

My first Harrogate

Hello, and welcome to the latest edition of *Wounds UK*. We sadly said goodbye to our long-standing Head of Editorial, Adam Bushby, at the end of last year. I've taken over as Journals Editor and am very much looking forward to working with the writers and readers of *Wounds UK*.

On 10–12 November 2025, I was lucky enough to attend my first *Wounds UK* conference at Harrogate. Being at the welcome desk as everyone arrived on the first day was certainly an experience – thousands of the hardest-working experts in wound care today flooded in! From the minute the doors opened, the centre was alive with chatter, laughter and busy networking.

Jacqui Fletcher's opening speech in the packed auditorium was welcoming, funny and brilliantly empowering for anyone working in wounds. Her sparkling, 'come-say-hi-to-me' headband was a wonderful touch and really set the tone for what I found to be a collaborative, friendly and fascinating couple of days.

I was able to catch several of the presentations. It was a privilege to learn from so many leading experts in the field. Leanne Atkin's talk on finding clinical equipoise in a world where data dominate was both thought-provoking and insightful. There wasn't a dry eye in the house after Any Colby's moving discussion with Sian Fumerola about the realities of living with hidradenitis suppurativa. Digital innovation and the rise of AI were a hot topic and married well with the talk from Jacqui Hughes and Bernadette McGlynn on database insights and 20,000 reasons we can't ignore wound care anymore. I also loved seeing Cheryl Lugton's holiday snaps bring home the challenge of combating antimicrobial resistance in such a personal way.

Squirrelled away at the back of the centre, past the interactive digital posters, was a collection of rooms dedicated to the Made Easy sessions, chaired by professionals with the support of companies, such as Essity, Smith and Nephew, Urgo and Flen Health. The sessions were so popular, we had to hastily erect additional queue barriers like it was the Glastonbury of wounds! Both moisture-associated skin damage and medical adhesive-related skin injury were high on the

agenda, along with hands-on trials, techniques and tips for a range of practices.

Not only was it my Harrogate debut, but this year also saw the launch of Wounds UK's Wound Care Academy. This free 12-month course offers delegates advanced knowledge and understanding of prevention, assessment and management of wound care while developing problem-solving skills. Starting their journey at Harrogate, enrolled delegates will spend the next year building their understanding and expertise via a new online portal, with a view to graduating at next year's conference.

On Monday afternoon, the exhibition officially opened with hundreds of stands demonstrating the latest and most innovative advances in wound care. The studio at the back of the hall was busy recording podcasts and broadcasting summaries of the day's events. The sheer number of people and companies was somewhat overwhelming, and before heading back to the hotel, I spoke with providers and users who were all willing to share their knowledge and experience with someone a little out of their depth! My first day was a steep learning curve full of insights, and thought-provoking talks and meetings.

Finally, on Tuesday night, when I felt my feet might be too sore from pacing the conference centre corridors, it was time for the award ceremony and gala dinner. Hosted by the keen double act of clinical editors Jacqui Fletcher (looking incredible in her lion's headress and claws) and Karen Ousey (sharp-witted as ever), we celebrated some of the hardest working and most innovative amongst you, raising a glass and big cheer. Then it was time for dinner. What an absolute hoot! The sight of a dancefloor absolutely packed with the most glamorous of souls, all spangled and sparkled in celebration of the event's circus theme, was a pure joy! A wonderful way to wrap up a hectic yet intensely rewarding first conference experience.

My overall takeaway from Harrogate was one of a community of incredible practitioners whose spirit of collaboration and pursuit of clinical expertise combined with a wonderful sense of openness and fun.

I've already popped 9–11 November 2026 in the diary, I hope you have too! ●



Helen Ginn

Journals Editor, Wounds UK