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Features

19. Product spotlight
   Dispensing devices

20. Continuing Education & Training
    The low vision patient: illumination, glare and contrast
    by Elizabeth Bartlam

24. CET Answers
    Silicone hydrogel: the best all-rounder?
    by Claire McDonnell

25. CET update
    Just six months to go...
    by Paula Stevens

26. Business
    Tools and tips of the trade
    by Antonia Chitty

Regulars

5. DO Dispatches

6. Black Arts
   by ABDO president, Peter Black

8. Letters

8. News

40. Jottings
    A dedicated leader of fashion
    by David Barnaby

42. Jobs & Notices
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CHALLENGE THE TECHNOLOGY TODAY!
At its May meeting, the General Optical Council (GOC) released the headline figures of its recently commissioned report on the public’s perception of the profession (see page 7).

The results show the whole profession in a positive and encouraging way. The poll carried out by research consultancy, ComRes, revealed “a high level of confidence in and satisfaction with, opticians amongst the public”.

Ninety-six per cent of those surveyed (2,250) were very or fairly satisfied with their experience over the past two years and 92 per cent scored the profession for ‘high standards of care’ – a higher score than GPs (88 per cent) and dentists (87 per cent). Only pharmacists fared better at 94 per cent.

However, there was one worrying point: the public still regard GPs as the main or first port of call for all eye conditions – 54 per cent compared to just 19 per cent for opticians. We clearly have a lot more to do to promote the profession to both the public and other medical professionals.

Overall, these figures are both encouraging and welcome. The challenge for us all is to build on them, continue to strive to improve patient care and satisfaction, which in turn will help to safeguard the practices of the future.

The GOC should be commended for this initiative, which has been done in a way that should be able to inform any neutral observer.

Sir Anthony Garrett
ABDO general secretary
Optra-fair-enough

It seems weeks now since Optrafair, however this is my first opportunity to pass comment on what was clearly the biggest exhibition in the UK optical calendar by far. The Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) is to be congratulated for putting on a great show and, from what I saw, keeping exhibitors and delegates happy in the process.

As usual, Saturday and Monday were relatively quiet, and Sunday was the busiest day for visitors by far. However, what is missing from the attendance figures is whether or not visitors actually spent any money while they were there, or booked future appointments with sales representatives, or left their details for future contact, which from an exhibitor’s point of view is all that matters.

Certainly the feedback I have had from suppliers I know well is that the show was a great success, with one equipment supplier reporting they had achieved 20 per cent of their annual sales budget over the weekend; another well-known frame supplier said it had met its sales and new accounts target for the weekend just after breakfast on Sunday.

Despite its clear success – with lots of new frames, accessories and equipment on offer – some leading contact lens companies and frame and lens manufacturers were conspicuous by their absence. There are also one or two other areas that could be improved. ABDO’s main involvement, aside from having a stand which was well attended by members in search of advice or a free PD rule, was to provide the main dispensing-related CET and to jointly host an after-show party with the FMO.

The FMO announced that Optrafair would now be held annually in Birmingham and, for the future, we will see a revitalised show with something new for everyone.

Most exhibitors seemed to welcome the plans for Optrafair to become an annual show at the NEC and I for one have always thought an economy the size of the UK should always have had an annual, large-scale trade show. It is just a shame, given the finite nature of marketing and CET budgets, that we have moved from one show every two years to four times as many with two shows every year.

HELP US MAKE THE BEST USE OF MEMBERS’ FUNDS

The CET at Optrafair seemed to suffer the same problems as many ABDO Area events – in that despite being largely fully booked, lots of people didn’t turn up and others turned up at the event hoping to book there and then. This is proving a difficult conundrum for all CET providers, ABDO included. We can see as individual registrants when we accept CET points that the average registrant is still 16 points shy of staying registered at the end of 2015.

ABDO, the AOP and others are working hard to ensure there is sufficient availability for members, however, we are walking a fine line by only really providing just enough CET to meet the expected demand. It is, therefore, very upsetting when we have a waiting list for most events that often as many as 15 per cent of delegates don’t attend and don’t let us know they aren’t coming, when even with a few hours’ notice we could easily reallocate their place to a member who really wants to attend.

So please, to prevent us wasting funds and CET opportunities do let membership know if you are unable to attend. Or if within 48 hours, or on the weekend of an event, please inform your local Area committee who will be responsible for running the event on the day.

ABDO COLLEGE GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

ABDO College also exhibited at Optrafair, along with the Bookshop, and reported brisk trade with a great deal of interest in courses from the independent sector in particular. ABDO College now has more students than at any point in its history, with the independent sector and the three leading multiples training dispensing opticians in record numbers and the contact lens course also close to capacity. So if you are thinking of having a trainee dispensing optician, or training as a contact lens optician, you are advised to book early to avoid disappointment.
The other training institutes are also well subscribed so it seems professional ophthalmic dispensing is on the up. I wish I could say that driving this upsurge in demand for dispensing opticians was a drive towards higher standards of ophthalmic dispensing and customer service, however, it seems to be driven largely by the demands of regulatory compliance. Hopefully, the latter will lead in due course to the former and at any rate it can only be a good thing for our profession that there is increasing demand for our services.

OPTICAL ASSISTANTS TRAINING IN THE PIPELINE

The new relationship where ABDO College will become an accredited assessment centre for the courses offered by the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) from September (see News page 8) has been welcomed and criticised in equal measure. Already a number of small and medium sized groups of opticians have expressed an interest in providing optical assistants training through ABDO College and the WCSM, providing the independent sector with a uniform approach to optical assistants training on a national assessment framework similar to that adopted by the major multiples through Pearson EdExcel.

Critics appear to doubt that there is any need for this, and hold that this is a great threat to DO jobs. Those who read this column regularly will know that at 100% Optical, Gareth Hadley, chair of the General Optical Council (GOC) openly asserted in a Question Time style event that he foresaw greater regulation of all optical personnel in the future as has happened in other healthcare areas such as pharmacy and dentistry. In dentistry, this has taken the form of registering all staff involved in anything remotely clinical including technicians, dental nurses and hygienists. In pharmacy, this has meant all pharmacy assistants being trained to between Level 2 and Level 4. I believe, depending on their job role.

The chances of the GOC increasing regulation of all optical assistants involved in any form of clinical work (including routine dispensing, regulated dispensing – including fittings, adjustments and repairs, contact lens supply, insertion and removal teaching sessions, pre-screening, etc) is looking increasingly likely. ABDO hopes, now that support staff qualifications are available and from September easily accessible to all practices across the sector, that the GOC will resist the dentistry model with expensive annual registration fees and, if it must impose further regulation of our sector, will go down the pharmacy route with minimum levels of qualifications instead according to job roles.

These qualifications as now will continue to be awarded by the WCSM, and contrary to the story tellers on various optical forums, will never be badged as ‘ABDO qualifications’. It is envisaged that optical support staff who work their way through Levels 2, 3 and the forthcoming Level 4 qualification will be able to display the letters SMC (OA) or similar after their names in the same way that SMC (Tech) has been used for decades. Support staff with Level 4 qualifications will, in common with SMC Techs and EdExcel Cert 4 students, also be given considerable exemption from the requirements of the first year of the FBDO course. Subject to passing the part one practical exam, they will be granted direct entry into the second year of the FBDO programme.

A CAREER LADDER TO BE PROUD OF

It is a source of great pride to the ABDO Board that our profession is amongst the most accessible of any registered profession in the UK, and indeed the world. The fantastic career ladder we have built over the years has led many of us who perhaps didn’t apply ourselves at school, or fell into optics through happenstance, or decided on a change of career midway through our lives, to forge new careers in an industry that we may have grown to love as technicians or optical assistants.

Since deregulation, it is true that the majority of ophthalmic dispensing is done by unregistered and often unqualified personnel. It is also true that standards could be vastly improved; one only has to sit in any public place and observe the fit of our nation’s spectacles, especially children’s spectacles, to understand that. Ensuring all involved with dispensing have some form of assessment of their competency is a good thing to ensure standards improve. Those who say optical assistants are stealing dispensing opticians’ jobs, and ABDO/ABDO College should not be endorsing in any way optical assistants training, should pause and reflect.

There are currently around 6,100 registered DOs, of which around 1,500 work almost exclusively as contact lens opticians, and another large cohort work exclusively in management or industry. Currently it is unlikely that more than 4,000 DOs work actively dispensing every day and with over 6,000 practices in the UK, there is a considerable shortage of DOs if we are to ensure a DO is available to serve patients, or supervise colleagues every minute of every trading day. The newly invigorated career ladder will improve the prospects of all practices employing DOs, and improve their regulatory compliance in the future.

I have always said there is a direct correlation between a successful practice and the presence of a dispensing optician. Whether dispensing opticians create success, or successful practices employ dispensing opticians, is arguable – but the truth is professional ophthalmic dispensing and success go together, and the more amateurs who aspire to become professionals the better. It is better for them as individuals, better for business, better for patients, and better for the strength of this profession.

SURVEY REVEALS PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN PROFESSION

New research commissioned by the General Optical Council (GOC) has shown high levels of confidence in, and satisfaction with, ‘opticians’ among the public. However it also showed that optical practices are seen as playing a narrow role in testing sight and improving vision rather than improving eye health more generally.

The independent research found that 96 per cent of those who had been to the opticians in the past two years were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their overall experience of opticians. The research did find, however, that GPs were seen as the main port of call when individuals experienced acute eye problems. Just 19 per cent said that they would consult an ‘optician’ first compared with 54 per cent who would turn to their GP.

GOC director of strategy Alistair Bridge said: “With only around a third of people associating opticians with detecting eye health problems and less than one in five saying they would turn first to their optician with an acute eye problem, there is clearly an opportunity to raise awareness of the roles that optometrists and dispensing opticians play in improving the UK’s eye health and a need to address the barriers to them making a greater contribution in the future.”
Letters

PAEDIATRIC DISPENSING SURVEY REQUEST

I am writing to invite all fully registered dispensing opticians and optometrists to complete a Paediatric Spectacle Dispensing Questionnaire.

As dispensing of spectacles to children is a regulated function, only current full registrants are invited to take part in this research questionnaire. It is hoped the results will identify and inform any training needs required in the optical sector with regard to dispensing spectacles to children. The intention is to gather useful information on typical behaviour whilst performing this service, and also to identify any issues with both product availability and function.

The questionnaire is delivered online via Bristol Online Surveys and can be found at https://aston.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/paediatricdispensing/ and it is open until 15 August 2015. There are 34 questions and these are mostly multiple choice in design. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation is entirely voluntary and all responses are anonymous.

Please take the time to read carefully the participant information at the beginning of the questionnaire and contact me directly, by emailing athompson@abdo.org.uk, if you should have any queries or require further information.

Thank you in advance.

Alicia Thompson BSc(Hons) FBDO R (Hons) SLD SMC(Tech)
Aston University PhD student, Life & Health Sciences
ABDO director of professional examinations

HAVE YOUR SAY
Email ncollinson@abdo.uk.com or write to Dispensing Optics, PO Box 233, Crowborough TN27 3AB

ABDO COLLEGE TO TAKE OVER RUNNING OF WCSM COURSES

ABDO College and the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) have agreed in principle that, with effect from 1 September 2015, the College will take over the day-to-day running and administration of the WCSM training courses for optical technicians and optical retail staff leading to the WCSM’s nationally accredited qualifications.

The WCSM will remain the awarding body, and will accredit the College as an examination centre. Successful candidates will still be presented with their certificates at the Company’s annual ceremony in Apothecaries’ Hall each October.

The WCSM retains responsibility for running the examinations scheduled for June and December 2015, and the preparatory training leading up to them, based on the existing programme of qualifications. However, the two organisations are already engaged in a review of that programme with a view to the introduction of a simpler, more easily understood suite of qualifications, including a new Level 4 qualification for optical retail staff to stand alongside the renowned ‘SMC Tech’ qualification regarded by many as the gold standard for optical technicians. It is proposed that those attaining the new qualification will be entitled to put the letters ‘SMC(OA)’ after their names.

This planned initiative is intended to provide a solid foundation for the development of essential optical skills, and opens up a clearly defined career pathway for those entering optics at the lowest levels. ABDO College Principal Jo Underwood explained: “For those acquiring the WCSM Level 4 qualifications who wish to progress further, we are seeking to enable a seamless transition into year two of the ABDO College Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing course, which in turn leads to the Level 6 ‘FBDO’ qualification awarded by the Association of British Dispensing Opticians.” Indeed, it is hoped that the change will also eventually swell the number of former WCSM students who have not only subsequently obtained the FBDO qualification, but gone on to qualify as optometrists.

It was also announced that the WCSM’s director of training, Debbie Gigg, has joined ABDO College as course coordinator – optical support programmes. She commented: “Those studying for the June and December 2015 examinations will be fully supported, and if necessary enabled to re-sit any units that they do not pass first time throughout 2016 and into 2017.”

Commenting on behalf of the WCSM, the Master, Dr Christine Tomkins, said: “The Company anticipates that optical technicians and optical retail staff will be able to benefit from ABDO College’s proven expertise in training and conducting examinations. The resources at the College’s disposal will ensure that the Livery Company’s qualifications are attained by a broader section of the optical community, and thereby raise the standards of eye care available to the public.”

Those seeking further information should contact the ABDO College courses team on 01227 738 829 (option 1) or email info@abdocollege.org.uk, or the WCSM on 020 7236 2932 or email clerk@spectaclemakers.com

@FMO_Fed
FMO & ABDO collaborate to ensure all new dispensing opticians see the latest in optical manufacturing – with hands on experience

We kindly reserve the right to edit contributions prior to publication. Follow us on Twitter @ABDOCollege and @MembershipABDO

@primaryhealthnt
WCSM & ABDO College to co-operate in qualifying optical technicians & retail staff: It was announced at Optrafair

ABDO events and booking information can be found at www.abdo.org.uk/events

New role at ABDO College for Debbie Gigg

NEWS
For more information call our sales office on: 01452 510321  Email: sales@norville.co.uk  Online: www.norville.co.uk
ABDO and the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) have announced a new educational link-up to ensure that all newly registered dispensing opticians are aware of established and new manufacturing processes, and are able to gain hands-on experience.

“For the next generation of opticians to promote the very best in eyecare they need to have a broad understanding of new developments,” said Andy Sanders, ABDO/FMO panel chairman and Hoya professional services manager. “Our aim is to ensure that where possible students see in a lab environment. When this is not possible, due to geographical constraints, we are looking to fill the gaps with up-to-date AV education.”

ABDO director of professional examinations, Alicia Thompson, commented: “This exciting new initiative will see trainees visiting and reporting on manufacturing processes as part of their portfolio of experience. This supports the competency in demonstrating knowledge in frame and lens manufacturing, as well as the application of lens treatments.

“Thanks to our collaboration with FMO members, we can ensure this experience is always up-to-date with the latest technological advances in product design and production methods. We are very grateful for the enhanced support from FMO members with teaching and examination equipment and the latest technical information,” added Alicia.

Led by Andy and including Alicia, the education group also includes: Debbie Gigg, newly appointed ABDO College course coordinator – optical support programmes; Elaine Grisdale, ABDO head of professional services and international development; Andy Hepworth from Essilor; Julian Wiles from Younger Optical; Mark Marland from Optimum Coatings; and Kevin Gutsell, FMO chief executive.

PURIST DESIGN AND STYLING

Porsche Design has added six new models to its sunglass collection, available from Rodenstock.

Trend-inspired and ultra-modern without losing sight of the Porsche Design signature claim to high-tech elegance, the new models feature intensive colours, matt surfaces and mirror-coated lenses.

New model P’8592 (pictured) has a modern and progressive front shape setting a clear design statement. The frame features a flexible temple using high performance trogamid and an innovative folding technique to minimise the product as much as possible.

FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE ABDO EVENT DETAILS keep an eye out for the eNews landing in your inbox, and the events section of the website, visit www.abdo.org.uk/events

ERASURE FOR FRAUDULENT ACTIVITIES

The General Optical Council (GOC) has erased dispensing optician, Amanda Al-Hassani, from its registers.

A GOC Fitness to Practise Committee found her fitness to practise impaired by virtue of misconduct relating to fraudulent transfers and attempted transfers of company funds into her personal bank account.

In making its decision the committee, chaired by Margaret Hallendorff MBE, noted that: "The obligation to be honest and trustworthy is a central and fundamental tenet of the profession. The committee has no doubt that the registrant’s dishonesty breached these duties in the Code [of Conduct] and that the registrant brought the profession into disrepute by deceitfully taking company money and putting it into her personal bank account.

“The conduct amounted to a serious breach of trust by the registrant who was a senior member of staff in the company’s employ. The committee has no doubt that such conduct is deplorable and reaches the threshold for misconduct.

“In these circumstances, the committee cannot be satisfied that such behaviour is highly unlikely to be repeated. The registrant demonstrated an entrenched attitude that she had done nothing wrong, but took no active steps to support her case. Therefore, the committee found that the fitness of Amanda Al-Hassani to practise as a dispensing optician is impaired. The committee is satisfied that the only proportionate and sufficient sanction is one of erasure.”

Amanda Al-Hassani is now unable to practise in the UK as a dispensing optician. At the time of going to press, she still had time to appeal her erasure, whilst being suspended from the register.
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IN HIS FATHER’S FOOTSTEPS

Contamac founder, John McGregor, has named his son Robert McGregor as his successor as managing director, as he takes on the role of chairman.

After founding the company in 1987, John led it through the development of many groundbreaking products, facility expansions and winning awards, including the Queens Award for Enterprise International Trade in 2012. Whilst continuing to play an active role in the company, he will dedicate more time to his neglected leisure activities and the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers.

Robert joined the company in 1994 and for the past decade, has led its sales, marketing, R&D and business development activities. He said: “It is a real privilege and honour to take over the role of managing director from my father; he has been an outstanding mentor who leads with the right ethics and business philosophies. I am committed to ensuring that Contamac retains its position as a world leader.”

John added: “If a company is to stay at the forefront of its industry it must have dynamic leadership and a culture that readily accepts new concepts. Such a company demands a capable leader supported by an experienced but young team, developing and capitalising upon emerging technologies. There is no one better able to fulfill this role and I wish Rob and his team every good fortune.”

CLO DISPENSES HIS LAST PAIR

After 40 years of practising in Skipton, contact lens optician David Benjamin has dispensed his last set of contact lenses.

Son of the practice’s founder, Clifford Benjamin, David alongside his brother Phillip who retired four years ago, have seen the town and the business go though many changes over the years, since they started practising in the 1970s with their father. The practice outgrew its original premises on Sheep Street and moved to its current home in Newmarket Street 15 years ago.

Clifford Benjamin created the business in the 1950s and the family tradition continues today now under the leadership of dispensing optician, Liz Ellis, who has been with the practice for more than 20 years and took over the practice two years ago.

Liz said: “David will be missed by patients and staff. He has been my friend, colleague and mentor at Benjamin’s for almost all of my career and I am very proud to be able to continue the tradition and values which Benjamin’s has become renowned for.”

Our photograph shows David and Liz (on the right) with the practice’s contact lens practitioners, June Perera and Nick Howard.

MULTIFOCAL MAKES ITS DEBUT

Johnson & Johnson Vision Care launched its new 1-Day Acuvue Moist Multifocal at the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) conference in Liverpool last month.

Developed based on insights into the changes in the presbyopic eye (Eye-Inspired Design), the lens was available for delegates to experience on the company’s stand. In addition, Kurt Moody, director, R&D presbyopia global platform, and Tom Karkkainen, senior principal research Optometrist, both integral to the product’s design, were on the stand to discuss the lens’s technology.

Marcella McParland, Johnson & Johnson Vision Care director, professional affairs, UK & Ireland, said: “1-Day Acuvue Moist Multifocal is specifically designed for the natural shape and function of the presbyopic eye, to help eyecare professionals continue to provide patients with an excellent vision experience. The lens also comes with all the benefits of the 1-Day Acuvue Moist contact lens family, including the proven etafilcon A material, so we were very excited to offer ECPs the opportunity to try this new lens for the first time.”

SHARING THE CARE

Brothers James W. Bill, a contact lens optician, and Charles P. Bill, an optometrist, are teaming up with Roland Ling, consultant ophthalmologist at Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, to open the Medical Eye Clinic in Exeter to provide primary and secondary eyecare under one roof.

Bill Opticians is a family owned business and has been established for more than 40 years, now in its second generation. Although their expertise lay with eye examinations and dispensing, Charles and James Bill felt that they wanted to become more involved in further areas of vision correction and eyecare.

James said: “At the Medical Eye Clinic we offer everything from spectacle and contact lens dispensing, through to designer eyewear, a Nike sports vision centre and enhanced eye examinations, to cataract, refractive and retinal surgical procedures. The clinic will be part of a local shared care scheme, carrying out routine cataract and retinal procedures for the NHS, in addition to private refractive lens exchange patients.”

Bill added: “We offer the most advanced technology for cataract patients in the country. The Zeiss Cataract Suite is the first of its kind in the UK, and will be used for surgical training and CET.”

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AN EASY FIT FOR FRAMES

Swiss Eyewear Group’s new Invu Easyfit sunglasses have been created to fit perfectly over prescription frames. But rather than replacing prescription sunglasses, Easyfit are pitched as an additional accessory that will add value to optician-customer relationships.

“For some situations, such as driving with sudden light changes due to varying road conditions and tunnels, it is much safer and easier for consumers to slip on an Easyfit rather than trying to switch to prescription sunglasses,” said a spokesperson.

The Invu Easyfit collection is available from Norville in a variety of designs.

INNOVATIVE TAKEOVER BY B+L

Bausch + Lomb has acquired Innovative Sclerals, which has specialised in scleral contact lenses since 1992 under the guidance of pioneer Ken Pullum.

The new structure will see optometry and clinical consultant, Jennifer McMahon, working with the team for Innovative Sclerals, which will now operate from Bausch + Lomb’s specialist GP manufacturing plant in Hastings.

Steve Graham, Hastings operations manager, commented: “We are delighted to complement our highly successful Maxim CV mini scleral lens with the addition of the well-established Innovative Scleral range. Through our technical support team and our specialist GP lens field team, we will support this and our entire GP lens portfolio by the provision of advice and technical training to practitioners throughout UK and Ireland.”

As part of the company’s GP lens field team, Andrew Elder Smith, Nick Howard, Pauline Bradford and Iain May will provide CET-approved as well as bespoke training and fitting advice to customers.

Andrew said: “This investment in the acquisition of the Innovative business and the engagement of these three highly talented practitioners further demonstrates Bausch + Lomb’s commitment to these specialist contact lens modalities.”

STAKEHOLDERS ROUND THE TABLE

The Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (AIO) will host a round table session at its conference in Nottingham in October.

The event will bring together stakeholders in eyecare to discuss topical issues: Lyndon Taylor (Association of Optometrists), Chris Hunt (Optical Confederation), Peter Black (ABDO) David Parkins (College of Optometrists), David Hewlett (Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians) and Peter Warren from the AIO. AIO council member and conference organiser, Nigel Burnett Hodd, will facilitate the session and promises to ensure a lively debate.

Nigel said: “The conference round table session is a unique event and not to be missed by all independent optometrists and dispensing opticians who have an interest in the long-term future of our profession. It provides an opportunity for delegates to pose the questions and raise the issues that are important to them, and to hear first-hand the different stakeholders’ answers and views. I am sure the session will be extremely interesting and rather lively!”

FIONA HAS THE FORCE

CooperVision has named Fiona Buckmaster, a third-year optometry student at Glasgow Caledonian University, as its FORCE Student of the Year.

Fiona investigated the effects of environmental conditions on tests of tear production. Her study showed that many patients with borderline results with the Schirmer test may be misdiagnosed as having dry eye if the test has been undertaken in a low humidity environment.

Presenting the award on behalf of the judges, Nick Rumney, said: “Fiona challenged orthodoxy by overturning our understanding of a technique we thought was familiar. She approached the subject rigorously and scientifically, and she designed an elegant experiment which was, at heart, simple but gave results and a conclusion of great clarity.”

Fiona said: “It was such an honour to represent the UK so to win is just incredible.”
The 2015 ABDO Conference and Exhibition will be held at Manchester Central - an award winning venue located in the heart of city centre Manchester. The comprehensive conference programme will cover all of the required CET competencies and delegates will be able to attain up to 27 CET points over the two days.

- CET for DOs, CLOs and optometrists
- Workshops and lectures
- Safeguarding training for DOs
- Student and supervisor track
- BCLA stream
- AOP stream - both days

ONLINE BOOKING AVAILABLE SOON via www.abdo.org.uk/events
SHOWCASE FOR FLAGSHIP LINE

New merchandising material is now available from Eyespace for its flagship Cocoa Mint collection.

The display options include a silk banner (50x110cm), an A4 strut card featuring top-selling frame CM9014, a white acrylic stand with new imagery, a branded acrylic block and a choice of two Cocoa Mint branded A1 posters. Lifestyle imagery in the package features new release CM9919 available in crisp blue with cyan accents (C1) and warm burnt red with orange (C2).

HIGH-PRECISION HINGE DESIGN

Silhouette’s new Hinge C2 men’s collection, hand-made in Austria, has minimal maintenance with a screwless, high-precision hinge.

The combination of materials, comprising the 23ct gold-coated Titan, merge with a hand-polished high-gloss finish, while the synthetic SPX+ material developed by Silhouette in matt soft touch haptic characterises the overall look of the Hinge C2.

There are four models in four colours to choose from, each weighing just 4.62g.

BRINGING TECHNOLOGY TO THE FORE

The Hakim Group and SPECS (Specialist Provider of Eye Care Solutions) Network are partnering up to provide independent practices with a broader range of display and merchandising technology products and services.

Dr Imran Hakim, CEO of the Hakim Group, said: “This link-up only goes to reinforce our commitment to safeguarding the UK’s remaining network of independent practices by helping them retain their unique flavour and individuality, that sacred ingredient which makes them an independent, whilst adopting the latest merchandising technology.”

Richard Hollings, Seiko Optical UK commercial manager, added: “The ethos of the SPECS Network is that suppliers and independent practices are stronger together. Imran and his team recognise the important role that innovation plays in the modern independent practice. By joining forces, more independent practices can benefit from the latest merchandising technology to wow their patients.”

NATIONAL PR CAMPAIGN STARTS

The Sight Care Group has launched its sixth national PR campaign promoting the independent sector, which will run until April 2016.

Paul Surridge, Sight Care chief executive, said: “Once again the platform will be based on both consumer and practitioner research to uncover the realities and myths attached to eyecare and eyewear in Britain, with the key objectives of turning those findings into stories that can educate and inform people about the importance of regular eyecare and the value of visiting an independent community optician rather than just defaulting to the High Street.”

Working in collaboration with Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Sight Care is encouraging independents to join the group to take advantage of the campaign and other members benefits.
YOUR PLATINUM PASS TO A JVP IN AUSTRALIA IN 2015?

1-ON-1 CONFIDENTIAL PARTNERSHIP DISCUSSION

In Australia we have opened more than 300 Specsavers stores in a few short years with average annual store turnover now approaching the $2.5 million mark. That’s because Australians have embraced the whole Specsavers package of incredible value matched with clinical excellence, great products and unrivalled customer service experience. A typical Store Partner in Australia is now earning significant profits in addition to a guaranteed market rate salary package – and we have JVP opportunities available right now for the brightest and best UK Store Managers and Supervisors.

So, if you have the ambition to operate your own business Down Under backed by the massive support structure that Specsavers provides, call us now. We have a series of confidential ‘1-on-1’ meetings in the UK & Ireland in June – the perfect time for us to give you all the detail of what’s on offer.

So what do you need to qualify for this once in a lifetime opportunity? Simple. A minimum of 3 years’ experience in a Supervisory or Managerial position in a large optical retail environment.

And, while there are a number of these opportunities immediately available, as one of 8 successful ‘Platinum Pass’ applicants you’ll receive an all-expenses paid trip to Australia - to assess what’s on offer and view key store locations.

But first, let’s talk.

COME AND MEET US in DUBLIN on 10th and 11th June and LONDON or MANCHESTER on 12th, 13th and 14th June.

To book your personal ‘1-on-1’ confidential timeslot at a Roadshow, contact Jerry Dunn on 07799 581281 or via email jerry.dunn@specsavers.com

There’s nothing to lose and – in return - you might just gain the opportunity of a lifetime.

We also have opportunities for Optometrists throughout Australia and New Zealand.
During all the time I spent with her cooking, her glasses case from under a pile of clothes. At the end of my stay, my host mother pulled out families in the Kolkata slums. She said: “At the recently returned from a home stay with Sightsavers who is leading the project, someone who wears glasses. In Karnataka, India, research showed that half of young respondents thought glasses were a cosmetic blemish. A third felt that two people with refractive error should not marry, and six per cent said they would refuse to marry someone who wears glasses.

Anna Gerrard, technical advisor at Sightsavers, is working with experts from US-based Cornell University on a new social enterprise project to help develop ways of overcoming the stigma of wearing glasses in the urban slums of Kolkata, India. Worldwide, 285 million people are estimated to be visually impaired, with approximately 90 per cent of those living in developing countries. That is why Sightsavers is working in partnership with Dr Erik Simanis, head of the Frontier Markets Initiative at Cornell, on an innovative business model that can sustainably deliver primary eyecare solutions to India’s urban poor.

Anna Gerrard with her host mother in Kolkata

A recent Sightsavers study in Dhaka, Bangladesh, identified a stigma associated with wearing glasses. In Karnataka, India, research showed that half of young respondents thought glasses were a cosmetic blemish. A third felt that two people with refractive error should not marry, and six per cent said they would refuse to marry someone who wears glasses.

Anna Gerrard, technical advisor at Sightsavers who is leading the project, recently returned from a home stay with families in the Kolkata slums. She said: “At the end of my stay, my host mother pulled out her glasses case from under a pile of clothes. During all the time I spent with her cooking, cleaning, going to work, shopping, watching television, she didn’t use them once.

“‘What’s needed is the ‘Swatch approach’ to eyeglasses – eliminating the negative attributes, while enhancing the functional and style features,” continued Anna. “By doing this, we can then offer consumers a completely different way of valuing glasses as a lifestyle option. We are still developing this innovative new product that will offer the urban poor an affordable, fashionable and multi-functional alternative.”

The Kolkata project is the first ‘for-profit’ project for the UK-based international development organisation.

ABDO vice president, Fiona Anderson, pays tribute George Jardine, who sadly passed away on 14 April.

George was known to me as one of the ‘Dispensing Greats’ of Scotland. I met him, only once, when he interviewed me for a prospective pre-reg DO position with Dollond & Aitchison (D&A) in 1985. I obviously didn’t have what he was looking for in a trainee DO, as I was not offered the post! As the current chairman of Area 12, the old ‘Red Book’ of minutes from meetings by a bygone era sits on my bookshelf and one of the first entries in it states that, ‘Mr Jardine proposed that...’

George’s career started with David Beck Dispensing Opticians in Dundee in January 1947, and George joined the ADO (as ABDO was then known) in September 1948 to pursue training in the art of dispensing optics. During these early years, George learned on the job just what it was to be a DO and when, in June 1951, he received his call-up papers for National Service, not wanting to interrupt his training, he had them deferred until 1952 in order to take his examinations.

In July 1952, his call-up duly arrived and he was requested to report to the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) Training Depot. George hoped to get something as near as possible to his chosen career and as his qualification was recognised by the Army, he was billeted as an optician in a hospital after some more training.

The ABDO Membership Department has on file a hand written letter by George of some eight pages long, in which he updates them on his exploits during his National Service. Highlights of these include details of his two weeks in basic training with a further 12 weeks of role specific training, his journey to Egypt and the living conditions there, his description of the (and I quote) “Equipment that came out of the Ark” and the limited supply of frames and lenses. “We have frames in a 58 PD and 66 PD,” he writes. “We are expected to perform miracles and we have meniscus lenses, toric lenses and a few flats”. This is a truly unique archive, which the Association will always treasure.

After his National Service was completed, George returned to Civvy Street. He duly qualified as a dispensing optician in June 1958, and was proud to use the suffix FADO. His working life continued and in 1969 a new role beckoned – George became a rep for Norville Optical. Time out of practice was short-lived, however, and a move back to his beloved Dundee came in 1972 along with a job with Wigmores. A directorship soon followed in 1974/5 and life with D&A continued in many guises (when our paths crossed George was the company’s Scottish Managing Director).

George was a stalwart of the ADO, and latterly ABDO, in Scotland; he was a huge supporter of the Association and supported many colleagues throughout their time in optics. He changed his suffix in 1986 to FBDO when the Association and the Faculty of Dispensing Opticians merged to become ABDO. Due to ill health, George was forced to take early retirement in 1988 following a heart attack and subsequent quadruple bypass operation earlier that year.

Outside of optics, George was a devoted family man, piano player extraordinaire and a great raconteur. He will be remembered fondly by many. Our sincere condolences are extended to his wife Anna, daughters Barbara, Elaine and Alison, and the wider family.
Dispensing devices

ALL PRACTICE AND WORKSHOP NEEDS MET
Norville’s 2015 Practice & Workshop catalogue is now out – and includes a number of new products such as lens display cases, an HT Gauge and a seven-pot tint bath. As readers are aware, the company provides a vast range of products including practice fittings, refraction and dispensing, optical tools, finishing supplies plus edging supplies and equipment. Norville also offers an equipment support scheme, linked to the business the practice does with the company.

“We can offer financial help for the acquisition for your practice of the very best glazing, test and dispensing equipment from some of the leading suppliers in the UK,” said Frank Norville. “Our friendly and knowledgeable team are always on hand to offer alternative products as required and are dedicated to your business.”

CENTRATION SYSTEM ON THE MOVE
visuReal Portable Plus, Hoya’s award winning centration system for the iPad has a number of new features designed to make it even easier and quicker to use. This new version recognises the most optimal image position and takes a picture automatically, with ‘image optimising software’ enhancing the image and the patient’s view of themselves. In addition, automatic diameter calculation and the ABC Mets code are added to simplify and shorten the ordering process. visuReal Portable Plus comes with a back plate that is also suitable for the iPad Air.

HVC Look is Hoya’s newest app for frame selection, which shows the patient how they will look with their selected frame and prescription lenses. Each patient can clearly see the benefits of choosing a certain lens design and material index. An ‘online’ mode also makes it possible for them to ‘try on’ all the frames available in the practice.

HANDY TOOLS THAT ARE CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE
Hilco has announced the availability of professional grade screwdriver and wrench sets, which have the dimensions clearly marked on handles, tool stand and blades for easy identification. Individual screwdrivers and wrenches feature smooth action tops with blade size marking, sure grip handles and professional grade blades with laser etched size markings. The 6-Place Pro Screwdriver Sets comes with Flat and Phillips screwdrivers in popular sizes and a choice of either a non-skid bench base or rotating base. The 8-Place Pro Wrench Set comes with Hex, Star and Square Wing wrenches in popular sizes and in a non-skid bench base.

TAKING INDIVIDUALISED LENS DESIGN TO A NEW LEVEL
Hot on the heels of the success of its OptikamPad digital measurement and dispensing tool for the iPad, Waterside Laboratories is enjoying a positive reaction to the Optrafair launch of its new lens series, Elysium, which is complemented by a Visual Lifestyle Analysis App.

“All Elysium progressives take individualised lens design to a whole new level thanks to Digital Ray Path Technology,” said Waterside MD, Bob Forgan. “This clever new interactive, user-friendly on-screen consultation app is available as a free download via the Apple store for iPad. Using the app generates confidence by enhancing the dispensing experience for progressive wearers. It identifies the best Elysium lens design for each individual through a series of steps engineered to evaluate the wearer’s expectations, needs, previous experience and reading habits.”

Next month’s product spotlight will be on children’s eyewear.
The low vision patient: illumination, glare and contrast

by Elizabeth Bartlam BSc(Hons) FBDO(Hons)LVA SMC(Tech)

One of the core responsibilities of the dispensing optician is to be able to advise the visually impaired patient on illumination, glare and contrast\(^1\). This article aims to cover aspects of advice that can be given with these three elements in mind.

**ILLUMINATION**

Illumination is increasingly important with age, even without pathology present\(^2\). With the passage of years, patients have increasing difficulty in low illumination as well as more difficulty adjusting to low illumination when coming from a brighter environment. A study has shown that rod-mediated dark adaptation slows down quite dramatically with age, therefore there are delays in dark adaptation with figures provided of 70-year-olds taking two-and-a-half minutes longer than a 20-year-old.

Poor vision in low illumination, and the inability to adapt quickly, hinders a person’s performance, can hamper mobility and has been linked to falls\(^2\). Many other conditions, such as retinitis pigmentosa\(^6\), present with difficulty in low illumination and adapting to dark environments.

This information leads to two items upon which the low vision patient could be advised: the potential need to increase lighting where appropriate; and the need to have even lighting where possible.

Patients can be advised about the use of local task lighting when reading to aim to increase performance in visual tasks. An angle poise lamp would be suitable, and to demonstrate its positioning would be beneficial to the patient. It can be demonstrated that it should be the object of interest that should be illuminated and not the patient’s face (Figure 1), showing them that placing the lamp closer to the object of interest results in increased illumination. This employs the inverse square law.

The arrow in Figure 1 is the distance \(d\) in the following formula: 

\[
E = \frac{I}{d^2}
\]

where \(E\) is the illuminance in Lux (lumens per square metre) and \(I\) is the intensity of the source. This formula applies when \(d\) (in metres) is at a normal to a surface. If the distance is halved it will result in a four-fold increase in illumination.

If the light is tilted from the object of interest then this will decrease the illumination. Therefore, the aim would be to get the light as close to perpendicular to

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**COMPETENCIES COVERED**

Dispensing opticians: Communication, Professional Conduct, Low Vision, Ocular Abnormalities, Refractive Management

Optometrists: Communication, Professional Conduct, Assessment of Visual Function, Optical Appliances, Ocular Disease

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This article has been approved for 1 CET point by the GOC. It is open to all FBDO members, and associate member optometrists. The multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for this month’s CET are available online only, to comply with the GOC’s Good Practice Guidance for this type of CET. Insert your answers to the six MCQs online at www.abdo.org.uk. After log-in, go to ‘CET Online’. **Questions will be presented in random order.** Please ensure that your email address and GOC number are up-to-date. The pass mark is 60 per cent. The answers will appear in the October 2015 issue of Dispensing Optics. The closing date is 18 September 2015.
the surface as possible. However, the patient’s seating arrangements and work space have to be taken into account, so their real environment should be asked about when advising them about lighting and positioning.

Another variable in this formula is the amount of intensity, therefore, we can also advise them to increase the wattage of the bulb to obtain more illuminance, and this can be done for both task and ambient lighting if the fitment allows. Research has linked contrast sensitivity loss with a reduction in reading speed and an aim to correct this should be considered with the provision of adequate lighting.

Local task lighting can be used wherever detailed tasks are done, such as by the telephone, work areas and dining tables. Do, however, ensure to advise them about the importance of keeping wires securely out the way to avoid trip hazards. Small portable lights can be recommended for the patient to use when they are out and about and find they are in an area of poor lighting, such as a dimly lit atmospheric restaurant.

The task light should be easily positioned, so adjustable and flexible arms are desirable. However, if too complex with too many bolts to twist to secure positioning and too many components that are flexible, then this can become problematic for the patient to set up. So ideally it should be adjustable but simple to maintain position. Ideally, reflections from the surface being illuminated should be limited, so matt surfaces are better than glossy material.

Other simple advice to increase illumination in the home can be:

- Increase natural daylight
- Draw curtains
- Avoid nets, but if essential for privacy they should be kept clean
- Windows should be kept clean
- Arrange seating so it is by the window, but avoid creating a direct glare source and avoid positioning where it would cast a shadow on the item being viewed.
- Aim to position so the light just falls on the object of interest

Lighting can be advised upon in essential areas such as wardrobes and cupboards.

It can be difficult for patients if they go from different rooms with different levels of illumination. Therefore, it would be good advice to try to keep illumination levels consistent throughout the home. A place where good lighting can be considered essential, due to safety, is the stairs. Therefore the hallway, stairs and landing should, in an ideal situation, have good but even lighting. The lighting should also be near the same level of light to any rooms that open onto these areas.

Other advice that can be provided is light-coloured lampshades, use of fluorescent tubes and pale colouring on walls to allow more light reflection. External lights on the house, such as at entrances, can also be suggested to allow some form of lighting outside for dark nights and evenings to aid mobility, location of keyhole, etc.

Although this advice is relatively simple to provide, it can have a profound impact with Brunnstrom et al finding that improved lighting can have a marked effect on the visually impaired patient’s quality of life.

One complaint that is commonly heard is about the use of energy-saving bulbs; they take a while to reach their maximum output and are therefore not well liked by those with a visual impairment. When advising on lighting, be aware that too much can give rise to glare and also the pale colours on the walls should not be gloss as this can also be a glare source. Each patient will have individual needs.

SELECTING A TINT

The reason for dispensing a tint will vary. A tint might be dispensed to reduce disability glare or alternatively to improve contrast and visual performance. As mentioned earlier, a reduction in contrast sensitivity has been shown to reduce reading speed and so a selective filter may be considered here. Most manufacturers who supply an

GLARE

Glare is a common problem for the low vision patient. The cataract patient suffers from increased light scatter with reduced contrast of the retinal image. This type of glare is quite disabling and is termed as “disability glare” which refers to the reduced visibility of a target due to a light source being present elsewhere within the visual field. Although cataract surgery can potentially solve the cataract patient’s problem, there are those with inoperable cataract and those who are awaiting surgery who can also be helped.

Glare is a problem presented with various pathologies. Glare sensitivity has been shown to be an important factor in hindering the mobility of macular disease patients. Both contrast and glare sensitivity are factors that have been found to be self-reported visual disabilities in the older population. Visual acuity measurements alone will not help assess the true impact of the impairment suffered by glare sufferers. The question of glare needs to be in the history taking.

Recommendations that can be given to reduce glare are:

- Polarised filters
- Wide brimmed hat/cap with a peak
- Side-shields
- Neutral density filters to allow reduction in light levels but maintain contrast
- Typoscopes on print

Some patients who complain of glare indoors as well as outdoors may assume they need a dark tint. However, this will prevent the light entering the eye that is needed to perform and get around indoors safely. It is possible to find that a lighter filter can be used indoors as long as does not hinder vision, which has the potential to be dangerous. However, some pathologies may warrant constant wearing of a tint, such as albinism. Therefore each patient’s needs are different. Indoors it may be possible to remove the glare source.

Aspects that can be considered should the patient complain of indoor glare:

- Is the lighting at a suitable level?
- Are lights shaded?
- Do they have dimmer switches to tailor their lighting needs?
- What is the décor like? Gloss paint? Shiny tiles? Shiny floors?
- Where are things such as the television and the patient’s seat situated? Are they positioned to give rise to glare?

Figure 2. It can be wise to have a trial set of filters available
array of filters will also supply guidance on who the specific filter may assist. For example, those patients with retinitis pigmentosa and albinism may benefit from a dark red tint. However, it can be wise to have a trial set of filters available for the patient to try in their real environment as they do not always have a preference for the one you would initially have dispensed.

Some patients may benefit from a variable tint such as a photochromic, however, these carry the disadvantage of not lightening up instantly when the patient goes from outside to indoors and, hence, it is wise to also remember that many visually impaired patients complain of not seeing anything when they enter a shop or their house, and hence photochromics may not be suitable for them.

IMPROVING CONTRAST
As mentioned above, visual acuity measurements are not a true measurement of a patient’s visual function. A contrast sensitivity test, such as the Pelli-Robson (Figure 3), can be a useful and more realistic tool in patients with a visual impairment, being shown to provide a more realistic test for those with cataract and for those with macular disease, with a reduction in contrast being found to be an important factor in reducing mobility performance.

Contrast sensitivity testing is also useful for conditions that have damage in the visual pathway such as found in multiple sclerosis. It is considered more meaningful in those with a visual impairment as it measures the ability to detect objects from a background. Therefore, to recognise faces, navigate safely and is generally more akin to real life conditions. An improvement in contrast is linked to improvement in visual performance and it has been shown to be an important factor in reading speed for those who are visually impaired.

To help improve contrast, the use of dark colours against light colours and vice versa could be recommended, such as:
- Dark table cloth under white plates
- Dark foods on white plates
- Writing with a black felt-tip pen/Berol handwriting pen on white paper
- Secure contrasting strips or painted strips on the edge of dark stairs and steps
- Contrasting strips on door frames
- Doors a different colour from the walls
- Different colour handles to doors and cupboards
- Floors/steps and skirting different colours and different to that of the wall
- Brightly/contrasting coloured bins and other standalone objects to allow identification of where they are to avoid hazards.
- Brightly/contrasting coloured kitchen appliances
- Bannister a different colour to the wall
- Different coloured chopping boards
- Coloured glass wear
- Utensils with bright handles. Bright handles can also be used for gardening tools
- Contrasting colour light switches to that of the wall
- Brightly coloured towels and bathroom accessories

It can be seen that this technique can be utilised practically anywhere in the home. Ideally, the contrasting colours should have a matt finish to avoid the occurrence of glare. With regard to advice on writing, felt-tips can be too thick at times and the letter becomes a blob, therefore, a Berol handwriting pen is useful to keep in stock.

Glass doors should be avoided, but where they have to remain (as we cannot expect patients to go away and do a complete re-fit of their home), as already mentioned some ideas are easily advised but can be tricky to implement, then brightly coloured visibility strips can be advised.

Bump-ons can be useful items as they are both tactile and brightly coloured. They can be used on light switches, cooker and microwave dials and other kitchen appliances as well as on heating controls. Finally, electronic aids are useful as they improve contrast and many have a choice of reversal (black background with white text) (Figure 4) or an array of coloured texts and backgrounds so the patient can choose their preferred combination.

CONCLUSION
Not every patient’s visual problem can be overcome with the above advice. However, providing advice on adequate illumination, contrast and glare can have an impact on the patient’s visual performance and the ability to perform day-to-day tasks. Therefore, it can be worthwhile adding these areas of advice into a discussion with a patient who is having difficulty due to their vision.
MYOPIA MORE COMMON IN EUROPE

Myopia is becoming more common across Europe, according to a new study led by King’s College London.

The meta-analysis of findings from 15 studies by the European Eye Epidemiology Consortium found that around a quarter of the European population is myopic but it is nearly twice as common in younger people, with almost half (47 per cent) of the group aged between 25 and 29 years affected.

The analysis of studies covering over 60,000 people, published last month in the journal Ophthalmology, also found a strong link between myopia and level of education, with myopia levels in those completing higher education approximately double those in people educated to primary school level.

Researchers suggest that factors relating to the nature of modern education such as more time devoted to studying and working with computers and less time spent outside may help to explain the correlation between short-sightedness and education levels.

However, while younger generations tend to have spent more time in education, this did not fully explain why myopia is becoming more common. A number of factors increase the risk for being myopic, including a family history of myopia, while other modern lifestyle factors may also help to explain the trends identified in this study.

The general rise in myopia, including in a sizeable proportion of the working age population, has implications for both the health care system and the economy, conclude the authors of the study.

Katie Williams, first author from the Department of Ophthalmology at King’s College London, said: “We knew myopia was becoming more common in certain parts of the world – almost eight in 10 young people are affected in urban East Asia – but it is very interesting to find that the same pattern is being seen here in Europe. This has major implications for the future burden from this eye disease which can threaten sight in older age, particularly in very short-sighted people.”

Professor Chris Hammond, senior author, added: “We do not fully understand the reasons for this shift, given that this study shows the rising levels of education are not solely to blame. More research is required to see if changing trends in childhood outdoor exposure, reading, and educational practices are affecting myopia development. While this study was on adults, we do not yet know the impact of the recent rapid rise in use of computers, tablets and mobile phones on visual development in children.”
1. What is the usual cause of corneal neovascularisation in contact lens wear?
   a. Lack of oxygen transmission to the cornea
   b. Damage from the contact lens edge
   c. As a consequence of lipid build-up
   d. Wearing a contact lens with a low water content
   **a is the correct answer.**
   Corneal neovascularisation is rarely seen in silicone hydrogel wearers because of the high oxygen transmission afforded by the SiH material.

2. Which statement is CORRECT?
   a. Lipid and protein deposits are rare with silicone-based material
   b. Second generation silicone hydrogel lenses have their surfaces treated so that they become hydrophilic
   c. Third generation lenses can provide high Dk values and high water content without having high modulus values
   d. Polyvinyl pyrrolidone dispels moisture and tends to stiffen the material
   **c is the correct answer.**
   This shows an improvement on first and second generation materials.

3. For a myope of 2.00D, which lens would NOT provide the cornea with a normal supply of oxygen in all circumstances?
   a. Advance
   b. Biofinity
   c. Premio
   d. Oasys
   **a is the correct answer.**
   From Table 1 in the article, Advance is the only lens not to exceed a Dk/t value of 125 – the figure arrived at by several researchers.

4. Complete the sentence correctly. A high modulus and increased oxygen transmission through silicone hydrogel materials have contributed to...
   a. a reduction in the occurrence of overnight infection
   b. the steady increase in continuous wear fittings
   c. a reduction in limbal neovascularisation
   d. less risk of contact lens papillary conjunctivitis
   **c is the correct answer.**

5. Complete the sentence correctly. If a patient wearing silicone hydrogel lenses presents with symptoms which may suggest microbial keratitis they should be told to...
   a. see an optometrist
   b. go to an eye hospital as an ocular emergency
   c. limit their wearing time to daily wear temporarily
   d. bring their next scheduled appointment for a check-up forward by 1 month
   **b is the correct answer.**
   Symptoms of microbial keratitis require immediate referral to hospital.

6. Complete the sentence correctly. The term modulus refers to...
   a. the accumulation of denatured protein
   b. the link between lens thickness and water content
   c. oxygen transmissibility
   d. the coefficient of elasticity of a material
   **d is the correct answer.**
   The rigidity of the material will also depend on the power and thickness of the lens.

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**NATIONAL EYE HEALTH WEEK CALLING**

Organisers are urging practitioners to get involved in National Eye Health Week 2015 as they unveil plans for this year’s campaign, running from 21-27 September.

Once again there will be a different theme each day of the Week, with topics including You and Your Eye Health, Nutrition and the Eye, Technology and UV Protection. The Week will launch with a day full of activities designed to challenge people to stop and consider how healthy their eyes really are and what steps they should be taking to improve and protect their vision and eye health.

David Cartwright, chair of National Eye Health Week explained: “The latest Health Survey for England highlights a real disconnect between people’s perceptions of their eye health and the stark reality with one in five respondents who rated their eye health as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ admitting that eyesight limits their activities at least sometimes. As part of our You and Your Eye Health campaign we want to inspire people to take better care of their eyes and enhance their everyday lives.”

Register for a free resource pack at:

[www.visionmatters.org.uk](http://www.visionmatters.org.uk)
It’s imperative that all registrants complete their CET requirement within the next six months, writes Paula Stevens

Just six months to go...

Registrants now have just six months to complete their requirement for the 2013-2015 period, to ensure that they are not removed from the General Optical Council (GOC) register at the end of 2015.

Most registrants have completed at least six CET points in the years 2013 and 2014, but some still have a way to go. This period will see the end of the ‘grace period’, which allowed those who had not fulfilled their requirement to gain the top-up points needed for continued registration – so it is imperative that everyone on the register who intends to renew their registration in 2016 completes their requirement in the next six months. Your CET record is stored on the GOC’s CET website under ‘My GOC’ and then ‘My CET’. ABDO has no access to your CET record.

**POINTS REQUIREMENT**

All dispensing opticians and optometrists must gain 36 points. At least 18 points must be through interactive CET. If you are still unsure about the scheme, there are a number of resources available on the ABDO website and the GOC website, and it is strongly recommended that you access these in good time, so that you are not faced with removal from the register.

In 2013, the article ‘How are we doing?’ (http://www.abdo.org.uk/cet/how-are-we-doing/) gave a view of the scheme at that time, stated the requirement for DOs and CLOs, defined what ‘interactive CET’ is, as well as recommendations regarding how to plan CET points accrual.

**COMPELENCIES REQUIREMENT**

The GOC indicate competencies using coloured icons. Sometimes the providers of CET used the pictures without stating the title of the competency. While many registrants will have become familiar with which picture indicates which competency, the picture and title for each competency is reproduced in Figure 1.

DOs must cover all their nine competencies during the three-year period. The requirement for CLOs is more complex, and in August 2014 Linda Ford authored a summary of the situation and requirement for CLOs for Dispensing Optics, available on the ABDO website, http://www.abdo.org.uk/cet/cet-for-clos/.

**PEER REVIEW REQUIREMENT**

CLOs and optometrists, in addition to their points and competency requirements, must also complete at least one peer review/discussion session during the period. This requirement does not apply to dispensing opticians, but if included in the target group for the peer review/discussion, can also gain the points and competencies if they attend.

Information about peer review/discussion can be found at http://www.abdo.org.uk/cet/peer-discussioncases/ and cases for use in registrant-led peer discussion (ie. generating your own CET) covering all DO and CLO competencies are at: http://www.abdo.org.uk/cet/peer-discussion-cases/. These cases are for ABDO members’ use only, so you can only access them if you are an ABDO member.

**GOC DOCUMENTS**

If you are now on the GOC register, the requirement is as above. However, if you are returning to the register after a break, you must contact the GOC directly to ascertain your exact CET and PII requirement to return to the register, as this can vary with your individual circumstances. The GOC has a number of resources on their website intended to clarify the CET scheme.

**CET: A guide for registrants:**

**Overseas CET:**
https://www.optical.org/en/Education/CET/overseas-cet.cfm

**A break in your career:**
https://www.optical.org/en/Education/CET/a_break_in_your_career.cfm

If you are having difficulty meeting the requirements, the ABDO CET staff can probably help with advice and suggestions, particularly with regard to interactive CET. If you are thinking of taking a break, or want to restore to the register, read the ABDO website documents, ‘Thinking of taking a break?’ at http://www.abdo.org.uk/cet/thinking-of-taking-a-break/ and http://www.abdo.org.uk/cet/rejoining-the-goc-register/

**PAULA STEVENS MA ODE BSc(Hons) MCOptom FBDO CL (Hons) AD SMC(Tech)**

is ABDO CET coordinator.
It’s easy to find yourself in a rut in practice, and sharing tips and tricks of the trade can make day-to-day problem solving easier for every dispensing optician. In this article, we gather advice from experts and round-up old and new ways to make the life of a DO a little easier, and help patients at the same time.

**SETTING UP AND DISPENSING TIME**

Kevin Gutsell is the chief executive of the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO). He has a tip for every DO even before a patient steps into the practice: “I notice time and time again, practices don’t take the time to set their frames up before they display them. If you went to buy a pair of shoes, they were size six and you are size four, you wouldn’t find them comfortable. I find that if frame set-up is poor, people become reluctant to purchase: the frames just aren’t comfortable to wear so the look becomes irrelevant.

“So, when you take the frame out of the bag, check the front of the frame is straight, the length to bend is between 97 and 100, and the head width is 130-140. With that, you get a fairly average head shape. If someone puts a frame on without you there, they can make some sort of judgement. People walk into a clothes shop and the first thing they look for is size. They can’t do that in practice so we need to make it easy for them.”

Anthony Blackman is senior lecturer in Vision Science at Canterbury Christ Church University. He says: “Look at what the patient has had before. Some patients tell you what they don’t like but not what they do like. Sometimes with lenses, they might say that they like the lens they had before their current pair better.” Invest time in discussing the patient’s likes and dislikes to create a foundation for a successful dispense.

Kevin Gutsell adds: “At the point of dispense, think about the difference the new specs will make to visual quality. Look at the record: it is easy to show a patient a gain of a couple of lines on a letter chart. If it is a small change, 0.25, perhaps a different lens type, you need to communicate in a different way right from the start. Have a spare trial lens kit and a 0.25 and 0.50 flipper to help demonstrate changes in the dispensing area.”

Ronald Rabbetts is a retired optometrist and chairman of the BSI Spectacles Committee. He has noted that there are two areas where DOs might make more adjustment: head width and pantoscopic angle. He explains: “To perform properly, a spectacle lens must be kept in the correct position and orientation with respect to the eye. The angle of side and the vertical position of the optical centres in the frame should be taken into account so that the optical axis of the spectacle lens should pass approximately through the eye’s centre of rotation.”

**Tools and tips of the trade**

“Think fingers before tools” is just one of the top tips for the trade, as Antonia Chitty discovers this month.

Hoya has apps to support each function in the practice. Hoya VisuReal is an app to measure CD and other essential measurements to design a personalised lens. It is in use in more than 100 practices in the UK. The app works with a clip on attachment for the iPad to avoid the problem that the tablet lens is on one side.

When using the app, sit or stand 1m from the patient to avoid convergence. A red line indicates if the iPad isn’t straight, a green one shows when it is ready to go, and there is a box to ensure that you are at the right distance. Paul Jones of Hoya says: “The best DOs seem to have an instinct to look at people as soon as they walk in the door and see how they are holding their head. We have a graticule attachment that accompanies the app to assist with this.”

The app takes an image to front and side views, and you can make small manual adjustments to ensure that measurements go right to the edge of the lens. This varies according to frame type. Data is uploaded via WiFi so the app can produce mono PDs and heights, BVD accurate to 0.1mm and pantoscopic angle. Paul adds: “This app is only as good as the person using it: you need to make sure that the frame is well fitted to start off, and you can get a very consistent result. You can use the measurements for any supplier to create a bespoke varifocal.”
Every practitioner has experienced that sinking feeling when you have a patient with macular degeneration and don’t want to say: “There’s nothing more we can do”. Optelec has launched a new in-practice Low Vision Kit, which comes with staff training to allow you to have something more to offer this group of patients.

Paul Fletcher, Optelec managing director, says: “In many parts of the UK, most rehab is done through hospital low vision clinics up to a certain point and then it stops. With our in-practice demo kit, which contains a narrow range of optical magnifiers, and a portable Compact Plus HD video magnifier, we can train front of practice staff so that they can ask about what power magnifier that people are using, demonstrate similar and better products and the electronic magnifier which is not supplied on the NHS.”

Read more about Paul and Optelec in next month’s issue.

Steve Beech is sales manager for Hilco Europe. He says: “We have a range of pliers that will overcome problems with rimless frames. People are afraid to adjust rimless frames because they are concerned that they might bend or snap them. Specialist pliers are designed to adjust the frames without damaging them.

“This rimless plier [image] has a mechanism to allow me to hold the hardware in one hand, and adjust with another nylon tipped plier,” explains Steve. “There’s no strain on the lens. The bespoke plier for rimless frames has a recess and cross pattern in the nylon tip. If you need to bring in the sides you can use a general nylon plier, and there is also a specific plier for adjusting nose pads, shaped to avoid damaging the edge of a high minus lens.”
Antonia Chitty reviews what ABDO’s social media activities have achieved in the past 12 months

Reaching out to new audiences

A year ago, ABDO made its first foray into using social media to spread positive messages about looking after your eyes. In the last 12 months, the Eyecare FAQ social media campaign has seen fantastic growth.

The idea behind the campaign is to reach people where they are, on their phones, tablets and computers, and encourage them to make a regular eye examination part of their health routine. The campaign also highlights the role of the registered dispensing optician.

SHARING IN THE SUCCESS

Seven people in 10 use social media, and it’s not just for the young. Even amongst people in their 50s, six in 10 are active, and of course that rises to almost nine in 10 people in their 20s. And in the last year ABDO has reached out to thousands of people, encouraging them to look after their eyes.

From a soft launch last summer, there are now around 1,000 people following Eyecare FAQ on Twitter, and around 1,500 on Facebook. Messages go further than just the fans of a page, however, as people share and retweet messages with their followers. In the six months since the Facebook page was launched to the public, for example, there were more than 122,000 users and over 288,000 page impressions, and those figures are growing every month.

Google plus doesn’t release such detailed statistics but it has achieved almost 20,000 page views. Pinterest and Instagram pages have been set up more recently and numbers are growing there too. Thanks must go to members who have followed and liked Eyecare FAQ and share new resources every day or week. Without your shares and retweets, the campaign would not have such a great reach.

So what’s next for Eyecare FAQ? Part of succeeding on social media is about persistence. There are so many important messages to communicate about looking after your eyes, and ABDO is keen to build on the initial success of Eyecare FAQ.

New topics for the coming months include sunglasses, eyecare for people with disabilities, careers in optics, congenital eye diseases, sight problems in old age and, for December, a focus on the many eye charities. As more members follow Eyecare FAQ on social media and share the messages, the campaign’s potential to improve eye health in the UK will grow too.

HOW YOU CAN USE EYECARE FAQ

It isn’t always easy to find interesting and accurate content for your own practice’s social media channels, and that’s where Eyecare FAQ can come in handy. As an ABDO member, you can use any of the resources – the images and the questions and answers – on your own practice website, blog or social media.

Bonita Irish of Hallcroft Opticians turned one of the Eyecare FAQ infographics into a pop up banner for a local exhibition. She says: “I was invited to a local Business Networking Event by our local MP Nicky Morgan.”

Bonita contacted the Eyecare FAQ team as she had to create an eye-catching display and thought that some of the graphics would work well. As well as a banner, she says, “I also printed off some of the pictures from Facebook, which looked great on the display boards. The event was well attended by local businesses and members of the public. The Eyecare FAQ pop-up stand was very eye catching and the posters were very informative. They drew lots of people to our stand.”

“We now use the posters and stand in the practice and they will be very useful when we attend other local events,” adds Bonita.

If you want to use the Healthy Eyes infographic to fit a pop up banner, a print-ready file is available for you to download in the ABDO members’ area.

NEW THIS MONTH

Spread the word about looking after your eyes on and offline. In this issue you’ll find a small poster to put up in practice so more people can discover Eyecare FAQs. Print-ready files are available to download in the ABDO members’ area to print more copies in different sizes.

Also new this month on Eyecare FAQ, you’ll find an infographic to share on AMD, FAQ on the disease as well as an optical lingo bingo card full of related words. How many are you using every day, and do patients know what you mean?

Love images? You can now find Eyecare FAQ on Instagram and Pinterest:
• www.instagram.com/eyecarefaq
• www.pinterest.com/eyecareFAQ
• https://instagram.com/eyecarefaq/

You can use any of the FAQ answers and images on your own blog or website. Follow, like and share these useful resources on your practice and personal social media channels, to help the public learn about eyecare and promote the role of the registered dispensing optician. Get involved with Eyecare FAQ.

Eyecare FAQ is also at:
• www.facebook.com/eyecarefaq
• www.twitter.com/eyecarefaq
• plus.google.com/+eyecarefaq
• or visit the website, www.abdo.org.uk/information-for-the-public/eyecarefaq/
ABDO made its presence felt at Optrafair this year with an offering of European flavoured CET, writes Elaine Grisdale

ABDO education at the fair

In a purpose-built ABDO Theatre, which could house 150 delegates, the Association played host to six distinguished speakers from the worlds of product research and development (R&D) and manufacturing.

Bérangère Granger, a research scientist and optometrist from Essilor R&D in Paris, opened and closed the programme – accompanied by elder statesman and Varilux lens inventor, Bernard Maitenaz. Mr Maitenaz is a 'legend in his own lifetime' and delegates were keen to have their photo taken with such an esteemed celebrity of optics.

VISUAL SCIENCE: PAST AND PRESENT

Now aged 89, Mr Maitenaz doesn’t speak in public much these days and if he does, it is normally in French. So he did us the great honour of flying in to recount the early days of Varilux and his creation, which was the world’s first progressive lens. His aim all those years ago had been to stop any break in the image from distance to near; and he thought that mathematically this should be possible.

fact, the closest Mr Maitenaz came to using a computer was when he adapted the punch cards the invoice department used to undertake his optical calculations.

From the early days of the launch of Varilux 1 in 1953, then Varilux 2 in 1972 to today, the standards that are universally adopted by lens makers all over the world were created by Mr Maitenaz: engraved circles that are 17mm from the fitting cross, the add under the temporal side and identification under the nasal side, prism thinning, washable markings, and so on.

When asked by a delegate why he chose 17mm, he nonchalantly replied that it could have been 19mm but it looked too wide for the small frames of the day; 15mm looked too small so he chose 17mm. Well it stuck and is now a European standard, with absolutely no scientific basis. The principle of the corneal reflection pupillometer was also stumbled upon by accident when the light in the shaving mirror bounced off Mr Maitenaz’s pupil one day and he caught sight of it when shaving. He quipped that it could not have been invented by a woman!

The historical exposé certainly merited the start of the session because in the words of President JF Kennedy: “You can’t know where you’re going until you know where you’ve been”. To all of us who have tried to ray trace in our student days, and who struggled working out the prism at a point eccentric to the optical centre on an astigmatic lens, Mr Maitenaz’s original hand drawn diagrams and calculations were awe inspiring.
Bérangère then took to the stage to talk about the latest collaborations in vision science as a pre-cursor to any product creation. No longer do R&D departments work alone, she explained, they partner with specialists in many different fields around the world.

Presently, Bérangère’s team are working with a university in New Jersey looking at the influence of fatigue on the dynamics of vergence movements. Eye movements (vergences) are critical in determining what we see, and the team is looking at vergence stimuli and vergence responses in tired and awake subjects. The demands on our visual system in the modern world mean that fatigue is more likely to impact on how well we see. The ability to adapt to various stimuli and to fatigue varies between people.

Bérangère described the types of apparatus, the experiential conditions and the methods for testing the vergence responses in the lab. The results showed that there was an influence of fatigue on vergence dynamics but the visual system was able to adapt in the presence of stress. The study went on to look at individual strategies to cope with visual fatigue, and criteria to predict when visual fatigue would strike.

**PASSIONATE ABOUT PHOTOCHROMICS**

A great vote of thanks has to be given to Andy Sanders, Hoya Lens UK’s professional services manager, who very ably stepped in for Bob Forgan, the irrepressible speaker, the irrepressible Bob Forgan, gave a gripping exposé of what you can do when the catalogue doesn’t necessarily have a solution for you. Weird and wonderful prescriptions and out-of-the-box lens solutions were discussed and delegates came away with renewed interest in their chosen field – and maybe the hope that they would get an unusual prescription when they got home to put his theories to the test! For many, it combined a trip down memory lane with cutting edge technology.

Propelling us into the future, our final speaker, the irrepressible Bob Forgan, gave the delegates an animated and well-
documented insight into the latest developments in smart glass technology. Bob entered optics in 1973; his enthusiasm is infectious and it has never waned. In a riveting presentation, he illustrated the new products available with a series of film clips, whilst highlighting the added value dispensing opportunities.

The optical challenges that smart glasses represent were discussed and delegates left with a much better idea of the numerous added value dispensing opportunities these new products offer.

The Monday of the show saw a series of well-attended paediatric dispensing workshops take place, offering delegates three CET points. ABDO staff and board members were kept busy in the Association Lounge.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Of course it wasn’t just the CET programme drawing the crowds to the ABDO Theatre. The ABDO College stand was as busy as ever and the ABDO College team provided information about its extensive range of courses, such as the degree programme run in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University.

And on the Sunday night, the Association hosted jointly with the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) a networking party on the Sunday evening in the NEC Gallery Breakout Area – welcoming members, speakers, industry partners and optical dignitaries alike. Some 200 people attended the early evening event, which provided some relaxing time out for those visiting and exhibiting at the show.

As well as enjoying a drink and the sounds of the Kamikaze Jazz Quintet, attendees took the opportunity to chat with their colleagues, share a joke or two and put the world to rights. ABDO president, Peter Black, thanked everyone for attending and the FMO for co-sponsoring the event. He also highlighted the news that Optrafair would return to the NEC in Birmingham in 2016.

So, all in all it was a great event for ABDO and we’re looking forward to planning for Optrafair 2016.

ELAINE GRISDALE is ABDO head of professional services and international development.
The verdict on Optrafair 2015 seems to be that it delivered for both exhibitor and visitor. Nicky Collinson reviews just some of the activities and events that helped shape its success.

Stand and deliver

Over three days in April at the Birmingham NEC, more than 6,500 people from all walks of professional life gathered to discover new products, test out innovative technology, establish new contacts, share knowledge and skills, debate topical issues, and make strategic business decisions to build their practices and better serve their patients and clients.

A show with a 38-year heritage, organised by the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO), Optrafair 2015 was hailed a success by exhibitors as news emerged that the show would return to Birmingham in 2016.

Optrafair director, Malcolm Polley, commented: “This year’s show was packed with trend setting fashion, the latest technological developments and world class education from renowned international speakers. There is a reason why leading industry players choose Optrafair as the best platform to launch products and services to the industry. Optrafair always delivers the right audience.

“The NEC has been the home of Optrafair for 38 years and is a popular venue with both exhibitors and visitors. The venue affords easy access from both inside and outside the UK and affordable space for exhibitors. The addition of Resort World at the NEC will add further to the attraction of the location next year. The show is a great way for anyone involved in the optical industry to get inspiration each year and find the means to enhance their business,” added Malcolm.

DEBUTS AND DEALS

Making its exhibition premiere, Eyespace showcased more than 50 new releases from its six designer-led brands: Rock Star for children, Cocoa Mint and Louise Marcel for women, Jensen for men, urban Basebox and budget Zips. Jayne Abel, Eyespace managing director, said: “We had a phenomenal exhibition and were overwhelmed by the positive response to our stand and collections. We hope that people took away ideas for their practice – as we provide a service not just products.”

With 180 square metres of space, Continental Eyewear showed 50 new designs from its extensive portfolio, including 10 new X-eyes designs, the 2015 Jaeger sunglass collection and additions to the Lazer range for both children and adults. A ‘Wheel deal’ competition ensured lots of giveaways for visitors, including free orders made at the show.

Neal Grimason, sales and marketing director, said he was delighted that the Wheel Deal proved such a big attraction.
“We had a storming show and exceeded our targets before the Monday. Counting visitor numbers is not important; the people who attended were on a mission. New releases are essential for a show, and that’s what people came to see.”

There was Frozen fever at the International Eyewear stand as the company launched the Disney Frozen eyewear collection aimed at girls aged four to 10. The company reported a ‘record breaking’ collection of high jointed frames from the Nakamura and Eclipse collections, returning after an eight-year absence, Silhouette enters its 51st year building on its continued success.

NEW FACES AND OLD FRIENDS
Returning after an eight-year absence, Silhouette presented its new collections including SPX Illusion, Sun 2015, Titan Contour and Felder Felder. The company also debuted its eagerly anticipated, and Red Dot Award-winning, Titan ONE, and held its own fashion show featuring Silhouette and Adidas frames. Silhouette’s managing director, David Chalmers, commented: “We were delighted to see our customers, both old and new, who were glad to see us there. With a new management team, new collections and a new direction, Silhouette enters its 51st year building on its continued success.”

Amongst a plethora of new launches across the board, Dunelm Optical unveiled 10 new optical styles in its Janet Reger collection of high jointed frames from the celebrated lingerie designer brand. Experimenting with different proportions of round and square shapes, the new frames feature gradient and contrasting colour effects. Peter Beaumont, managing director at Dunelm, said: “The Janet Reger collection is a signature range for the modern woman, providing statement eyewear for every occasion. We think we’ve got the perfect 10 with this new spring drop.”

Hilco launched its new Glide-Fit SunClips system, which works with both metal and plastic frames. It combines the easy on/off utility of a spring bridge with a patent-pending ‘slip over’ clip that glides the clips into place without contacting the back surface of the prescription lens thereby protecting expensive lenses and coatings. The clips are available in two chassis colours with two polarised lens options in the best-selling shapes and sizes.

Marchon welcomed visitors to its stand to view the latest releases in its quality eyewear brands including Chloe, Calvin Klein, Nike and Valentino, as well as the soft launch of Italian brand Liu Jo. Carlo Merati, managing director, said: “Optofair is an important platform for us to help demonstrate our support to the independent sector. I always relish the opportunity to meet our customers at the show to find out how we can further enhance our partnership, whilst also welcoming new customers to the world of Marchon, our balanced portfolio and commitment to providing a high quality service.

Norville Eyewear was in the Fashion Quarter this year with Invu, the polarisation range from the Swiss Eyewear Group, for men, women and children in both plano and prescription. Other fashion collections on show included Barbour, Duck and Cover and Cecil Gee and the trade show launch of Barbour International Optical and Sun. Sports Rx and spectacles frames plus prescription lens solutions, including Vista Mesh, along with the new E-scoop lens range primarily developed for people with macular degeneration, were showcased too.

Making its debut appearance, Blinx introduced its range of spectacle accessories for children. The colourful soft silicone charms allow children to customise existing frames by sliding the charms on/off the arms of their spectacles. They can be worn individually, as matching pairs, or mixed together to create a unique and colourful look.

“The idea was to create something cool and collectable that would help children regain some control over a situation they may not feel entirely positive about,” said Stephanie Collier, creator and director. “Blinx provide a colourful and eye-catching way of encouraging children into the practice, as well as encouraging repeat visits, as the children return to purchase additional charms from the range. The response was fantastic – we were amazed at how
enthusiastic visitors were at expressing their support for both our new product and for us as a new business to the industry.”

RISE OF THE MACHINES
There was much to see in the technology arena this year. Birmingham Optical displayed its extensive range of instruments and machines, including those from Oculus, Keeler and Nidek, whose new Nidek Retina Scan Duo combines high definition OCT with fundus imaging.

Heidelberg Engineering UK director, Krysten Williams, said: “The show saw huge interest in OCT with practitioners looking at upgradeable OCT platforms and multi-modality imaging. We have not seen such a surge in demand for technology since retinal cameras stole the show in 1999 – it has been a similar scenario at this Optrafair.”

Emma Baynes, marketing and communications executive at Carl Zeiss, said: “We had a fantastic show with the launch of our new HFA3 and new applications for our CIRRUS HD-OCT. It was great to welcome so many new and existing customers onto the stand over the weekend, along with those who attended our sponsored lecture and hands-on workshops.”

Topcon, renowned as the industry’s top innovators, chose Optrafair to launch its latest swept source OCT, which has the world’s fastest scanning speeds. Andy Yorke, managing director of Topcon Medical GB, commented: “This year’s Optrafair had a degree of apprehension wrapped around it for me in the light of the fact that Optrafair London only seemed like yesterday! I really need not have been, as this year’s fair was a complete success and we were delighted with the results and number of visitors to the show.”

Sharon Mills, Haag-Streit marketing manager, said: “We unveiled the new AngioVue OCT-Angiography system and this created quite a ‘buzz’. In addition we showcased the CenterVue Eidon, which is the world’s first true-colour wide-field confocal scanner. Both these products are exciting additions to Haag-Streit UK’s product portfolio.”

Waterside Laboratories reported being inundated with requests for demonstrations of the OptikamPad, its digital measurement and dispensing tool for the iPad. There was also a positive reaction to the launch of Elysium, a new lens series complemented by Waterside’s Lifestyle Analysis App.

MD Bob Forgan said: “From my view Optrafair has confirmed that we have struck a nerve across the industry with our digital offerings. We are seeing an insatiable appetite among independent opticians and multiples for new technology. More and more opticians are appreciating the benefits of harnessing digital dispensing tools and the massive new business potential presented by the smart eyewear sector.”

SEEING THE LIGHT
Recently launched, and also being showcased at Optrafair, was Rodenstock’s latest anti-reflection coating that reduces artificial blue light. Solitaire Protect Balance 2 is said to represent a significant contribution to relaxed and healthy work at a PC, laptop or tablet. Lens product manager, Debbie Bathgate, said: “Blue light can lead to overstraining the eyes and sleeplessness. This new technology reduces blue light, increasing a general feeling of well-being and ensuring a balanced biorhythm through relaxed sleep.”

Shamir launched several exciting, unique and award winning products. On display was 2015 Optician Awards Spectacle Lens Product of the Year, Shamir Attitude III, the latest generation fashion and sport sunwear lenses. Offering “unparalleled” choice for prescription sunwear, the fully optimised range of lenses for single vision and progressive lens wearers is individualised according to the personal visual needs and lifestyle requirements of the wearer. Also available to view was what Shamir describes as the world’s first anti-fog coating that doesn’t require any activation cloth, spray or wipe.

Nikon Optical showcased its ever-expanding range of spectacle lens products, including the Capture-i, an iPad-based advanced optical measurement system. Featuring unique patented technology, Capture-i is a high-tech, advanced optical measurement unit that provides “outstanding accuracy, yet is easy to use”. Designed exclusively for the iPad Air, Capture-i fits Nikon’s entire range of lenses from single vision to the most advanced fully customised progressive lenses, including SeeMax Master and Presio Power.

Hoya previewed its new Hoya DF – distortion-free optics (relates to PNX 1.53 plano) featuring a premium, carbon fibre or
TR90 material that has been specifically optimised for wearers and utilises the patented Avantek Mounting System. Preparing to launch in September, Hoya claims that Avantek is the first lens mounting system that is distortion-free.

Younger Optics, in partnership with Transitions Optical, launched a new portal at www.youngertransitions.com, offering the most comprehensive source of Transitions product information ever to be made available free of charge to the profession. Isabelle Dekker, Transitions Optical business development director EMEA, said the new site represented a route to freedom and autonomy for the independent practitioner never previously seen. “It is the most comprehensive platform on adaptive lenses ever created,” she enthused.

The new site is open to all customers free of charge, providing unlimited access to the latest Younger Transitions products, technical information, marketing tools, news, training and education on products including Transitions Signature VII, Transitions XTRActive Grey & Brown, Acclimates and Transitions DriveWear.

Sharing a stand with Lenstec and the National Eyecare Group, Seiko Optical discussed with visitors its unique approach to supporting independent practices through the Seiko Lens Specialist (SLS) scheme and the Specs Network web portal. All SLSs are automatically enrolled in the Specs Network, a unique consumer web portal created to help independent opticians improve the profile of their practice and building loyalty to the practice.”

PARPARTNERSHIPS AND DEBATE

It was a case of the more the merrier on the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) stand at Optrafair as the BCLA teamed up with its 2015 Partners, Alcon, CooperVision and Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, to share a larger stand with the opportunity for visitors to trial and discuss their products. “Sharing a stand with our 2015 Partners proved a winning formula and we were delighted to welcome many new members during the three-day show, as well as taking a number of clinical conference bookings,” said Cheryl Donnelly, BCLA CEO.

Bausch + Lomb promoted new developments in both contact lenses and eyecare products. Tom Bailey, sales and clinical training manager, said: “We have a very exciting product pipeline with developments to address the fact that the contact lens market has great potential to grow. There is a huge opportunity to dispense contact lenses to the presbyopic market with our new lens technologies; our nutritional product Ocuvite is winning favour and the Eye-sential mask are all important opportunities for additional sales and building loyalty to the practice.”

David Maher, product manager at Scope Ophthalmics, said: “Scope Ophthalmics was delighted to exhibit and host two educational workshops. Optrafair’s focus on providing expert CET mirrors Scope’s aims of empowering optical practitioners and becoming their ocular surface disease partners through quality education and innovative products.

“We’re proud to be working with expert optometrists such as Ian Cameron, Sarah Farrant and Scott Mackie, who all hosted workshops at Optrafair in partnership with Scope,” Tom continued. “We saw great levels of engagement and had over 50 delegates attend our demodex blepharitis workshop. Attendees watched as a slit lamp test was performed and BlephEx was used to treat and break the cycle of blepharitis, precisely and carefully spinning a medical grade micro-sponge along the edge of eyelids, removing scurf and debris and exfoliating the eyelids. Ocusoft Plus (proven to kill demodex) is then used post BlephEx procedure.”

Peter Charlesworth, managing director of Perspective, education partners for Optrafair reported that early indications were that there were record attendances for the CET sessions at this year’s Optrafair. And it was standing room only for the highlight of the programme – a lively Question Time session where the UK’s leading retailers took questions from the floor about the future of retail optics.

Chaired by BBC Radio 4’s Peter White, the industry panel included: Doug Perkins, co-founder of Specsavers; Ben Fletcher, managing director, Boots Opticians; Ryan Leighton, CEO, Leightons Opticians & Hearing Care; Peter Noakes, optometrist and partner, Noakes Habermehl and Kerr Opticians; and Imran Hakim, director of entrepreneurship, UMIP.

In a wide-ranging debate, the panel reflected on the impact of innovation and online optometry, differing business models for growth, pricing, the effect of grocer advertising as well as the impact of free eye examinations on the public’s perception of the value and importance of the standard eye examination.

Ben Fletcher commented: “With a good mix of companies and personalities, the panel debate certainly proved a lively discussion with some important questions raised by the audience. It was great to hear feedback first-hand from the professionals who make the optics industry the exciting and dynamic place that it is. Panel discussions are a great way of tackling some of the important issues that our industry faces and it certainly provided everyone, myself included, with some interesting and useful food for thought.”

Optrafair will return to the NEC Birmingham from 9-11 April 2016. www.optrafair.co.uk
ABDO and the BCLA are teaming up to offer CLOs a tailor-made track at this year’s ABDO conference

Best of both worlds

In a new collaboration between the two organisations, the ABDO Conference will feature a special contact lens symposium this year delivered by the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA). Running on Sunday 20 September, in the Charter 4 suite at Manchester Central in the heart of the city and offering 11 CET points, the programme features experts from the world of contact lenses and the anterior eye.

A highlight of the day will be the keynote presentation by Dr Nicola Logan, senior lecturer in optometry at Aston University, a convenor of the Myopia Consortium UK and a global authority on myopia management. Dr Logan’s presentation, ‘Myopia control management update: the role of the DO and CLO’ will take place at 11.30-12.30am, offering one CET point for both DOs and CLOs.

Said BCLA CEO Cheryl Donnelly: “Myopia management is certainly a hot topic and it is entirely appropriate that we consider its impact on everyday practice and the varying approaches being researched and developed. Nicola will enlighten us on how myopia control might impact the future of modern practice from both the DO and CLO perspective, and provide some food for thought as to how to determine your approach to myopia management for your paediatric patients,” Cheryl added.

PRACTICAL TIPS AND GUIDANCE

Reflecting current contact lens topics and interests, many of which were covered at last month’s BCLA conference in Liverpool and so ideal for those who were unable to attend, the programme also includes practical advice on enhancing everyday clinical skills and providing greater confidence in contact lens prescribing.

In ‘The mighty mites’ (one CET point), Sarah Farrant, the director of an independent practice in Somerset who works within a GP surgery managing eye conditions, will outline the clinical presentation of Demodex mites and explain the appropriate steps required to successfully manage the condition in High Street practice, involving some new approaches. “Having already seen Sarah in action, this will be an excellent presentation with some astonishing video footage and real life demonstrations from her practice to help us appreciate the key clinical signs and what options we have to treat this pervasive condition,” comments Cheryl.

Recognising the increasing collaboration between the High Street and the Hospital Eye Service in the delivery of specialist contact lens services, the programme will explore the detection and management of patients with early keratoconus, courtesy of optometrist Katie Harrop. In ‘Is this keratoconus? What do I do next?’ (one CET point) Katie will provide key clinical advice to help in the diagnosis of early keratoconus, and provide guidance on the latest thinking on managing the disease.

“While it is acknowledged that risk factors for contact lens complications are still relatively low, having the confidence to deal with them is as important as ever,” suggested Cheryl. To this end, optometrist Caroline Christie, currently engaged in contact lens teaching and supervising at City University in addition to appointments as a visiting lecturer at optometry schools across the Nordics, will run an interactive quiz, entitled “Why is my eye red?” (three CET points). “The aim of Caroline’s quiz is to ensure delegates have the skills to support the optometric team in reviewing and managing complications – thereby providing 360° patient care,” explained Cheryl.

With comfort very much still the ‘Holy Grail’ of contact lens industry R&D, a session on this topic is expected to be an additional draw.Presenting ‘Comfort: are we there yet?’ (three CET points), Dr Christine Purslow, honorary visiting professor at Plymouth University who has researched and published many papers in this arena, will outline the latest technological advancements in contact lens designs, materials, modalities and care products that are enabling practitioners to provide patients with greater wearer comfort.

“With still just under four million contact lens wearers in the UK, the market is growing very slowly,” said Cheryl, “and comfort undoubtedly plays a part in this. Practitioners invariably cite comfort as the reason for patients dropping out – but does patient research bear out this theory? Christine will share her expert knowledge about all the elements that contribute to overall patient satisfaction – not just comfort.”

Finally, in a complementary ABDO addition to the programme, Andy Sanders, professional services manager at Hoya Lens UK, will provide a ‘Lens update for CLOs and returning opticians’, worth three CET points.

“The BCLA is thrilled to be working with ABDO to deliver its contact lens and anterior eye conference track this year,” said Cheryl. “We have worked closely with Elaine Grisdale and the team at the Association to put together a programme that is topical, focused, clinical, practical and relevant to all. We hope to see as many ABDO and BCLA members as possible in Manchester this September enjoying all the programme has to offer – and more of course.”

Download the full programme and book your place online at www.abdo.org.uk
New buddy scheme for NOC 2015

A new buddy system will help first-time DO delegates at this year’s National Optical Conference, writes Chris McGachy

Last year saw an increasing number of dispensing opticians attend the National Optical Conference (NOC) – the premier event in the Local Optical Committee (LOC) calendar. DOs recognise that they can play their part as frontline professionals in helping LOCs shape and deliver services.

In recognition of these growing numbers, and the fact that many LOCs send new officers and committee members as first-time delegates to the NOC to introduce and inspire them to life beyond the practice, the Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) is introducing some exciting new changes that will benefit first-time DO delegates at the event, being held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole from 5-6 November.

NURTURING WIDER PARTICIPATION

The NOC plays a unique role in community eyecare commissioning. DOs have skills, relationships and professionalism that make them key players in the primary care team. Add to that their business acumen and leadership skills, and LOCs recognise that DOs are an asset to the optical team too. To encourage this DO participation for the upcoming NOC, LOCSU will be introducing a welcome session and establishing a ‘buddy system’ for new officers and delegates attending the conference for the first time.

Architect of the changes, Gill Brabner, LOCSU’s learning and development consultant, explained: “The 2014 NOC attracted nearly 50 first-time delegates, and within that a growing number of DOs. That’s almost one quarter of the audience. The conference provides an ideal opportunity for new officers to hear about the latest developments at national level and learn from the movers and shakers in community eyecare commissioning.”

However, we also recognise that arriving at the conference as a newly-elected LOC officer or committee member can seem quite daunting, especially when everyone around you appears to know the ropes and they seem to be meeting up with old friends and established networks.

“Listening to some of the first timers last year, some admitted to the LOCSU team that they felt anxious about joining the informal dinner on the first evening,” Gill continued. “Obviously we want to do everything possible we can to ensure that everyone has a positive experience at the premier conference for LOCs. To achieve this, we are delighted to announce that, for NOC 2015, we will be putting in place support measures specifically aimed at first-time attendees.”

Among the planned initiatives for 2015 are:

- Deploying a dedicated and visible welcome group to meet and greet newcomers
- Hosting a reception for first-time delegates to meet each other and share experiences
- Establishing a ‘buddy’ system matching newcomers with experienced delegates to chat about all things LOC and discuss how to get the best out of the NOC programme across the two days

Outlining the new approach, Gill said: “The NOC is a fabulous learning and networking opportunity and with these initiatives, it will be a highly positive experience for everyone whether you are a very experienced officer and regular attendee or have just arrived at the LOC table.”

But Gill was keen to point out that in addition to the measures for newcomers, there will be much in the programme to appeal to regular attendees who want to hear about the latest developments in community services and use it as a premier networking and social event.

“Work is underway to shape the theme and the programme for NOC 2015 and you should look out for further announcements in Dispensing Optics, through LOCSU News and on Twitter (@LOCSU #NOC2015).”

“Invited headline speakers include policy makers from the NHS, plus leading figures from ophthalmology and public health. We will be announcing the details of the full programme as speakers and sessions and extras, such as the poster competition, are confirmed. But, without doubt, it will remain the not-to-be-missed event in the optical calendar,” concluded Gill.

The booking page for this year’s NOC is now open – follow the link on the homepage of the LOCSU website, www.locsu.org.uk. One free place is available to each LOC.

Chris McGachy is communications manager for LOCSU.
Next month marks the 10th anniversary of Independents Day (i-Day) – the annual business event dedicated to independents

Celebrating independence

Established by training company Proven Track Record (PTR) whose three directors, Nick Atkins, David Goad and Brian Collison, are all ABO members, the annual i-Day business symposium and exhibition is dedicated to promoting and celebrating all that’s good about being independent. Nicky Collinson talks to Nick and David about the event’s success and what they have in store for delegates this year.

NC: We’ve seen i-Day expand since 2005. Why do you think it continues to be successful?

NA: From the outset we’ve tried to run pertinent themes for the independent, focusing on business opportunities that the multiples will struggle to compete with. We use a mixture of lectures and workshops all delivered by engaging speakers with a proven track record (excuse the pun!) in their subject area. Whilst we sometimes bring in expertise from outside optics, one of our core strategies has been to provide business speakers who understand the optical world, whether at home or abroad.

NC: Can you tell us what plans you have this year?

DG: This year’s theme, ‘Niches for riches’, looks at how adding supplementary services can help a practice stand out from the crowd, as well as be more profitable. We are delighted to have US optometrist Dr Gary Gerber from the Power Practice, whose keynote address, ‘How to avoid drowning in a sea of sameness’, will share some of his proven strategies for success.

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NC: Are there any new initiatives this year?

DG: Yes. This year sees an alternative track for non-business owners. Run by experienced optical team trainer, Lindsey Small and sponsored by Hoya, it is designed with the whole front of house team in mind. It will look at more effective patient communication at the key touch points and I think DOs will enjoy this session in order to take the learnings back to share with the team.

NC: What else can delegates, and especially ABO members, expect?

NA: Following its fantastic feedback last year is the business advice surgery. Nicknamed the ‘Guru session’ by last year’s audience, it is sponsored by Essilor and is open to all i-Day delegates for free one-to-one business advice. On the Sunday there will undoubtedly be some controversy with Simon Browning presenting his views on optics in England, post GOS. This will be followed by what, I’m sure, will be a lively discussion session with representatives of some of the professional bodies, including ABO president Peter Black.

NC: I also understand ABO members can attend i-Day for free on the Sunday?

DG: Absolutely. From the outset we decided that the Sunday would be free-to-attend for any independent practitioner, regardless of i-Day attendance. And this year we are expanding attendance to those practising in the multiple sector, who might be thinking of opening their own practice in the future.

NC: Will there be CET points for members?

NA: Whilst i-Day is all about business and not CET, we appreciating that it’s always nice to pick up a point or two, whilst taking valuable time out of the practice. So we have a variety of interactive one-hour, three-point CET sessions planned.

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NC: How important is it, in your opinion, for independent practices and their DOs to attend i-Day?

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DG: Nick and I would never claim that attending our event every year is essential to the future of an independent practice. So perhaps I should simply reference the fact that more than 600 individuals have attended over the last 10 years, with an increasing number of owners bringing the whole team along. Every year we also get glowing testimonials from people saying how the content has generated almost too many ideas. I also think that by stepping out from the day-to-day hubbub allows them to refocus on their business, leaving them reinvigorated and motivated to start making improvements.

NC: Having reached this milestone, what is your long-term plan for i-Day?

NA: We have simply focused on one event at a time and are delighted it now has a loyal following, with an average attendance of 200 delegates and a 40-company strong exhibition. Assuming we continue to have that support, the plan each year is simply to endeavour to provide relevant content and continue to celebrate everything that is good about being independent.

i-Day 2015 will be held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole on Sunday 5 and Monday 6 July. Find out more and register at www.independentsday.co.uk
Vision UK 2015 will see the introduction of dedicated streams on improving eye health

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**Fresh format for Vision UK**

The seventh annual Vision UK conference will be held on Thursday 18 June at Central Hall, Westminster. It is the only conference for the whole of the eye health and sight loss sector, bringing together eye health and social care professionals, government decision makers, representatives from the voluntary sector and service users.

Keynote speaker at the conference will be Lord Chris Holmes of Richmond MBE, Britain’s most successful Paralympic swimmer. Since going blind unexpectedly at the age of 14, he has been a lifelong campaigner for equality and inclusion. Lord Holmes said: “I am delighted to be the keynote speaker for this year’s Vision UK conference and look forward to sharing my personal experience as a campaigner. In my speech I will highlight what I see as some of the key issues the government will seek to address over the next Parliamentary term to ensure inclusion for people with sight loss, and earlier detection of eye conditions”. Lord Holmes will also speak as part of a conference stream on ‘Social inclusion: transforming lives through digital technology’.

**STREAMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

‘Working together to deliver the UK Vision Strategy’, Vision UK 2015 will feature a brand-new format, with delegates offered a choice of five streams, each focused on delivering aspects of the UK Vision Strategy and tailored for different professional interests. The stream ‘Making the case for improving eye health’ will focus on how professionals across the health and social care sectors, including dispensing opticians, can work together to ensure that eye health and sight loss is a priority across the UK, within the context of increasing financial pressures.

Chaired by David Allen, chief executive of the UK’s Faculty of Public Health, the morning session will begin by examining examples of best practice to assist the effective and efficient planning of eyecare services. Speakers will include Darren Shickle, Professor of Public Health at the University of Leeds, as well as several representatives from Healthwatch Torbay, who will explain to delegates how they have effectively worked with local communities and their clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to successfully influence the delivery of local eye health services.

In the later session, delegates will hear from a range of speakers including Dr Jackie McCall, consultant in public health, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland, who will discuss the work of the Developing Eye Care Partnerships as part of the five year strategy, and David Cartwright, chairman of National Eye Health Week (NEHW).

**SECTORS WORKING TOGETHER**

Another stream choice is ‘Transforming patient care to ensure timely treatment and support’. Chaired by Marcus Longley of the Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, this session will analyse how all sector professionals can work together to more effectively provide a pathway from diagnosis to support.

Dispensing opticians may also be interested in stream 3, ‘Empowering adults with sight loss to regain their independence,’ with each presentation focusing on one of the 10 ‘Seeing it my way’ (SIMW) outcomes. SIMW is an initiative to ensure that every blind and partially sighted person in the UK has access to the same range of information and support.

Mhairi Thurstson, lecturer at Abertay University and chair of the VISION 2020 UK Counselling and Emotional Support Services Group, will lead the discussion on the role played by technology in improving the lives of people who are blind and partially sighted. There will be expert plenary speakers throughout the day, the annual poster competition and, for the first time, a People’s Panel consisting of a service user representative from each stream.

Katherine Raven, UK Vision Strategy senior manager, said: “We are really excited by the new stream format of Vision UK 2015, which will allow our delegates to experience a full day of engaging content that is relevant and tailored to their interests. I encourage all dispensing opticians to come along and hear about the great work already happening to implement the UK Vision Strategy framework, and to learn more about the role that they can play in the pathway.”

Visit www.visionuk.org.uk, and follow @UK_Vision #VisionUK2015 on Twitter.
I have been working as a qualified dispensing optician for 49 years now, 40 of those running my own practice, and I have to say that being an independent (in more ways than one) has been one of my biggest strengths in business. Of course, the experience I gained in optics before I bought my practice, especially from my father, was invaluable and provided an excellent grounding for the years ahead. My interests in music, art and, in particular, fashion have definitely defined and shaped my path and greatly influenced many aspects of the business.

EMBRACING INDIVIDUAL STYLE

So, fashion in dispensing: am I the only person interested in that? I don’t think so! For sure, I know lenses are very important and our clients trust us to give them the best, but clients mainly come to us because they want to look great and need us to point them in a direction that suits their individuality and style of living. It could be the latest trends coming out of the fashion houses of Paris, Milan, New York, etc., or it could be vintage from the drawers of styles we never sold in the 1970s or 80s.

Our practice has the latest editions of fashion bibles, Vogue, Tatler, GQ and so on, to keep us up-to-date about every aspect of the on-trend fashions and their ‘houses’. Films also influence the buying power of the public – the James Bond films, the Matrix, Men in Black, the Terminator, Breakfast at Tiffany’s, etc. Celebrities and pop stars, Samuel L. Jackson, Will.i.am, Madonna, Johnny Depp, Lady Gaga, all contribute to the choice of look that people may want, or aspire to. The iconic looks and styles that Hollywood and pop culture have given us continue to massively influence people’s idea of fashion, even if they don’t realise it. How many times have we all been asked for those Tom Cruise aviators in Top Gun or the Blues Brothers’ wayfarer sunglasses? Everyone in the public eye will have people who aspire to be like them, and want to achieve the same look.

Whilst there are many commentators desperate to tell us what is and isn’t in fashion, we encourage everyone to embrace their own style. As Coco Chanel said: “Fashion changes, but style endures”. Thankfully this statement is very true; fashion is always changing and those with a sense of style will always wish to be on-trend. With changing trends and fashions there are more dispensing opportunities available to us all – even when there is no change in prescription.

Then there is sport – from skiing to cycling to motor racing and everything in between. Most sportspeople will spend large sums on the latest kit to improve their game or enjoyment, and eyewear is no different. What a choice there is in this category, with a massive array of tints and filters available for every conceivable sport and light condition. What sunglasses will Lewis Hamilton wear next? Then there are the summer festivals, the panic to buy the trendiest sunnies for Glanstonbury, or the necessary polarised sunglasses for the Bournemouth Air Show so you don’t miss half of it due to the glare of the sun on the sea.

BREAKING THE RULES

As we have recently moved Barnabys to the centre of Bournemouth, we now have more room and more passing trade and can accommodate some new brands to cover all interests. Above all, we continue to embrace our own passions and set out our store accordingly.

I have always bought too much stock, broken all the logical business rules, picked obscure brands, taken the taboo risk of picking all the colour frames that no other practice dared to take on, and taken on the newest shapes a year in advance of everyone else. Many a time, the reps have come in and said: “Well, this collection is really different and you were the first people that came to mind that would want to look at it.” I still get excited when the reps bring in something new, like a new hinge (call me a sad anorak if you will) or some amazing new material or finish. Sometimes, you have to take chances. What a boring life it would be if we always played safe.

Our clients love that they can find something different and sometimes exclusive with us, when the High Streets of nearly every town and city are predictably full of the same multiples, carrying the same styles. And we have fun on the way! Well, you are a long time working, so we have fresh coffee on hand and invariably, there are cakes or chocolate lurking. We spend a great amount of time with our clients, not just advising them, but actually getting to know them which, over the number of years I have been in business, is a given.

Styles come and go (often several times around), fashions change and people change. Recessions come and go; one year the market is booming the next it is bust but if you follow your heart as well as your head you will survive to see the next cycle (and the next).
INDEPENDENT IN THOUGHT AND DEED
Many years ago, I was told that the day you stop learning is the
day you stop earning. This has since become a cliché of
sales bable, but at the time was fresh thinking. As we all
continue to increase our skills and knowledge of the latest
technology and best practice, I am reminded of the one
thing that we cannot be taught. In my mind, that is to smile!

We can teach our staff and our peers everything about
the technical aspects of our chosen career, but we cannot
teach them to enjoy it or get excited by it – that has to
come naturally.

I am a firm believer that dispensing opticians are
people-people, we enjoy the social interaction that our jobs
bring and the assistance we can offer our customers. This
manifests itself in other ways when we are 'off the clock'. At
any optical event you can bet that it is the DOs burning the
midnight oil catching up and maybe even partaking of a
refreshment or two! These discussions are often as important
for my business as prescribed training with an open sharing
of views and a chance to discuss industry gossip.

It is amazing that regardless of our business model and
positioning in the marketplace, we all come across many of
the same problems and challenges in our work lives. Whilst
copying everything that our contemporaries do will never
work, the odd tip that we can share can make all the
difference. What is obvious to everyone else in the room is
often the last thing we can see ourselves when we are too
close to the situation that we are struggling with.

Over the years, much has changed in optics, although
much has remained fairly constant. Forty years ago when I
first decided to go my own way, we were not permitted to
price frames, have window displays or indeed pick our own
business name! When the General Optical Council said no
to my chosen 'brand' name, as it was not my own, the
obvious answer was to change my name to match the plans
for the company. I have now been a 'Barnaby' for longer
than my given name. This is something that is not
necessary anymore but still makes for a good tale to tell.

As we now have two floors in our new premises, we
have some incredible ideas and plans for the future. Being
independent in the way we think and act, brings us a
business as individual as ourselves. It may not be for
everyone but you cannot please all of the people all of
the time. The pace of life continues to increase, with ever more
demands on both our time and that of our clients. We hope
that we have created an Aladdin’s Cave of a practice, best
appreciated at leisure, with a coffee and a friendly chat.

DAVID BARNABY FBDO is the owner of Barnabys
Opticians, Bournemouth.

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Frequently asked questions
answered by Kim Devlin FBDO (Hons) CL

IS THIS PRESCRIBING?
An interesting query came up the other day, which
certainly made me stop and think. Our member had a
patient who sought advice for an elderly relative; the
relative was not a patient of the practice, and indeed
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certainly made me stop and think. Our member had a
patient who sought advice for an elderly relative; the
relative was not a patient of the practice, and indeed
patient who sought advice for an elderly relative; the
sight would be the best answer. Apart from the possibility of a
clinical problem, the best prescription would be found, even
with poor acuity, and the best would be made of what little
vision there was.

It is not unusual for such patients to decline a home
visit, and “Can’t be bothered” is a frequent comment. Of
course, such patients have every right to declare an eye
examination but they should at least be asked and gently
couraged.

Without a prescription of any age, or at least an old
pair of specs to copy, the DO can do very little to help.
Suggesting a pair of ready readers or a magnifier may be a
step towards a home visit, especially if they prove to be
useless. The complexity of finding the correct power is hard
for many people to understand; most think that stronger is
always better.

Be wary though of suggesting a power for the ready
readers to such a patient. Self-selection is within the law,
but you saying a +3.00D would give higher magnification
could also be viewed as prescribing.

With an ageing population, such situations are likely to
become more common, so it is a good idea to have some sort
of procedure set up within the practice for these occasions.

Past FAQs are available for reference on the ABDO website at http://www.abdo.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions

Kim Devlin
is chair of
ABDO’s
Advice and
Guidelines
Working
Group

Dispensing Optics JUNE 2015 41
Optician Index - March 2015 summary

• Total turnover for March fell by three per cent to 169 Index points from February, but a quarterly comparison with the same period last year was positive by 0.2 per cent
• Total number of eye examinations for March fell by six per cent to 100 Index points from February, but the quarterly comparison with last year was also positive by 0.3 per cent
• Average monthly turnover per eye examination for the first quarter was £168.35, £4 lower than the first quarter of 2014
• Sample average dispensing is four per cent lower than March 2014, at 89 Index points
• Contact lens new fits were five per cent higher than March last year, at 121 Index points

The full March 2015 report was published in the 25 April issue of Optician

NEW ‘THROUGH THE PIN-HOLE’ SERIES
PARTICIPANTS WANTED

DOES YOUR PRACTICE OFFER SPECIALIST SERVICES IN, FOR EXAMPLE, DRY EYE, PAEDIATRICS, SPORTS VISION, LOW VISION AND/OR OTHER NICHE AREAS?

We’re looking for member practices to feature in a new ‘Through the pin-hole’ series showcasing the fantastic work that ABDO members are involved with above and beyond ‘the everyday job’ of dispensing

Email ncollinson@abdo.uk.com to register your interest in taking part

PATIENT STORIES WANTED

DISPENSING OPTICS CONTRIBUTOR, ANTONIA CHITTY, IS LOOKING FOR PATIENT STORIES – IN PARTICULAR RELATING TO SQUINT AND AMBLYOPIA

If someone in your practice has picked up a pre-school child with a lazy eye, and the parents would be willing to appear in the media, please let Antonia know by emailing mail@antoniachitty.co.uk any time until 15 August

On yer bike!
GET YOUR BIKE OUT OF THE SHED, DONE YOUR LYCRA (IF YOU DARE) AND GET PEDDLING FOR THIS YEAR’S OPTICS CYCLING FOR SIGHT CHALLENGE IN SUPPORT OF OPTOMETRY GIVING SIGHT (OGS)
The goal is to collectively cycle 25,000 miles and raise £1 for each mile cycled up to World Sight Day on 8 October.
To register and take part visit www.oc4s.co.uk, and register your fundraising page at www.justgiving.com/teams/oc4s

To place an advert, telephone 0781 273 4717 or email ncollinson@abdo.uk.com
Booking deadline for the July issue is Thursday 11 June. Special rate for ABDO members
ABDO College offers a choice of two distance learning courses on the route to becoming a qualified dispensing optician:

Option 1
A two-year Foundation Degree course followed by a third year BSc Degree course in Ophthalmic Dispensing – leading to BSc (Hons) and the ABDO Level 6 FBDO qualifications.

Option 2
A three-year diploma course in Ophthalmic Dispensing – leading to the ABDO Level 6 FBDO qualification.

Course features
• Combines academic and work-based learning
• 32 weekly distance learning units in each academic year

Entry requirements
• Grade C or above GCSE in English, mathematics, science and two other subjects, including evidence of recent learning
• Applicants must be working in practice as a trainee dispensing optician for a minimum of 30 hours per week and have the support of their employer

For further information and application forms for these and other courses, or to request a copy of the ABDO College Prospectus, please contact the ABDO College Courses Team on 01227 738 829 (Option 1) or email info@abdocollege.org.uk

ABDO College Operational Services, Godmersham Park, Godmersham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7DT

www.abdocollege.org.uk

www.twitter.com/abdocollege

Let us further your career

Foundation Degree /BSc (Hons) in Ophthalmic Dispensing (Year 1)
Fellowship Dispensing Diploma (Year 1)

ABDO College provides comprehensive education for dispensing opticians and is currently accepting applications for a range of different courses. Some of the reasons why you should make ABDO College your first choice to either start or further your career in optics are:

• An extensive range of courses to suit your individual needs
• Dedicated and experienced academic staff
• Friendly and supportive learning environment
• Consistently high theory and practical examination results
• Helpful course tutors
• Vibrant and positive attitude towards students
• Committed to the furtherance of dispensing optics
• Established by the profession for the profession
• A proven track record of success

• Four weeks block release at Godmersham in each academic year
• Access to supplementary web-based interactive tutorial presentations
• Block release accommodation can be provided
• Year 1 courses will commence in September 2015

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www.twitter.com/abdocollege

KEEPING EXCELLEENCE IN YOUR SIGHTS
Now plastic frames can be almost as slim as metals. Stepper has just launched the SI 30048; a new collection of colourful plastic frames with TX5 fronts featuring a super thin profile without the need for inline glazing.