

# BSDS Consultant Surgical Refresher Course, Leeds 2014

**Dr Caroline Owen  
Consultant  
Dermatologist, East  
Lancashire Teaching  
Hospitals NHS Trust**

My dermatology training was before the days of the e-portfolio and DOPS. My early surgical training was what one might describe as 'unstructured' and I have to confess that it was almost 12 months before I realised that there was a difference between artery forceps and needle-holders.....

I did remedy these deficiencies and was deemed competent enough to be awarded my CCST. However, over my 12 years as a consultant I have slowly felt my surgical skills atrophy and my confidence diminish. Our more complex cases are referred to colleagues in maxillofacial surgery or plastics, and the straight-forward surgery is undertaken by specialty doctors and increasingly nursing staff. I do regular surgical DOPS for our specialty trainees but am I teaching them correctly? Skin cancer, as we all know, is rising inexorably.

Against this backdrop I was delighted when the BDS Surgical Refresher Course was advertised, particularly when I saw it was being organized by one of our former trainees Dr

Wal Hussain. I registered immediately.

I did wonder briefly how sensible this was when my alarm went off at 6.00, but caught the train from Skipton and arrived at St James' hospital in Leeds by 9.00. Those travelling from further afield had enjoyed a Thai meal together the night before and had stayed overnight. There was excellent attendance despite a clash with the British Society of Paediatric Dermatology meeting and the forthcoming Consultants' course.

It was a testament to the popularity of the course that people had travelled from all corners of the UK to attend.

Wal and his colleagues from the BDS with the able help of Tamsin from the BAD had put together a fantastic programme.

We were reassured that no question was too simple and it was great to be able to ask things that I have wondered about for years.

We went back to basics and had succinct and informative presentations on anatomy, local anaesthesia, biopsies, curettage, shaves, suturing techniques and 'perfecting the ellipse'

We had copies of all the presentations in our packs plus some useful papers covering a number of other important surgical topics.

We then had the first of 2 workshops. Everyone had their

own workstation with pig belly to operate on. We could then concentrate on what we individually wanted to practice; different suturing techniques in my case, simple flaps or more complex closures in others. The BDS tutors were all on hand to guide, demonstrate and answer endless questions and queries.

A hot lunch followed, and then we were back for a second workshop to hone our techniques. The final session of the day covered skin grafts, flaps, 'when things go wrong' and medico-legal aspects of skin surgery. We were running out of time by this stage but Wal just managed to squeeze in his fantastic collection of 'surgical pearls' before a final question and answer section.

I really enjoyed this course and feel that it is much-needed, I am sure it will become a regular fixture. I feel much more confident and am looking forward to putting some (slightly) more difficult cases on my lists. I also feel much more confident about teaching our trainees. I don't want to be a dermatological surgeon but I want to be able to undertake and teach basic surgery well and competently. This course has certainly reassured me that I can do this and I would have no hesitation in recommending it to others.



*Drs Rajib Rahim, Tom Oliphant, Wal Hussain, Graeme Stables, Juber Hafji.  
Faculty for Consultant Surgical Refresher  
Course, Leeds 2014*



*Dr Wal Hussain demonstrating surgical  
skills to Consultant delegates*