

VERMILION – THE SMILE EXPERTS

For patients and staff alike, nothing has been overlooked in creation of the renowned clinic's newest branch in Kelso, which offers the highest quality services in a scenic location that arouses a sense of calm and relaxation

The tranquil setting and the welcoming and comfortable facilities offered by Vermilion's new clinic in the Scottish Borders are bound to put a smile on anybody's face.

Vermilion, a well-established, private 100 per cent referral-only clinic, first opened in Edinburgh in June 2011, and in May 2018 the Kelso branch opened its doors.

Owned by David Offord, a specialist in oral surgery, Vermilion offers, through its large and experienced team, a wide range of advanced treatments including dental implants, restorative dentistry, "All-on-4", orthodontics, periodontics and dental hygiene, endodontics, oral surgery, implant maintenance and conscious sedation. Both sites share a set of values that are centred around delivering consistent clinical excellence with outstanding service to patients and their referring dentists.

We talked to David about the clinic's expansion into the Scottish Borders.

WHO WORKS AT VERMILION KELSO?

We have a highly experienced team in place at Vermilion Kelso. Most of the dental team at Kelso also work in the Edinburgh clinic, so patients can be assured of consistent clinical excellence. Dr Verena Toedtling (GDC reg no. 113501) is a specialist in oral surgery who works between our Kelso and Edinburgh sites. We have two specialists in prosthodontics who are well known within the dental community: Dr Alfred Dellow (GDC reg no. 51007) and Dr Grant Mathieson (GDC reg no. 65342) who has worked at Vermilion from the outset. Other team members include Dr Luz Garcia-Ford (GDC reg no. 201868) the maintenance dentist, Michaela Zilinska (GDC reg no. 206867), our dental hygienist, and Dr Neil Hallos (GDC reg no. 56120), practice limited to endodontics, who joins Vermilion to look after patients referred to Kelso for endodontic treatment. I base myself between both clinics.

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO OPEN THE PRACTICE IN KELSO?

Over the past five years we have established an excellent reputation with Borders dentists, and we noted an increasing number of patients travelling to Vermilion in Edinburgh to receive specialist dental procedures. It made sense to open a branch in the Borders, meaning significantly less travel time and ease of access for many patients. In Kelso, we also welcome patients from Northumberland.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS SETTING?

The Kelso site was selected following extensive research and stood out for its strategic location and ample parking space for patients, assuring ease of accessibility. We also wanted to create a rural setting that would evoke a sense of relaxation and calm and offer scenic views for our patients and our team members to enjoy.

WHICH COMPANIES DID YOU WORK WITH?

The Kelso clinic was built from the ground up. We engaged with suppliers with local, expert knowledge to design and build the clinic, including Galashiels-based architect Camerons in conjunction with Berwick builder Cruickshanks & Co Ltd.

On the dental side, we worked with IWDental+Services across many of the services such as IT, telecoms, dental chairs and cabinetry. We also worked with Dental Directory, NSK, Modwood UK and Systems for Dentists, who provided practice management software. We commissioned Kenny Hanley to create another bespoke sofa for Vermilion Kelso, having created the now iconic sofa in our Edinburgh waiting room, which is always a talking point for patients.

DID YOU REQUIRE ANY PLANNING PERMISSION OR FINANCE?

We had a solid trading history from Vermilion Edinburgh, which was very useful. On the business planning side, we worked closely with our accountant Derek Bond at Bond Accountancy. Gail Cormack from Braemar Finance was wonderful as ever, first-class service. The planning side of our Kelso building did take much longer than we anticipated, but we got there in the end!

HOW DID THESE COMPANIES ADD VALUE TO YOUR IDEAS FOR THE PRACTICE?

We were very keen to keep economic benefit within the Scottish Borders as much as possible which is why we mainly engaged with local suppliers on the building side. Camerons Architects have excellent connections within Scottish Borders Council. It was also invaluable working with a local builder who was able to pull in local resource as and when required.

In the end, our new venture has created nine local jobs. We are also reaching out to dentists in Northumberland, therefore attracting new business into the Scottish Borders. We are very proud of what we have done to create a new business that is bringing positive results into the area. Our patients and referring colleagues are giving us good feedback so that is very satisfying.

HOW LONG DID THE PROJECT TAKE?

The whole process took three years from start to finish: from finding the perfect location, to drawing up the plans, refining them, obtaining planning

permission and finally building the clinic. I guess this seems a long time, but the process has resulted in a stunning clinic that works perfectly for our needs.

ARE YOU STILL USING ANY OF THE SUPPORT SERVICES YOU USED?

Yes, we retain IWDental+Systems for IT and telecoms services within both our clinics. We also have ongoing relations with our dental suppliers with whom we liaise on a day-to-day basis.

WHAT SORT OF TRAINING DO YOU PROVIDE FOR YOUR STAFF?

Our dentists are experts in their field, with the majority being specialists. They have all gone through rigorous training and many of them are teaching the next generation of dentists at dental school. Many of our clinicians examine for the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh or at the University of Glasgow. They are committed to attending courses and conferences across the world to ensure they are up-to-date with the fast-moving world of dentistry, particularly on the digital and technology side. Every morning we sit down as a clinical team to discuss the day's cases and treatment plans.

Our support team, including our dental nurses and administration team, are all encouraged to constantly improve their knowledge and skill set, and all benefit from training to ensure they have the necessary skills to carry out their job. For the dental nursing team, full training is given within dental implants and restorative dentistry and all have the opportunity to develop their skills in a professional learning environment. We also conduct regular training on a day-to-day basis outlining policies and procedures with new nurses and staff. We also get together at least once a year as a group to revisit best practice and conduct team-building exercises.

ARE THERE ANY FACILITIES SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUR PATIENTS – AND YOUR TEAM?

We place the highest emphasis on customer care, and we ensure each and every patient feels at ease when they arrive. Our waiting rooms have been designed to feel high quality without compromising comfort. In Kelso, the waiting room (along with the surgeries) has stunning views of the rolling fields.

The Kelso clinic has three surgeries (Edinburgh has five), decontamination unit and dental laboratory. We have also invested heavily in technology to ease the patient's dental experience: Kelso has a Sirona XG3D cone beam CT scanner, while in Edinburgh we have a Planmeca ProMax 3D Classic. We invested in the Trios 5Shape intra-oral scanner over two years ago, and prosthodontist Dr Grant Mathieson uses this to take digital impressions for the majority of his cases. We recently acquired a second intra-oral scanner, the Emerald from Planmeca, which links seamlessly with the cone beam scanner.

For our staff, we have made a high level of investment. There are separate staff entrances to ensure staff privacy, personal lockers and changing rooms at each site with shower facilities. Each site has a staff room with a kitchen, with complimentary tea and coffee-making facilities. Many of our nursing team work on a four-day only weekly rotation and benefit from a "time back" scheme.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ETHOS OF THE PRACTICE AND ITS APPROACH TO PATIENTS AND EMPLOYEES?

At Vermilion, the values are centred around delivering consistent clinical excellence with outstanding service to patients and their referring dentists. We are 100 per cent referral only, and after treatment at Vermilion all patients are returned to their own dentist for their ongoing dental care. Vermilion is also known for its popular CPD events for its referring dentists that are held both at the clinics and off site.

For our employees, it is our aim to offer our team a stimulating and dynamic workplace that is constantly challenging yet encouraging to enable them to learn and progress. Our success comes down to the strength of our team, pulling together and always putting the patient first. We have a huge amount of pride in our team and our greatest pleasure is seeing them flourish and do well.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE PERSONAL CHALLENGES OF TAKING ON THIS PRACTICE?

We take a pride in our transparent communication with patients and their referring dentist, and we are currently undertaking a huge administrative audit to ensure that we are constantly thinking and pushing ourselves to improve what we do.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE FOR THE PRACTICE?

Don't lose sight of what we do best and stick to doing that well.

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