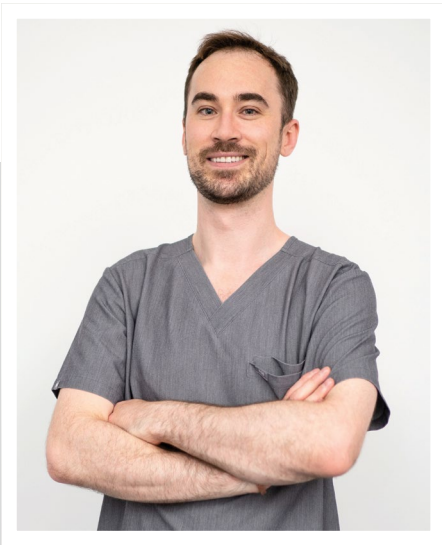




*'I work seven days a week: I'm a workaholic!'*



**Benjamin Tighe** is a dental therapist and a dental therapist tutor in London, and trains practices to implement guided biofilm therapy (GBT). He is passionate about education and working hard!

I get up at 5.30 am. I am originally from Northumberland and now live in Oxford. Getting to work in the West End of London involves a one-hour train journey but I actually like it. It means I can work on the train, writing lectures, catching up on admin or posting on social media. Breakfast is usually coffee and cereal.

I work seven days a week: I'm a workaholic! My weeks are so diverse. Teaching days generally consist of lectures, clinics or clinical simulation suites. I'm the assessment lead for both the BSc (Hons) Hygiene and BSc (Hons) Therapy programmes at the Eastman so a lot of my time is spent behind the scenes preparing for them. My clinical days are usually pretty full-on seeing all of my lovely patients for a variety of treatments. My SDA [Swiss Dental Academy] days could see me in a room full of clinicians for a masterclass or visiting practices teaching the implementation of GBT [guided biofilm therapy].

I love the variation my week offers me and I think we're living in a really exciting,

transformative period for dental care professionals (DCPs).

I left school knowing I wanted to be in healthcare but wasn't sure where. I once wanted to be a paramedic – I think it was growing up with *Casualty* and *Holby City*. A trainee dental nurse position came up at the practice where my sister was a dental hygienist and I applied for it. I loved the job and it gave me a real appreciation of how important dental nurses are in the team. I have another sister who is a dental technician at Newcastle Dental Hospital and my hygienist sister went on to pursue a PhD.

I qualified with a diploma in dental hygiene and therapy (DipDHT) from Newcastle University in 2011. I then went on to top up my diploma at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), achieving a BSc (Hons) in Dental Studies. In 2018 I returned to education and completed an MA Education at Oxford Brookes; with this I became a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). My clinical teaching experience awarded me membership with the Academy of Medical Educators and Faculty of Dental Trainers. I am currently working towards an Advanced Post Graduate Certificate in Educational assessment with Cambridge University.

My career so far has been a whirlwind.

Lots of people think that when you graduate then that's it, the learning stops. It's just the beginning. I've still got so many other things I want to achieve and learn.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the clinic was closed due to government restrictions, but I went into work and called patients. We had many laughs and some phone calls lasted nearly an hour. I just wanted to check in on them and see how they were, if they needed oral health advice or any products sent out to them. I also started my Instagram @thegumsguy with the view of being accessible to those who needed oral health advice.

Teaching didn't stop during the pandemic; we still had students to prepare for exams but it was about adaptation and learning new skills like Microsoft Teams.

As a tutor, I enjoy watching students showcase their knowledge. It fills me with so much pride when I remember what they were like on day one and seeing just how far they've come.

Clinically, it is the response to treatment appointments that is really rewarding – knowing that I've been responsible for getting that patient to health. I tend to take a lot of clinical photos so when patients return, we compare before and after and their indices.

The best part of being an SDA trainer is

*'I love the variation my week offers me and I think we're living in a really exciting, transformative period for dental care professionals (DCPs).'*



visiting beautiful dental practices and getting to know enthusiastic clinicians who love GMT as much as I do.

In our dental practice on Devonshire Street in London, we have recently welcomed new team members as we are so busy. We have some of the best clinicians, dental nurses and reception staff out there!

The Eastman team is really diverse. We have therapists, hygienists and dentists who all have different experiences and interests which is a great resource to the students.

I usually get home around 8 pm. Outside

of dentistry, I'm a keen potter, so when I have any down time I'm usually in the studio making something. At the weekend I might go out for breakfast or a walk then plan my week ahead.

The three things I couldn't live without at work are my loupes, the EMS Airflow Prophylaxis Master, and my team.

I go to bed around 10 pm.

**Interview by Kate Quinlan**

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