

Britpods 2009 – A whole new conference

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June 2009 saw the launch of Britpods – a conference that celebrates the talents of podiatrists in musculoskeletal and applied biomechanics practice.

Britpods is the result of many, many hours of hard work by Andy Horwood, Tim Hall and Gareth Hicks (Baileys Instruments) and the wider Britpod team: Bob Longworth, Mandy Abbott, Tess O'Neill, Lee Short, Helen Branthwaite and Jill Halstead.

This was a conference with a personal touch to foster confidence in skills and discussion as well as the delivery of first-class evidence-based theory. Exactly what the clinician in 2009 needs.

The whole Britpods team was present throughout the conference ensuring close supervision in the many practical sessions (the conference was about 70:30 practice : theory), which ensured everyone had a go and got stuck in!

The conference ran for two days and was residential so delegates worked, rested and played together in the superb Belton Woods golf complex in Grantham, Lincolnshire. The buzz was tangible at dinner on the first night (pre-conference) and a real sense of expectation of what might come out of our two days together.

As with all the best

conferences, the bar was full after dinner and clusters of conversations developed. As I moved round the room it became apparent that the conference had attracted a wide range of podiatrists, physiotherapists and a podiatry assistant – all hungry for some take-home gems.

The conference was seamlessly well organised and each delegate was welcomed and given a pack explaining which group they had been placed in. Tim Hall opened the conference and a stimulating keynote lecture by Andy Horwood kicked the day off entitled 'the wheelbarrow foot'.

This lecture quickly set the scene for the conference – this is about looking forward and redefining the boundaries, after all, the foot doesn't know it has to obey the paradigms!

The delegate groups were divided off into separate rooms, where sessions proceeded to cover everything from manipulation techniques, chairside orthosis manufacture, problem solving of complex cases, ski-boot management, strapping techniques, new types of silicone device manufacture

What is Britpods?

Britpods is essentially celebrating the UK contribution to knowledge and leadership in musculoskeletal podiatry. Its other unique feature is the practical element of the delivery.

The team that run Britpods includes a range of experienced and highly trained podiatrists from the UK who are research active and research sensitive to deliver up-to-minute current best practice. The conference is organised by Bailey's Instruments and Andrew Horwood (podiatrist) and they

recruit their team of 'Britpods' to deliver the conference.

The conference is annual, residential and has a friendly, atmosphere, which encourages everyone to 'have a go' in the workshops.

Since biomechanics / musculoskeletal podiatry can sometimes be intimidating to some podiatrists this conference embraces all ability levels and encourages debate and questions to help bring understanding and application through clinical reasoning.

and trainer design appraisal among others – a truly diverse set of workshops. With all this hard work the delegates needed time out, and the trade stands were ready and waiting for us - all relating to the theme of the conference.

Day 2 saw the groups swapping over and the same schedule running a second time with a difference audience. The effect was that groups became coherent and confidence grew among the delegates, which fostered a sharing atmosphere as

delegates showed one another variations of techniques and discussed the pros and cons.

Britpods has brought something new to the table: it is practice focussed, celebrating British talent in a British context and meeting each delegate where they're at. This is a conference for practitioners who are serious about getting their patients better, with value for every penny spent on coming.

Britpods will be back in Lincoln in 2010 – book it, you won't want to miss it.