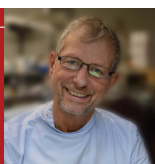


Laboratory spotlight – Walton Dental Arts

David Ludlow shares an insight into the **Walton Dental Arts** laboratory, where digital dentistry, heritage and years of experience combine to help create the perfect smile

David Ludlow

Lead prosthetic technician and director at Walton Dental Arts



Dentistry magazine (DM): Please introduce yourself.

David Ludlow (DL): I am David Ludlow, lead prosthetic technician and one of the directors at Walton Dental Arts.

Walton Dental Arts has an exceptionally long history as one of the UK's leading dental laboratories. The team and I are very proud of our heritage, craftsmanship and experience.

Walton Dental Arts – or WDA as it's known – has embraced the new era of digital dentistry. We're at the forefront of new techniques and are offering concepts across the board to support all aspects of the digital and traditional workflow.

WDA is based in Surrey and serves most of the surrounding counties, including London. We also have a growing national account base due to our next day delivery service and digital technology.

DM: How did you influence the lab during the years?

DL: The laboratory was founded in 1974 by Roy Walton and originally based in Leatherhead, Surrey. I joined the team in 1979, as I wanted to train as a ceramist after spending my initial training in prosthetics.

'WDA is based in Surrey and serves most of the surrounding counties, including London'

In 1984, I was asked to head up the prosthetics department at WDA, which I did. I've continually developed it ever since, and have engaged in many courses throughout my career, in Europe and the UK, and built on my experiences.

Our commitment has never changed – being key players with solid technical skills ensures that the company is recognised as a first-class provider of dental services.



DM: What renovations/changes has the lab gone through and why?

DL: We decided to move our whole lab to bigger premises a few years ago. We are now a few miles up the road in a beautiful village called Bookham. The space is much larger and allowed for the digital aspect to be implemented into the laboratory.

This has allowed us to increase our workflow and serve our customer base better.

DM: What type of work does the laboratory carry out?

DL: WDA offers all concepts:

- Digital/conventional crown bridge and veneers
- Digital design and milling
- Full arch implant cases (all-on-four/six)
- Digital and conventional prosthetics
- Ceramic department with a highly skilled team
- Digital and conventional implant restorations
- Surgical guides and planning
- Orthodontic appliances.

DM: What high-tech equipment/technology do you use at the lab?

DL: We use the latest software for our design – 3Shape, Exocad and Dental Wings.

We are also immensely proud to have a Carbon® Printer, which is the latest and most accurate printer on the market.

Some of our equipment includes:

- 3Shape Lab Scanner
- Milling Machines:
 - ZFX Inhouse5x
 - Ivoclar PM7
 - Zirkonzahn M1
 - VHF N4+

DM: What do you enjoy most about your job?

DL: I really enjoy creating work that is appreciated by aesthetically-driven clinicians. I have immense pride in what I create, and I am very much appreciated within our account base.

Making patients smile with confidence is another buzz for me. After all, what I create is the dentist's business card!

It's all about being a team player. Here at WDA, we all work together, utilising all our skills, which is why we are known for our craftsmanship.

DM: What are the future aims of the lab?

DL: Our aims are to offer the latest digital options while maintaining the traditional craftsmanship that has given us the proud heritage that we have today.

DM: Where do you see dental technology going in the next decade or so?

DL: Digital dentistry

WDA

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is very much part of the industry now and we have embraced it. We also see a lot of traditional work prescribed with digital prescriptions. I think in a few years the traditional impression will be a lesser part of the lab processes.

Patient demand to have digital scans versus traditional impressions will make the clinicians decide on the future of their practice.

I am happy to say that we are part of this transition and intraoral scanners and training are available from WDA. We would like to invite any clinician who is thinking of transitioning to digital to give us a call.

DM: What are your top tips for maintaining a successful laboratory?

DL: Offering a five star customer service is essential, and communication is key.

Our heritage, craftsmanship and accessibility are fundamental to our success – you cannot buy experience!

We have weekly team meetings to discuss business changes and will always utilise the years of experience for case assessments.

'Workflow through the lab is monitored to make sure we are organised and meet the return dates that are expected'

Workflow through the lab is monitored to make sure we are organised and meet the return dates that are expected; we are DAMAS registered.

We are very aware that we are part of the patient journey, so meeting the needs of our dentists is our highest priority. Our work is their business card – we take this very seriously.

DM: Is there anything else you would like to add?

DL: I have been in this industry for 50 years and being a member of the WDA team has been great, the team is very much part of my success and I want to thank them for that.

We would like to invite any clinician who is thinking of transitioning to digital to give us a call at 01372 377154.

