saturday the Silver Mill Outing was to the City of Bruges. The President had hired a special

train to transport the group and breakfast was served on the train. When we arrived in Bruges various guides, who spoke different languages, took the group to see the various sights. This wonderful town, full of surprises with its canals and churches, was fascinating. Visiting the famous statue of the Madonna and Child by Michelangelo was an experience not to be missed. The sun shone and the temperature rose and we were glad to get to the ancient Hospital of St John dating from the 13th century.

The afternoon was taken up with the Silver Mill competition, which had a typical Belgian flavour. The first test was to answer questions on various topics, each question being answered by releasing or keeping a balloon. The teams that won were then asked to participate in a competition to catch an egg without breaking it. The next test was to allow a metal bird with a pointed beak to hit a picture of the President, the nearer the centre of the head the better the marks. There were then several demonstrations of skills with rods on strings, dances and magical skills that the teams had to copy and the results were judged by an impartial group. The winners were the 'Kangaroo Kiwis' a combined team from Australia and New Zealand. There was a short walk to the station to pick up the train back to Ghent. The train guard, in the form of our President, informed us that all our luggage had been lost but it would arrive at the next meeting of the Society in Sorrento next June.

As we left to return home we again remembered a Congress where we had learned a lot, renewed friendships, made new ones, and had great fun. Our thanks go to Luc and Katrien Dermaut, and the Local Organising Committee for a magnificent Congress.

J. P. Moss

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