



# dispensingoptics

July 2012



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## Cover point

### Ever increasing activity

As I write this we already well into June; it is almost impossible to believe just how quickly the year is going by. Probably this has something to do with the ever increasing level of activity that is happening this year. Everything from the consultation process on the proposed new Articles of Association to the growth in activity at local level, particularly concerning greater engagement with LOCs and the advent of the new world of commissioning. The fact that more and more ABDO members are getting involved and making their voices heard is both heartening and reassuring. We will do all we can to support individual members putting

the case for the profession at local level.

### Date for your diary

This is the time of year when large numbers of members, particularly those with young children, are on countdown to their annual summer holiday. If you are fortunate enough to be going away may I wish you a very happy and restful holiday. However, whether you are going away or not I do hope that as many of you as possible will have put Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 September in your diary. In recent years we have had some splendid conferences and I am sure this year will at least reach, if not exceed, the levels we have come to expect. Elaine Grisdale writes in some detail on page 10 about this year's programme, our new initiatives and the splendid location for the annual dinner. If you cannot come to everything I do urge you to make every effort to spend at least a day with us. The exhibition alone will be worth the journey.

**Tony Garrett** ■



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# Being legal with contact lenses - is it so hard?

by Keith Cavaye FBDO (Hons) CL  
FBCLA

**Competencies covered:**  
**Target groups:**

Professional conduct, contact lens practice  
Contact lens specialists, dispensing opticians, optometrists

Recently, there have been an increasing number of enquiries to the ABDO membership department about legal issues concerning contact lenses, their fitting and supply. In fact, it is encouraging that members are concerned enough to make these enquiries in an attempt to do the job properly. The purpose of this article is to address the legal and professional uncertainties that are raised by both non-fitting dispensing opticians (DOs), contact lens opticians (CLOs) and optometrists in everyday practice. However it should be pointed out, that in a few instances, the guidance can be 'grey' rather than 'black and white', so some of the legislation and professional conduct advice may be open to different interpretations.

So, who does make the rules? The General Optical Council (GOC) is the starting point. They, under their banner

of protecting the public, guide the legislation via the Opticians Act that we must all abide by. Some regulations within this are clear cut – but the Act does not dictate the detail of how practitioners must work on a day-to-day basis to keep this level of 'legality'. This detail is delegated to both the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) and the College of Optometrists (CoO) to clarify for their respective members. Because the Act treats DOs and optometrists in a very similar manner in the contact lens arena, the two professional bodies work closely together to keep their advice very similar to each other, often choosing to use exactly the same words and terminology in their written guidance. In essence, they are saying the same thing, although on occasions, one body may offer more advice on a given topic. Although not law, the

advice and guidance offered is very likely to be referred to in any investigation undertaken by the GOC.

So, who can fit contact lenses in the UK? Registered optometrists, medical practitioners and contact lens opticians'. Any contact lens optician must also be on the specialty list of the GOC and have the relevant CET points and insurance. Failure to do this is likely to lead to a fitness to practice procedure, so don't risk it. Optometry students and trainee CLOs may also fit under direct supervision and 'in training'. This means that a trainee CLO must be on a course or intending to sit the Association's examinations – students may not practice under supervision for an indefinite period<sup>2</sup>.

What must we have before we can proceed to fit? An *In date*, written, signed spectacle prescription, not

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This article has been approved for **1 CL CET point** by the **GOC**. It is open to all FBDO members, including associate member optometrists. Insert your answers to the six multiple choice questions (MCQs) online at [www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk), or on the answer sheet inserted in this issue and return by **9 August 2012** to **ABDO CET, 5 Kingsford Business Centre, Layer Road, Kingsford, Colchester CO2 0HT** OR fax to **01206 734156**. If you complete online, 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 our September 2012 issue.

General Optical Council  
Approving CET  
For Dispensing Optician  
Optometrist  
Specialist Optician  
(Contact Lenses)  
**C-19079**



Remote contact lens supply

more than two years old<sup>3</sup>. This is absolutely clear - so never proceed to fit or re-fit without it! It's very normal to delegate the 'teach' appointment to an optical advisor – that's ok surely? Well yes it is, but it should be considered to be part of the fitting process, so should be supervised. That means that you (or someone CL qualified) should be on the premises to intervene if necessary, particularly if a lens gets stuck in an eye, not away collecting the kids from school.

Do I have to give the contact lens specification to the patient? Yes, of course, it's a legal obligation<sup>4</sup>! The specification must be given on 'completion of the fitting' and this should be LESS than three months after starting the fit<sup>5</sup> - not at three months which is commonly quoted. A longer time is acceptable in complex cases, such as keratoconus, but the patient should be pre-warned at the beginning of the fitting.

If more than one practitioner took part in the process, the specification must be given by the last practitioner to see the patient. The actual content of the specification is listed in **Table 1**<sup>6</sup>. Commonly, several of the nine elements are missed out - take care! For anyone who needs access to a complete specification document, this can be found in Appendix B2 in the Association's Advice and Guidelines section of the website. Should a patient require a duplicate or copy specification, having lost the original, new advice has just been written regarding who is able to do this. Could it be the optical advisor, manager, or dispensing optician? No! Only an

**The Contact Lens (Specification) Rules 1989 state that a contact lens specification must include the following particulars:**

1. The name and address of the individual;
2. If the individual has not attained the age of sixteen on the day the specification is issued, his or her date of birth;
3. The name and registration number of the person signing the specification;
4. The practice address of the person signing the specification;
5. The name of the practice on whose premises the fitting was done;
6. The date the fitting was completed;
7. Sufficient details of any lens fitted to enable a person who fits or supplies a contact lens to replicate the lens
8. The date the specification expires; and
9. Such information of a clinical nature as the person fitting the lens considers to be necessary in the particular case.

Table 1

optometrist or CLO should do this<sup>7</sup>.

A question which seems to be cropping up more frequently recently relates the maximum intervals allowed between aftercare appointments. Advice from both professional bodies states:

'It is appropriate to reinforce to existing wearers the various aspects of contact lens wear that may have become less obvious over time'. This could be interpreted as contact lens patients may quickly become non-compliant! It goes on to say:

'Good practice would suggest that it is in patients' best interests for follow up care to be at least every twelve months'<sup>8,9</sup> So in general, a maximum time between aftercare appointments appears to be annually. It seems sensible however to accept a common sense approach to a very casual wearer, wearing only a few times a year, being allowed a longer span between appointments.

This is more fully explored by ABDO in the following terms:

'The exact frequency at which patients should attend for contact lens check-ups will depend upon factors such as the patient's clinical status, history, type of lens and modality of wear. As a general rule, because of the increased risk of complications, patients wearing lenses on an extended wear basis should have more frequent contact lens check-ups than those wearing lenses on a daily wear basis.'<sup>10</sup> This very much makes sense, but exact frequencies are not quoted.

Occasionally, we come across a

patient that only wears her monthly lenses about three times a week or less. Surely it would be fine to stretch the renewal period of these lenses to six weeks or so?

The CoO deals with this specifically stating:

'Unless there are **exceptional circumstances**, optometrists should **not** recommend a wearing schedule that is contrary to the manufacturers' labelling instructions, which are based on the terms of the products licence'<sup>11</sup>. Contact lens opticians are recommended to follow the same guidance, however tempting it might be to give in to a patient's request.

Now, to perhaps the commonest area of questioning received – internet supply! This seems to raise more temperatures than any other contact lens topic, but is perfectly legal and proper when done correctly. When contact lens supply is remote, ie, internet or mail order, it comes under the rules of General Direction as laid out by the GOC. In this case, the 'seller' must be under the General Direction of a registered medical practitioner, optometrist or dispensing optician to retain the legal status of supply<sup>12</sup>.

To fulfil the order, the supplier must have:

1. the original specification; or
2. a copy of the original specification which he verifies with the person who provided it; or
3. an order from the purchaser, submitted in writing or electronically, which contains the particulars of the specification of the person who

PATIENT	DOCUMENT	ACTION
<b>Fitting/refitting contact lenses</b>		
Prospective wearer	Prescription less than two years old or stated re-examination time	Commence fit if appropriate
Prospective wearer	Prescription over two years old or past stated re-examination time	Only commence fit after eye examination
Contact lens wearer	Prescription less than two years old or stated re-examination time	Commence re- fit
Contact lens wearer	Prescription over two years old or past stated re-examination time	Only commence fit after eye examination
<b>Supplying contact lenses</b>		
Contact lens wearer	Contact lens specification is in date	Supply contact lens/es
Contact lens wearer	Contact lens specification is out of date	No supply to old specification but CLO may refit if eye examination in date

Table 2

intends to wear the contact lens, and the seller verifies those particulars with the person who provided the specification<sup>13</sup>.

When a DO (or other) is the person offering that General Direction, the public should be protected by both rules in the Opticians Act and advice from ABDO. In detail, ABDO records: 'the optician (giving the General Direction) has a duty to ensure that **written protocols and procedures** are in place to protect patient health and safety, that the **person** conducting the supply is appropriately **trained** and themselves able to ensure that the lenses meet the specification and make appropriate arrangements for the patient to receive aftercare. An **audit trail** must be in place'<sup>14</sup>. An additional restriction is that the patient must be sixteen years or over<sup>15</sup> and not appear to be registered blind or partially sighted<sup>16</sup>.

From all of this, you may now realise that the compliant supplier is required to contact the original fitter if they do not have the original specification. So should you speak to them when they telephone you? The author would recommend 'yes' as it is in the patient's best interest, but only verify the detail given to you with a simple 'yes' or 'no' without offering additional information. To do this without confirmed patient consent may be contentious under the Data Protection Act. ABDO advice clarifies the position

by stating:

'There is no confidentiality issue in confirming by receipt of an unambiguous yes that the details in a complete specification as provided to the optometrist/contact lens optician by a supplier are correct. However, if the specification is incorrect in any way, the supplier would need to confirm patient consent'<sup>17</sup>.

The situation regarding supply of contact lenses in relation to eye examination dates also causes confusion. Legally, we may supply contact lenses purely with an in-date contact lens specification<sup>18</sup>, however, patients should still receive a full eye examination at appropriate intervals. But this is 'Best Practice' rather than law.

The two professional bodies differ for once on the actual advice offered to members. ABDO records in capitals: 'A CLO SHOULD NOT CONTINUE TO SUPPLY CONTACT LENSES UNLESS THIS EYE EXAMINATION HAS TAKEN PLACE. IF NECESSARY, ONLY A LIMITED SUPPLY MAY BE GIVEN TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE NEW EXAMINATION TO TAKE PLACE'<sup>19</sup>. Of course, you may not be aware of the eye examination date with many patients and again this is best practice advice, not the law. The College of Optometrists takes a lighter approach advising: 'An optometrist should advise the patient to have an eye examination if appropriate'

Finally, some clarification on what amendments a CLO can make to a contact lens power.

'Contact lens opticians are reminded that contact lenses should always be dispensed to a current spectacle prescription. Once the initial fittings are completed, any changes of prescription should be confirmed with the referrer or by an eye examination'<sup>20</sup>. If that is not clear, it means that CLOs do not have the authority to alter contact lens powers at an aftercare if they suspect an actual prescription change – they must refer for an eye examination.

Hopefully, **Table 2** will also simplify actions required under differing circumstances that you may be faced with<sup>21</sup>.

There is support for you all from the Association, but much of it is readily available from the ABDO website, so why not give it a re-visit? <http://www.abdo.org.uk/adviceandguidelines.php>

Full details of the Opticians Act can be found via the GOC's website at [http://www.optical.org/en/about\\_us/legislation/opticians\\_act.cfm](http://www.optical.org/en/about_us/legislation/opticians_act.cfm)

## References

1. Opticians Act 1989 4.25.1A
2. Conditions of Admission requirements ABDO, Cert. in CL Practice

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1. JVC Data on file 2012. 33,403 attendees to date in Europe and the Middle East by end of 2011. 2. JVC Data on file 2012. 82% of respondents rated themselves extremely/very confident in contact lens fitting post-course. N=9,274 respondents attending courses in Europe and Middle East in 2011. Not all attendees completed questionnaire. THE VISION CARE INSTITUTE® and ACUVUE® are registered trademarks of Johnson & Johnson Medical Ltd. © Johnson & Johnson Medical Ltd. 2012. Johnson & Johnson Vision Care is part of Johnson & Johnson Medical Ltd.

3. Opticians Act 1989 4.25.1A(a+b)
4. Opticians Act 1989 4.25.1A(5)a
5. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.5.5
6. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.10.2
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8. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.7.7
9. Code of Ethics & Guidance for Professional Conduct CoO G5.04
10. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.3
11. Code of Ethics & Guidance for Professional Conduct CoO G2.12c
12. Opticians Act 1989 4.27.(3)(d)
13. Opticians Act 1989 4.27.(3)(a)
14. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.12.3
15. Opticians Act 1989 4.27.(2)(c)
16. Opticians Act 1989 4.27.(3)(e)
17. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.7.6
18. Opticians Act 1989 4.27.(1)(a)

19. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.6.2
20. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.6.3
21. ABDO Advice and Guidelines 3.1.2

**Keith Cavaye FBDO (Hons) CL FBCLA is currently working as an independent locum contact lens optician and consultant. For nine years he was a sessional lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University. His previous positions include Professional Services Manager Indigolighthouse Group, Contact Lens Product Manager Dollond & Aitchison & Contact Lens Services Manager Boots Opticians. He is also a British Contact Lens Association council member, ABDO Board member and past GOC council member, still serving on the GOC investigation committee. Other optical interests**



Keith Cavaye

**include ABDO contact lens practical examiner, member of the contact lens committee and chairman of the ABDO CET committee. ■**

## Multiple choice questions (MCQs): Being legal with contact lenses - is it so hard?

### 1. Which body guides the legislation for contact lens fitting via the Opticians Act (1989)?

- a. The Association of British Dispensing Opticians
- b. The General Optical Council
- c. The Association of Optometrists
- d. The College of Optometrists

### 2. Which of the following may not fit contact lenses in the UK without supervision?

- a. A registered dispensing optician
- b. A registered optometrist
- c. A medical practitioner
- d. A contact lens optician on the contact lens specialty list

### 3. It is a legal obligation to give a copy of the contact lens specification to the patient. At what point in the fitting process should this be given?

- a. The first time the patient leaves the practice wearing the lenses
- b. On completion of the fitting three months after starting the fit
- c. On completion of the fitting less than three months after starting the fit
- d. At some point during the first year of wear

### 4. According to the Contact Lens (Specification) Rules of

### 1989, what piece of information is NOT required to be recorded on the record of specification given to the patient?

- a. The patient's name and address
- b. The date that the fitting was completed
- c. The date and name and address of the practitioner who carried out the last eye examination
- d. The name and registration number of the person signing the specification

### 5. What advice do both ABDO and College of Optometrists offer with regard to the maximum interval between aftercare appointments?

- a. The interval should be no more than two years
- b. The interval should be no more than twelve months
- c. The interval should be no more than six months
- d. The interval should be no more than three months

### 6. Under what circumstances should the optometrist/contact lens optician ask for confirmation of patient consent from a compliant online supplier?

- a. In every case
- b. An optometrist/contact lens optician should not give any information to an online supplier
- c. If they can say "yes" to a completely detailed set of specifications
- d. If the specification is incorrect in any way

The deadline for posted or faxed response is 9 August 2012 to the address on page 4. The module code is C-19079

Online completion - [www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk) - after member log-in go to 'CET online'

After the closing date, the answers can be viewed on the 'CET Online' page of [www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk). To download, print or save your results letter, go to 'View your CET record'. If you would prefer to receive a posted results letter, contact the CET Office 01206 734155 or email [cet@abdo.org.uk](mailto:cet@abdo.org.uk)

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Diversification is the name of the game at this year's ABDO Conference and Exhibition, writes Elaine Grisdale

# Mixing it up in Shakespeare Country

**It seems like an age since we had an annual conference. In reality it means that we have had more time to put together a weekend which we are sure you will find enjoyable, interesting and stimulating. This year's conference offers an eclectic mix of the latest in cutting edge fashion and technology, a mouth-watering cocktail of workshops and lectures and the chance to mingle and socialise in fantastic surroundings. It's a weekend that you shouldn't miss.**

Our home for the weekend will be the beautifully renovated Holiday Inn in Stratford-upon-Avon. The hotel is modern, airy and has an enviable waterfront location. As well as the excellent conference facilities it boasts a new health club and pool. There is ample parking for guests on site so no worrying about carrying luggage from a multi-storey outside of the hotel confines. Everything is conveniently close. Within five minutes' walk are taverns, wineries, restaurants, shops, parks and all the historical landmarks associated with Shakespeare Country. Tourists come from all over the world to

bathe in the history and beauty of Stratford-upon-Avon. It will provide a lovely backdrop for our event.

Stratford-upon-Avon itself is an ideally situated central location with good road and rail links. For those people who need to fly to the location, Birmingham International Airport is only 30 minutes away.

For those of you who play golf, the weekend kicks off with a golf day at the Stratford on Avon Golf Club. Golfers will be playing for the Frank Clipson Memorial Cup and Barry Duncan will be defending his title. This is an annual event and brings together optical professionals, their partners and industry friends. This year's event is kindly sponsored by Shamir, Marchon and Transitions and is a relaxing and fun way to start the weekend. The competition is followed by a dinner and a good-humoured overview of the day's proceedings.

Our flagship event opens on Saturday 29 September with registration at 1pm and the opening of the exhibition

where you will be able to catch up with a large number of industry partners showcasing frames, lenses, technology and instruments. Please come along to support the many companies who continue to support our Association both with their time commitments and financially. We have tried to keep the cost to members as low as possible by choosing a central location. We have also made great efforts to keep the cost of attending the conference in line with the last conference, which was a great success in Bristol. As in previous years, those members who just want to attend the exhibition can do so free of charge.

## Expanded CET offering

2012 is the final year in a three-year CET cycle. For this reason we have expanded the scope of the CET on offer and have a mixture of lectures, additional learning and workshops. There is really something for everyone. Saturday kicks off with two streams of lectures. In stream one, the lectures are delivered by ABDO's director of professional examinations and are



Shakespeare's birthplace in Henley Street



The River Avon



Anne Hathaway's cottage

aimed at students in their final year with a guide to what lies ahead in the final qualifying exams. There is also a lecture looking at the Pre-Qualification Portfolio and supervision, which will be of interest to those of you thinking about taking on a trainee, those of you who are supervising at the moment and those of you who are being supervised.

As we try and expand the scope of practice and opportunities for our members, we have taken the conscious decision to highlight more clinical subjects at our conference. Sally Bates will be delivering the first of these subjects with the thought provoking topic, 'Do spectacles cause facial basal cell carcinoma?'. With the advent of local commissioning, the time has never been better for dispensing opticians to step forward and become involved in local optical politics. We have the chance to shape the future of the profession and must ensure our voices are heard en masse. Mike Cody, who is a LOCSU board member, and Barry Duncan, who has special responsibilities for relations with devolved governments and with LOCSU, will be co-presenting an overview of optics in 2012, the scope for dispensing opticians and looking at what happens after PCTs go. This will be a must for those who have been tempted to get involved but haven't had enough knowledge or confidence to step forward.

This political flavour leads us nicely into the ABDO AGM where we will be taking two important votes. One is for the validation of the new Articles of

Association (which we're hoping you'll all vote for to help us be on the right side of the law). The other vote is for the proposed name change and a 75 per cent of the vote has to be in favour before this can be done.

More clinical topics will be discussed in Sunday's programme. Well known for his involvement with Optometry Scotland and the College of Optometrists, Frank Munro will be explaining how DOs can become involved in developing a lifestyle/health vision practice. Also hot-footing it from Scotland just to be with us after her daughter's wedding, Anita Morrison-Fokken from Aston University will help us understand why we should be more aware of and particularly concerned about slipping, tripping and falling in our ever increasing elderly patient population. Glasses (or the lack of them) can be the root cause of such episodes, which in the most serious cases can lead to permanent disability. ABDO board member and popular *Dispensing Optics* contributor, Angela McNamee, will lead us through an update of when we should and shouldn't be referring.

### DOs in arms

We want you to leave Stratford-upon-Avon feeling empowered with the arms to become more successful in practice. To this end we have two excellent speakers in the form of Julian Wiles and Paul Surridge who will be there to motivate and inspire you to make a success of your business. Julian will be encouraging you to 'Make everything you can out of everything you've got', which in

these challenging times is a great idea. To complement this, and inspired by our theatrical surroundings, Paul Surridge who is the CEO of the Sight Care Group, will be showing you, 'How to move from mediocrity to centre stage' using the people and social networking technologies you have at your disposal to ensure successful growth.

Have you ever wondered what more you could do with your professional skills? Are you getting a bit fed up and feel as though you are in a rut? The ABDO Conference is here to help. Diversification is the buzzword at this year's event. We have a trio of inspiring ABDO members who will be sharing their real-life stories with you and offering an insight into how they are developing their businesses and developing their skills in different environments. Jo Holmes from Devon, Ros Kirk from Reading and Alan Parkhurst from Doncaster will be enthusing about their out-of-practice professional activities at the conference.

They broke the mould when they made Stuart Jones. He is a successful practice owner, eyewear designer, professional racing driver and Radio Manchester contributor. The rich and famous come from all four corners of the world to see him. He has built his successful practice in Manchester based around bespoke eyewear and an individualised styling concept. He will be attending to share with you the secrets of his success. As a support to Stuart's exposé we have one of our conference favourites, Duncan Counter, to recap how and why we

should be taking facial measurements and will be introducing us to the up-to-date terminology linked to frame and facial measurements.

We haven't forgotten product and the important part it plays in dispensing. The choice we make for our patients is critical to the quality of vision they receive. We are very happy to welcome two experienced presenters and lens experts who are joining this year's conference programme. We are first delighted to welcome Paul Walden who has been at Norville man and boy and is now its marketing director. He will be looking at the advent of new technologies and taking a practical view of what we can and can't do today compared with 10 years ago. I'm sure a lot of you will be surprised by what he has to say. Following Paul we have long-time conference favourite and friend, Andy Hepworth from Essilor. Andy will be presenting the most recent thoughts on protecting our eyes from the sun's spectrum.

### Focus on children

A lot of parents were screened at school and are therefore under the assumption that eye screening still happens, and someone will tell them if and when their child needs to see an optical professional. In fact, vision screening is supposed to happen at birth and at four to five years old in the

UK, but it doesn't. There are just not enough of the people (orthoptists) who are supposed to do the screening to carry it out. It is very area dependent – what the tabloids would call 'a postcode lottery'.

Sight tests are free for all children under 16 and there are plenty of optometrists in the UK to carry out sight tests on children. Remarkably only 22 per cent of under-16s have ever had a sight test. Some children are missing out on opportunities to fulfil their talents because they can't see properly and no-one has picked it up. A child who has always had blurred vision won't necessarily be able to complain of blurred vision as he considers this to be normal. Dispensing opticians could and should play a vital role in vision screening children. Michael Gilson does just that in Northern Ireland and he will be on hand to meet delegates and share his experiences. He will be happy to talk to individuals and will have the equipment he uses on hand, for discussion purposes. ABDO will be working with Michael in the future to develop refresher courses and training to help members who would like to become involved.

Also available on the children's stand to talk to members will be ABDO vice president Peter Black who has been heavily involved with the *Careers in Optics* initiative, which takes our world into secondary schools and creates greater links between the DO and local community. Jo Holmes and Michael Heap will also be present to talk about their unique roles and approaches talking to primary school children and giving tips on how to keep the under seven to 11s engaged. For the conference we are hoping to produce materials, which delegates can adapt for speaking in schools.

### Practical workshops

For those of you who want to get a bit more involved we are once again offering a series of practical workshop sessions to help hone your skills in different departments. The 'Frame measurement and low vision' workshops ran in Bristol and were a great success. By popular demand,

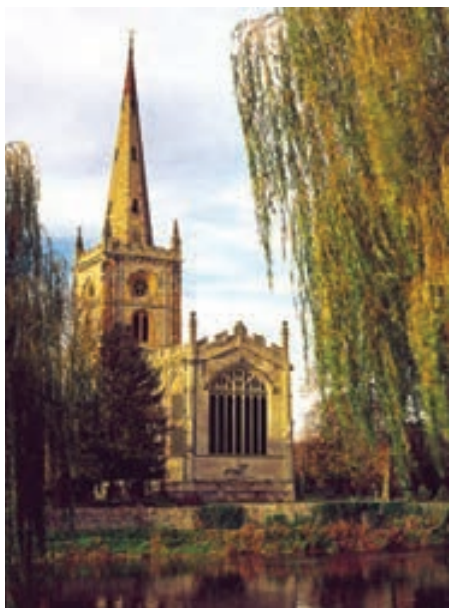
we are revamping them for the 2012 conference. Examiners and specialists in their fields will be on hand to double up your CET points tally, answer your questions in small groups and help you learn new and perfect old techniques.

New for this year, and limited to 18 places (so book early when you pick up your registration pack) is 'The introduction to refraction' workshop. Through the support of Topcon we have set up a six-point taster of what you can expect on the new refraction course, which aims to take you from understanding to execution. Participants will gain an overview of the retinoscopy, subjective refraction and binocular balance modules. The three, one hour sessions are worth two CET points each.

Some lectures will not be CET accredited due to the commercial nature of the content, while others will allow you to gain two and not one point through the ABDO additional learning scheme. If you attend lectures marked with the 'AL' logo, you will be able to log into a special site following the conference to read more on the subject and answer a further six questions to gain the additional point.

### Dinner, dancing, motors

Last but not least I have to mention the gala dinner. The dinner is all about letting your hair down and having fun with friends and like-minded people. It's a chance dress up, be wined and dined and to dance the night away or just sit and enjoy the live entertainment. This year we are leaving the confines of the hotel and taking a short coach ride to the dinner venue, which is the Heritage Motor Museum in Gaydon. Here we will be able to get up close and personal to the interesting and mouth-watering exhibits while nursing a pre-dinner drink. During the course of the evening we will be recognising fellow professionals who have stood out for their dedication and hard work. The gala dinner has once again been kindly sponsored by Transitions. We hope to see as many members there as possible. ■



Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon



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Association of British Dispensing Opticians



Following up last month's article, Antonia Chitty explains how to ensure that your idea or invention will lead to a marketable product

# From idea to product

**If you have an idea for an invention all ready to go, Cally Robson suggests caution: "Don't rush in. Computer aided drawings (CAD) won't help sell your idea to anyone, contrary to claims made by some services advertising on the web, and they often aren't technical enough to be useful towards a manufacturing prototype." Cally continues: "Do as much prototyping of your design yourself first – fabbing sites like Ponoko.com or Shapeways.com can be useful." If you need to create a prototype, Kane Kramer advises: "Depending on its complexity, you may find a large company that will join in, providing the patent application is in place, to assist with your prototype. Or you might invest £5,000 or £10,000 yourself to create a prototype. You may need more than one prototype to move towards your marketable product. Sometimes you may need to make prototypes in order to be certain what you need to patent. If you need external assistance you can sign a non-disclosure agreement [see last month's article] with that prototype maker."**

Alongside creating your prototype you should also carry out market research. This will tell you if your idea can turn into something that people will pay for. You need to do this without exposing your ideas. Cally Robson advises: "Ask people about the problem they have that your solution is addressing. You will learn a

lot without giving anything away. Ask your clients, or in small face-to-face groups or relevant forums on the web, where your target market is likely to hang out."

On top of this, Robson advises that you should check out the potential profitability of your product. "Get a ball park figure on manufacturing costs of similar items at different production runs, say 500 and 5,000. Online supplier sites like Alibaba.com can be really useful. Multiply the unit cost by six to eight to get estimates of the retail price you'd need to sell at to make enough money to cover margins for retailers, distributors and your costs. If no-one seems likely to buy at those prices, it's unlikely you'll have a profitable product concept."

## A great idea

The next steps will vary depending on you and your expertise. Kane Kramer says: "One inventor might already be in business, be able to get the product manufactured and go to market. Or you might have a great idea but know nothing about running a business, and not be keen to start manufacturing. If this applies to you, look at the British Inventors Society, a kind of 'self help club' which is free to join. There are inventors clubs all over the country. If you can get to a club, you'll find a mix of people, from doctors to engineers to artists, but everyone has an affinity as an inventor. You'll be able to sort out

confidentiality agreements so you can discuss your ideas.

"Clubs like this help you tap into the network of all the services that surround inventions," continues Kramer. "For example, you could get recommendations for factories that can help with prototypes. On the other hand, you'll also learn about how to avoid unscrupulous invention brokers who charge for worthless reports. A lot of these clubs are linked to universities and enterprise agencies, so if you have a great new idea there is the ability to find a friendly way in to the support you need. It means important inventions won't get missed." Cally Robson adds: "Tap into experience. There is no set process in designing and commercialising a new product and it can be fraught with expensive mistakes. Other product innovators are often too busy to pass on everything they've learned, so make use of online groups, and free resources like the British Library's Business and IP Centre [<http://www.bl.uk/bipc>] every step of the way."

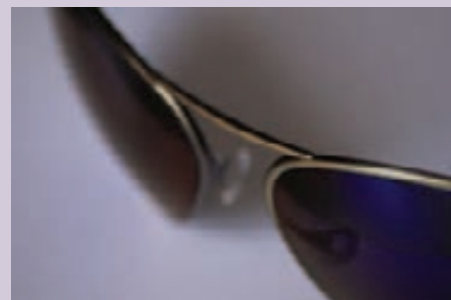
**Former optometrist Antonia Chitty now writes on business topics. Her latest book is *Blogging: The Essential Guide*, and she has also written *A guide to Promoting Your Business and Marketing: The Essential Guide* which will help you if you need effective ways to promote your practice. ■**



Alastair Carrie



Frames designed to fit



18 months developing lenses

## Case study: How a pilot got his idea off the runway

Alastair Carrie is a pilot and managing director of new sunglasses company, Bigatmo. He says: "Several years ago, I moved airlines and thought I'd buy myself a nice pair of sunglasses. I headed off to our local optician who had a good range, chose a pair with a good reputation but they didn't live up to my expectations. I took them back and started looking through all the other brands. There are lots of brands that have a good product but not one did everything I wanted. The optician, Graham Legg, sat back and said, 'Why don't you design your own?' and that was the start. Since then he has been incredibly helpful with all kinds of retail, practice and technical advice."

Alastair used his contacts to find a young designer who took him to the first stage of developing a vision for the perfect sunglasses for pilots. He recalls: "Looking back they were amateurish, but they were a start. A colleague's stepfather turned out to run an optical company, which supplies products to 11 out of the 13 European optical chains. He was kind enough to introduce us and we had a number of talks on the phone before meeting at Mido, where we spent around 20 hours going through my business plans. This gave me more credibility when I met companies I needed to deal with. At Mido I looked at five of the top lens companies, frame manufacturers and accessories companies to start the process of finding manufacturers and suppliers."

"After that, we needed to get our designs drawn up properly. Our young designer had reached the limits of his ability so we moved

on to a new designer, Anthony Harrison Griffin. He had been an acquaintance of mine for years, and is now our director of design. We developed our first collection, with titanium frames, and registered the designs. We wanted our brand to reflect our values, so we did a lot of branding work with a specialist company who were astoundingly good. They listened to what we were talking about and the branding remains good now, with an aviation-inspired theme running throughout.

"The design and manufacture was another issue. We produced 3D CAD designs but the manufacturers couldn't use that technology and needed 2D images. We initially didn't understand what the problem was and then when we tried to sort it out there were issues about the component parts – some of which we had to get from a different factory. The manufacturers have a great reputation for frame production in the Far East, but we just weren't aware of their limitations. Lack of understanding, knowledge, equipment – we educated them, they educated us, but this added around 18 months to the development process and even now they claim that although the design is visually uncomplicated our frames are the most complicated ones they produce.

"We spent 18 months developing the lenses. I asked colleagues to test out the lenses and tell me which one they liked to help us shortlist. Eventually we narrowed it down to two types of lenses. We found a good base lens, and tried different filters. We needed light transmission rates adequate to see

instruments, but also enough to cut out glare. We added on a number of coatings to take our lenses beyond the norm. The frames are designed to fit very snugly to cope with aerobatics. People are used to spring joints, but the titanium sides are springy and need to be opened up to wear. We also got pilots to give us their views on boxes, cases, cleaning bags, etc. We showed these to pilots all the way through, right down to testing out fonts and straplines. We thought about using a metal sprung case, but people wanted a zip case that was squashy enough to fit into a flight bag, but strong enough to cope with being sat on.

"We're going to practices now. We've had to do a lot of work quickly, as initially we thought we'd go via a distributor but their fees would put the sunglasses into another price bracket altogether. By going directly we can get them in the £169-199 price bracket for plano sunglasses. We developed the prescription programme at the same time. This is where Norville comes into the equation. We wanted a very secure fixing in the frame. Very few companies have the equipment to edge as we wanted, but Norville had the right equipment to produce freeform prescriptions and edge them to complete the prescription product as the replica of the plano product.

"Recently we were at the biggest aviation expo in Europe, and just as many people were interested in the prescription product as the plano product. Airline pilots used to retire quite early but times have changed. In Europe it is quite usual for pilots to work to 65 and so there are a lot of presbyopic people flying aeroplanes into their 40s, 50s and 60s, so we can see a growing demand for prescription sunglasses for pilots. Right now we want to find practitioners who want to deal with the prescription side in their practice."

Alastair finishes: "Our sunglasses have obviously been designed for aviation but they really are excellent for driving and all kinds of land and water based activities. In fact, many of our customers aren't involved in aviation at all and buy Bigatmo's because they are just really good sunglasses."

Find out more at [www.bigatmo.com](http://www.bigatmo.com) ■

## What is an inventors club?

Got an invention but lack help and support to get it to market? You're not alone. Britain is a nation of inventors, and every month men and women are meeting in inventors' clubs, to help stimulate ideas and get businesses off the ground. You'll find total beginners and experienced inventors, get the chance to network and attend useful presentations.

To find your local club just type 'inventors club' and your area into a search engine. Find out more and get support as an inventor from:

- Cally Robson – [www.catallyse.com](http://www.catallyse.com)
- She's Ingenious! – [www.shesingenious.org](http://www.shesingenious.org)
- The British Inventors Society – [www.thebis.org](http://www.thebis.org) ■



Andy Hepworth, professional relations manager, Essilor



Board member Ashton Galloway and Ant Blackman



President Jennifer Brower



Board member Angela McNamee

# Day of updates and debate



Gaynor Williams from Area 3 (North West)

New Articles proposals, CET points and peer review were just some of the hot topics discussed at the 14th President's Consultation Day held in London on 16 May

**I**n her welcoming address ABDO President, Jennifer Brower, urged attendees to have their say on the proposed changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association and encouraged members to stimulate debate in their Areas (see later). ABDO general secretary, Tony Garrett, then reported that eyecare and eye health had at last been included in the public health agenda as part of government policy. This would mean new responsibilities for local authorities in monitoring eye health, which would in turn provide the eyecare professions with an opportunity to influence funding decisions through local commissioning bodies. Local Optical Committees (LOCs) would be involved and Tony urged members to become engaged in the process locally.



Deanne Gray and Jane Burnand welcome everyone to the President's Day

Tony then mentioned a current Law Commission review of regulation and regulatory bodies, the outcome of which would change the ways in which regulatory bodies operated and could result in the General Optical Council (GOC) having greater flexibility to change its rules without the constraints of seeking Section 60 Orders or changes to the Opticians

Act. The President and the general secretary had been holding regular meetings with the GOC chairman and chief executive in order to maintain a constant awareness within the GOC of issues affecting the profession.

The general secretary reported on the Association's involvement in the Optical Confederation, noting in



The gathering at the President's Consultation Day

particular that a recent increase in voucher values, at a time of general public spending cuts, had only been achieved because the optical bodies had presented a united front. This joint approach had also facilitated regular discussions with the Minister of Health, and the Confederation had taken the opportunity to press for the exclusion of the profession from a new government scheme called 'Monitor', which would have drastic powers over the whole health sector.

Tony noted that the ABDO College intake, which had previously been capped at 180 entrants per year, had been increased by the GOC to 240 and that this year's intake had comprised some 200 students. He felt this indicated a high regard for the College and the profession, and a healthy demand for dispensing opticians. Negotiations with the New Zealand Association had culminated in the enrolment onto the ABDO course of around 60 New Zealand practitioners who wished to upgrade their qualification to FBDO.

### Clarification on new Articles and name change

Introducing an item on proposed changes to ABDO's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the President emphasised that these were a completely separate issue from the proposed name change. The Articles had been redrafted in modern terminology and streamlined to meet the provisions of company legislation. One proposed change would enable dispensing opticians who qualified through other training institutions to become ABDO members, although

they would be distinguished from ABDO-qualified members by being prohibited from using the affix FBDO. In the immediate future this would allow membership of the Association to be granted to practitioners who qualified through the new Anglia Ruskin University route.

The Board believed that practitioners should not be penalised because their employers required them to train elsewhere.

The Board had also been concerned that if membership was refused to these practitioners, they might establish their own association, which would be divisive for the profession. They would be allowed to upgrade their qualification to FBDO, and thus be able to take ABDO's higher qualifications, but until the content of the Anglia course was known, it was not possible to develop an appropriate upgrading process.

In response to a query, the general secretary confirmed that the Articles would be voted on as a single entity, with a separate vote for the name change. It would be impractical to vote on individual changes to the Articles as they had been completely rewritten to produce a smaller, more streamlined version, said Tony, to meet the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and to allow the Board more flexibility, whilst continuing to protect the essential rights of members. If the AGM approved the new Articles and the name change, a supplementary vote would then be taken to change the title of the Articles to match the new name.

### Better reflection of membership

With regard to the change of title, Tony reported the reasons for the Board's conclusion that this would benefit the Association and the profession. Removal of the term 'dispensing' from the title would better reflect the Association's membership, he said. For example contact lens opticians did not call themselves 'dispensing opticians' and did not undertake any dispensing, and a similar situation applied to low vision practitioners. In addition, 20 per cent of the membership, a percentage which was likely to increase, comprised non-British practitioners and clearly the current title was inappropriate for them. Furthermore, it had to be borne in mind that many overseas members were from countries where 'dispensing' did not exist and their regulatory authorities had no understanding of this term.

The general secretary had expected the proposed name change to generate a difficult debate, with strongly held views on both sides. He had therefore been surprised at how few comments had been received from members and he urged Areas to hold meetings to discuss all these issues and to explain to the wider membership the reasons for the proposed changes. He indicated his willingness, and that of the President and Board members, to attend Area meetings to explain the rationale for the changes and hear members' views. It was not the Association's intention to force these changes upon the membership; they could only be introduced after full consultation and approval.



Fiona Anderson Area 12 (Scotland) and Board member

Tony reiterated that in order to comply with the terms of the Companies Act, all members would be sent a proxy form for voting on the Articles and the name change. The forms would be sent out at the end of July and members could either:

- Do nothing;
- Complete the form nominating the chairman of the AGM (ie, the President) to vote on their behalf with or without pre-indication of their preference;
- Complete the form nominating a member attending the AGM to vote on their behalf, with or without pre-indication of their preference; or
- Attend the AGM and vote in person

In answer to a query, the general secretary confirmed that the proposed Articles should retain the provision that any member who was an undischarged bankrupt would not be allowed to stand for election to the Board; this was a requirement of the Companies Act. He would ensure that this provision was included.

### Encouraging debate

It was confirmed that approval of the new Articles and the name change required a majority of 75 per cent of the votes cast. In view of the importance of encouraging as many members as possible to use their vote, it was suggested that information be publicised not only in *Dispensing Optics* but also in *Optician* and *Optometry Today*. The general secretary welcomed this suggestion and added that every possible use would be made of electronic communications with members. He would consider a suggestion to



Jo Holmes Area 7 (West Country)

publicise the vote in company in-house journals, although he questioned whether this would be entirely appropriate. There was, however, no reason why individual members should not seek to persuade their colleagues to vote.

Comment was made about the potential cost to practices of the name change in terms of signage and stationery, and the costs to ABDO in terms of ABDO-branded merchandise. Tony indicated that the major costs for the Association were legal fees, circulation of proxy voting forms and, in due course, the cost of changing stationery. However, this last item was changed every two years anyway, when a new President took office. There followed a discussion on 'front of house' practice materials such as nameplates showing the FBDO affix, although it was noted that few members now purchased ABDO badges or nameplates. The President expressed the hope that if members approved the name change, they would wish to be known by their new affix.

It was pointed out that if the name change was agreed and members were issued with new certificates that showed their new affix from 2012, this would be extremely misleading as an indication of the length of members' qualification and could be damaging to patients' perceptions. The general secretary acknowledged the importance of taking this into account when the details were finalised. He urged everyone present, as leaders of the profession, to stimulate debate and, if they agreed with the proposed



Lee Price Area 6 (Wales)

changes, to promote their importance. If local members asked questions that those present felt unable to answer, they should be put in touch with the Association so that their concerns and queries could be addressed.

Comments should be submitted to ABDO by the end of June, when the Board will review all responses and submit final proposals to the AGM in September, when a vote will be taken.

### Conference on the horizon

In her presentation on the 2012 ABDO conference, Elaine Grisdale, ABDO head of professional services, outlined the format and content of the conference that would take place at the Holiday Inn in Stratford-upon-Avon on 29-30 September. She outlined the facilities at the hotel and the social activities that had been arranged as part of the event. These included a gala dinner at the nearby Heritage Motor Museum, which would be sponsored by Transitions Optical. The conference objectives were highlighted, as follows:

- To be accessible to all members in terms of location and cost
- To offer opportunities to enable members to perform better in practice; this would mean the inclusion of more business and practical elements
- To offer ideas for diversification
- To provide a networking event, meeting fellow professionals and bodies, industry partners and students
- To create a platform for debate of important issues such as the proposed name change and career progression

Pricing would be in line with the

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Barry Duncan ABDO members' support manager



Carole Desai Area 10 (Kent)



Ian Anderson Area 11 (London)

previous conference, ie, single delegate package £175; one delegate and one non-delegate package £195; two-delegate package £270; exhibition only free of charge; Saturday delegate pass £15; Sunday delegate pass £65; and gala dinner £85. ABDO head of marketing, Michael Potter, had generated a series of advertisements for maximum exposure and had developed other publicity activities. The conference guide would again be included in an issue of *Optician*.

Elaine then presented the full conference programme, noting that some lectures were accompanied by additional web-based material with an extra CET point, to be available after the conference; attendance at the lecture would be a prerequisite for this additional learning. The Sunday programme would incorporate a drop-in advice desk for members wishing to become more involved in schools. This was an area that the Association was keen to promote particularly as the current vision screening programme in schools appeared to be inadequate. It was hoped to produce a kit to enable members to carry out school vision screening and the Sunday programme would include sessions relevant to this topic.

Next Elaine listed the exhibitors who had confirmed their attendance, noting in particular the support of Shamir, which was proving to be an excellent partner. Conversely Elaine said she had been disappointed with the response of some of the previous major sponsors but acknowledged

that the current economic climate made it difficult to obtain sponsorship at past levels. She urged members to encourage their suppliers to support ABDO by exhibiting at the conference and suggested Area initiatives to stimulate attendance by members.

Elaine finished by mentioning that the Area 5 committee was assisting at the conference and with its planning. The committee had cancelled its September meeting in order to concentrate on the conference and was offering a £45 subsidy to Area 5 members who would have attended the Area meeting and booked the conference instead. She wondered whether other Areas might feel able to support its members in a similar manner.

### Current and future CET provision

In a presentation on his recent activities, Barry Duncan, ABDO members support manager, reminded members of the support provided by the Association in terms of CET. This had comprised an average of 390 points per cycle, mostly within the cost of the membership fee. He outlined the role of Areas in CET provision and noted that as of January 2012 only 750 to 800 members had attended ABDO events each year. There continued to be a lack of funding for CET for dispensing opticians except in Scotland, a situation that was unlikely to change in the near future. Barry outlined the results of a membership survey that he had undertaken earlier this year. Although only a small number of responses had been received, these had demonstrated that members would prefer not to pay

for CET and that some were not prepared to travel far to CET events. A majority of respondents had indicated a preference for email communications about events and a small number had pressed for crèche facilities.

Barry then explained possible changes to the GOC's CET requirements, as follows:

- Half of all points per cycle would have to be achieved by attending events, or participating in interactive CET
- Contact lens opticians would no longer be required to obtain additional points
- Peer discussion would be a mandatory activity for contact lens opticians
- E-learning would be an option
- CET would have to be undertaken in all core competencies

It was clear that if these changes were introduced for the next cycle, members' expectations would increase and Areas would have to be even more active in providing a variety of events and locations. Areas were urged to prepare for the new situation by ensuring that they had proper structures and effective communications both within their Areas and with the Association. Forward planning would be essential and Barry proposed the following:

- Each Area should offer a minimum of 12 points per year (some Areas already met this target)
- Areas should strongly consider the workshop concept
- Facilitator training for peer discussion would be offered to a representative from each Area



Joanne Abbott Area 4 (East Anglia)



Brenda Rennie Area 12 (Scotland) and Richard Morris Area 3 (North West)



Board member Keith Cavaye

- Full year meeting plans should be released a year in advance. Ideally the programme for 2013 should be ready, at least in outline, by the end of October 2012, with full information being published in *Dispensing Optics* and on the website in January 2013
- There would be a review of financial assistance from ABDO in recognition of the higher financial burden placed upon Areas by the new requirements
- Consideration would be given centrally to engaging with industry partners
- Contact had already been made with hotel chains to try and negotiate preferential rates for Area events

Barry stressed the support available from the Association staff and suggested that a steering group of Area chairmen be established to discuss the above propositions. Comment was made that it would be helpful if the CET events list could include more detailed information, for example, the title of a lecture did not necessarily indicate the content. It was felt that events would have to offer more than one CET point if they were to attract a good attendance and in this context members were reminded that visual recognition tests provided two points and could easily be added to an evening event.

### Area reports

**Area 2:** A full CET day had been arranged for October 2012 offering eight CET points, including one contact lens point. It was hoped to attract 50 to 70 members to the event and 11 exhibitors were anticipated, which would enable the event to be provided free of charge to members.

The usual revision day for students had taken place last year and feedback had been positive. Thanks were expressed to committee members for their hard work.

**Area 3:** An evening presentation, run jointly with the Cheshire LOC, had recently taken place and had been well received by the 18 optometrists and 22 dispensing opticians who had attended. The next event would take place on 17 October and would be an evening visit to the Hoya Lens factory at Wrexham. The tour would provide two CET points, with a further two points being provided by a visual recognition test. Longer-standing committee officers were gradually stepping down and their roles taken on by enthusiastic younger members.

**Area 4:** The last meeting in March had comprised a visit to the Shamir factory, with a presentation on occupational lenses by the company's product development manager. Although only a small company, full sponsorship had been provided. The next event would take place on 13 June and would hopefully be sponsored by Transitions. A full committee was in place and included a student member.

**Area 6:** A successful meeting had been held in March providing seven CET points and had been completely self-funding due to the large number of sponsors. Discussions were underway about another meeting in 2012, and how to encourage more members to join the committee.

**Area 7:** The President had attended the last meeting and would be

attending the CET day on 17 May. Two new members had joined the committee, both of whom were students, and thanks were expressed to all the committee members for their hard work. Future plans would await the new GOC requirements and would take into account points put forward by the members support manager. Area 12 was congratulated on organising the mini-conference and exhibition in Scotland.

**Area 9:** An evening meeting on paediatric eyecare had taken place at the end of 2011, providing two CET points and attended by more than 40 members. The quality of the speakers was a major contributory factor to good attendance at all events, as evidenced by the paediatric event and the joint event held in March 2012 with Areas 8 and 10. The latter had also been attended by the President and Board members. The Area AGM would be held on 21 June, and would include two lectures and offer 2.5 CET points. The President would attend the AGM to talk about, and hear views on, the proposed Articles and name change.

**Area 10:** Since the previous President's Consultation Day, a committee had been formed comprising a chairman, secretary and events coordinator, and the President had attended the inaugural committee meeting. A joint meeting had been held with Area 9, which had been well attended and well received. A garden party was being organised for the summer, offering six CET points as well as a family fun day. If successful, this could become an annual event.



Kevin Gutsell Area 9 (South East) and Board member

**Area 11:** A CET day had been held in November 2011, and another event in February 2012, attended by the President and attracting around 30 members. It had been sponsored by Silhouette. A CET day had been arranged for 4 November 2012.

**Area 12:** A successful mini-conference and gala dinner had taken place, providing five CET points and two additional points from a subsequent postal course. Two presentations had been made at the gala dinner: ABDO life membership to Donald Cameron, who had been instrumental in setting up Optometry Scotland; and an Area 12 presentation to a longstanding member for his services to dispensing optics in Scotland. A student revision day had been held in May, which had been well received. Two one-day events had been arranged in early October, both funded by NHS Education for Scotland. This funding support was much appreciated by members. A further meeting was planned for November, offering two CET points, and it was hoped to run a mini-conference again, although the committee was mindful of the need to avoid any adverse impact on the ABDO conference.

### **CET discussion and debate**

Following the Area reports, the President mentioned the two visual recognition tests available to Areas, one on myopia and one on low vision, both providing two CET points. She felt that these were useful in providing extra points at evening meetings. There followed a discussion on coordination of dates between Area events. Although Barry Duncan



Kate Clarke Area 4 (East Anglia)

planned to be in contact with all Areas to obtain their plans a year in advance, it was suggested that it would also be helpful to have an interactive diary on the website to which Areas could add their meeting dates and check for any clashes. There was also a need to avoid clashes of topics, especially between neighbouring Areas. Comment was made that it would be useful to know about national events such as the BCLA and Specsavers conferences, and the NOC. The general secretary reminded the meeting that much information was already published in *Dispensing Optics* but he would give some thought to the electronic diary option.

Mention was made of standby arrangements in Area 3 to cover the contingency of non-attendance by a speaker. In this context, it was suggested that peer discussion, based on case studies, was another way of providing CET at short notice, as long members of the Area had been trained as facilitators. In answer to a query, it was confirmed that peer discussion was likely to become a mandatory CET activity for contact lens opticians but that any dispensing optician could participate as part of their CET programme. The view was expressed that whilst peer discussion was effective in practice-based learning, it might not work so well for an evening meeting with a larger attendance. On the other hand, larger meetings would just require more facilitators to run parallel sessions.

The GOC was likely to insist on face-to-face peer discussion, although it

acknowledged that there could be circumstances where this might not be possible and was considering allowing e-contact in exceptional cases. The meeting was reminded that in Scotland, NHS Education Scotland funded joint events for dispensing opticians and optometrists.

Discussion then turned to the question of non-attendance by members who had booked for an event. Some Areas provided events free of charge, some made a charge for the catering, and others charged a refundable deposit or took cheque/card details to be used for payment of the deposit if the member failed to attend. ABDO head of membership services, Katie Docker, felt that a simpler method would be through the use of online booking and use of smartphones. The President suggested a voucher scheme. The view was expressed that as members would in future have to attend events in order to fulfill their CET requirement, the incidence of non-attendance was likely to reduce.

Consideration was given to the continuing lack of funding for dispensing opticians' CET and the lack of parity with optometrists in this regard. Tony Garrett stressed that in the current climate of public spending cuts the government in England would not change its stance, however strong the arguments in favour. The fact remained that dispensing opticians had to undertake CET and ABDO provided its members with enough CET for this purpose, free of charge wherever possible. He pointed out that as a result of the new public health agenda mentioned earlier in the meeting, there would be local funding for training initiatives and it was up to members to ensure that they were included.

**The next President's Consultation Day will take place on 14 November. ■**



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Huntly Taylor

## Taylor to help drive College growth

Huntly Taylor has been appointed as chairman of the ABDO College board of trustees.

Mr Taylor, who has been a trustee of the College since 2009, has run his own independent practice in Brighton since 1993. He is a past ABDO council member, past chairman of ABDO Area 9 (South East) and was a founder director of the Eyecare Information Service, forerunner to the Eyecare Trust. He is also a member of the Court of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers and has just finished a three-year term as chairman of its society.

Commenting on his new role, Mr Taylor said: "I am

honoured to have been appointed chairman of the ABDO College board of trustees. I hope to build on the excellent work of my predecessor, Colin Lee, and actively work with the College staff to further develop the success story that is ABDO College."

On behalf of ABDO College, secretary to the board of trustees, Tony Garrett, said: "Huntly is an exemplary member of the dispensing profession with a total dedication to excellence. He brings a wealth of experience, business acumen and level headedness that will greatly contribute to the College's future growth and achievements." ■

## Winter exams registration reminder

Those planning to sit the winter 2012 practical examinations for the Certificate in Contact Lens (CL) Practice are reminded that the closing date for registering supervisors and practices for provisional approval is 31 July 2012.

Candidates wishing to sit the CL practical examination in winter 2012 must have, at the time of their examination application and throughout the period up to and including their practical examination, a supervisor and practical experience practice on the current ABDO approved register – or have been given provisional approval following completion of a

supervisor/practice registration application form.

Completed registration application forms relevant to the winter 2012 sitting must reach the ABDO offices in Kent by 31 July. Registration documents are available upon request from the Examinations and Registration Department on 01227 732921/732924 or email [examinations@abdo.org.uk](mailto:examinations@abdo.org.uk) ■



## New IT system for next CET cycle

The General Optical Council (GOC) has appointed Replay Learning in collaboration with Sliced Bread to develop a new IT system for the next CET cycle beginning in January 2013.

Users will access the CET system through the GOC's website, with registrants able to view their targets and track progress. The GOC will provide a helpline and email support service for registrants and an independent panel established will

undertake the approval and quality assurance of CET.

Samantha Peters, chief executive and registrar of the GOC, said: "The new system will enable registrants to get the most out of our enhanced CET scheme by being more interactive, tracking the points they accrue, finding the right events to attend and being kept up to date with developments. It will also sit within the 'MyGOC' area of our website, so

registrants will be able to manage their CET, complete online retention, update their contact details and read all our news and guidance from the same place."

Over the next 12 months the GOC will implement a new, transparent data sharing scheme to ensure all providers have access to relevant data collected about registrants' CET activities and available CET provision. "This will give assurance that no provider is in a preferred position and will help all providers to deliver the variety and availability of CET events needed for registrants to meet their targets," it stated. ■



Jennifer Brower

## Eye charities band together

Fight for Sight is joining forces with the Childhood Eye Cancer Trust, the International Glaucoma Association, the Macular Disease Society, Nystagmus Network, Olivia's Vision and RP Fighting Blindness for this year's Fight for Sight Carrots NightWalk on 21 September.

Fight for Sight will also be teaming up with these partner charities to fund new research grants in the areas of childhood eye cancer, glaucoma, macular disease, nystagmus, uveitis and retinitis pigmentosa. The charity, with the support of each partner organisation, will jointly fund new Small Grant Awards, worth up to £15,000 each.

Michele Acton, chief executive of Fight for Sight, said: "The Fight for Sight Carrots NightWalk is a great way for people to come together and raise urgently needed funds. Whether participants choose to support Fight for Sight or the important work of other sight loss charities, everyone taking part will be helping to create a future everyone can see, and it is fantastic that so many organisations across the charity sector are coming together to address sight loss in such an innovative way."

[www.fightforsight.org.uk](http://www.fightforsight.org.uk) ■

## The President's diary

In my March diary, I drew attention to some of the vision problems experienced by people with learning disabilities and the campaign by SeeAbility to grant them NHS funded eye examinations. A recent conference held by the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) highlighted these and other concerns about the needs of people with learning disabilities and the problems they have accessing eyecare services. The conference was attended by optometrists, dispensing opticians and other professionals involved in eyecare, and the consensus was that this was a vulnerable group of people whose needs would best be served by regulating the supply of their spectacles. Children, partially sighted and blind people are protected in this way and the feeling of those present was that such protection

should be extended to this especially vulnerable group.

At the President's Consultation Day in May we discussed several current issues including the proposed changes to the Articles of the Association, the ABDO Conference in September, the new cycle of CET and Area activity. Also discussed was the Law Commission review of regulatory bodies, which could result in the GOC being given greater flexibility to change its rules. This would have implications for the scope of practice of dispensing opticians and we will be keeping a watchful eye on developments. After lunch, we received reports from the Areas and had further discussions on CET and Area attendance. The notes of the meeting can be found on the ABDO website.

The day after President's Day, I attended the Area 7 CET day and exhibition in Exeter and congratulations are due to the committee for organising such an interesting and informative day. A wide range of topics included the supply of artificial eyes, an update on RGP contact lenses, eyecare in an Ethiopian town twinned with Exeter and a lecture on handmade frames. There was also an interactive quiz on

occupational dispensing, which was a novel and enjoyable way to obtain two CET points. I was also given the opportunity to update members on current political matters and there were some very important points raised with a useful discussion. I am continuing in my efforts to attend as many Area meetings as possible, and at the time of writing I look forward to attending Area 4 and 9 events soon and Area 2 later in the year.

Olympic fever has finally gripped the small village where I practise; we have cheered the Olympic flame, the Parish Council has decorated our street with red, white and blue flowers, and my windows are now resplendent with Union Jacks, the five Olympic rings and much sporting regalia. We have even had a run on sports bands (three sold in a week) and there has been hushed talk of bringing in a TV for Olympic fortnight to watch some of the races. One lucky staff member has managed to obtain tickets for three different events, and has promised to wave from the crowd, so on 27 July we will be watching the opening ceremony, waving our flags, and sipping our power drinks in support of the athletes. Good luck GB!  
**Jennifer Brower**

If you have a job vacancy in your practice, please remember that the **Situations Vacant** section in the Bulletin Board area of the ABDO website provides you with a quick and easy facility to advertise completely free-of-charge. ■



Lots of pain, lots of gain

## Saddle sore Styles helps raise £3k

A mammoth 920-mile cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, with stop-offs at eight regional opticians, has raised more than £3,000 for Vision Care for Homeless People.

Elaine Styles, the charity's chair, took 10 days off from her work at Moorfields Eye Hospital and at Specs of Kensington to complete the trek with 70 hours in the saddle. Pounding hailstones, 25mph cross winds, three inner tubes and one tyre replacement were just some of the challenges along the way for Elaine, her husband John and friends. Elaine calculated that she burned

18,912 calories during the trip, which included 15,231 metres climbed.

"There was a huge feeling of relief in completing the journey, but also of disbelief that I had actually managed to achieve such an ambitious challenge," said Elaine. "We had light showers on most days but there were two days of very heavy rain. We also had a couple of showers of very sharp hail in Scotland – it was very painful. The temperature got down to 3°C at some points." To add to the total raised log onto <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ElaineMcKnight> ■

## FODO ups offering in Ireland

The Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians (FODO) is expanding its activities and service offering in the Republic of Ireland to support the growth of the corporate sector and prepare for the changing nature of eyecare in Ireland.

FODO has for many years provided insurance cover in the Republic of Ireland. Over the past few months at the request of members, FODO Ireland has been developing its service offering and has already responded to two government consultations, firstly to protect the fees structure for primary eyecare and suggest improvements to benefit patients, and secondly to oppose compulsory registration of representative bodies as lobbyists.

FODO Ireland chair, Peter McGrath, said: "We are delighted to have access to the intelligence and support framework offered by FODO Ireland. We look forward to working with our colleagues in the AOI and IADO to present a united voice for the sector and further improve eyecare for patients in Ireland." Visit [www.fodo.com/ireland](http://www.fodo.com/ireland) ■

## Council welcomes regulation review findings

The General Optical Council (GOC) has welcomed the Law Commissions' review of UK healthcare regulation in a recently-published consultation response.

The GOC supports the broad approach proposed by the Law Commissions of a single, overarching legislative framework for healthcare regulators that could make it easier for the GOC, and other regulators, to introduce rule changes. GOC chief executive and registrar, Samantha Peters, said: "The Law Commissions' proposals have generally found an appropriate balance between flexibility and consistency: a simplified, modern and

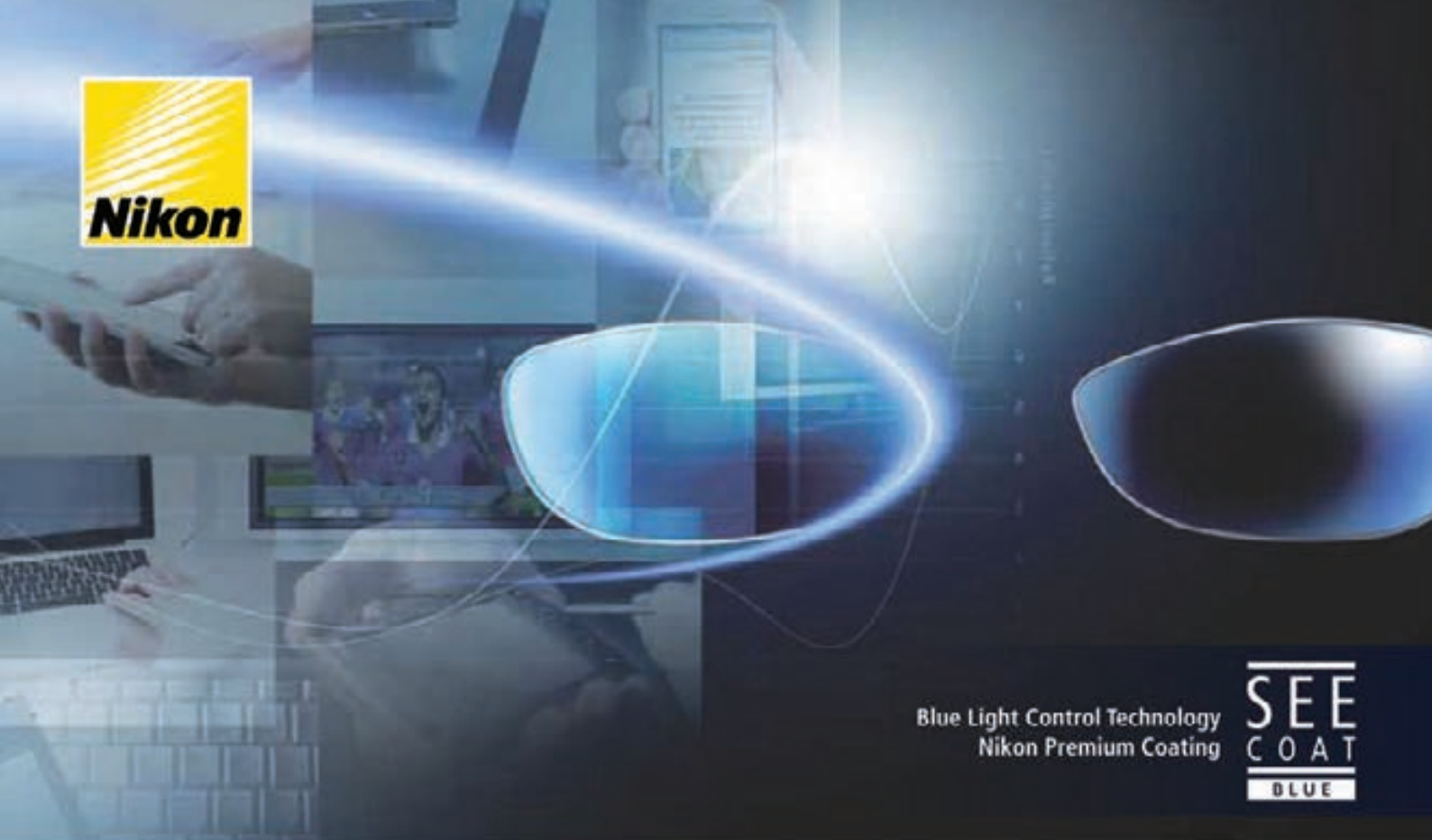
nimble legal framework will help us to respond faster and more effectively to developments in optics, regulation and wider healthcare."

The GOC will review its current role in regulating both students and optical businesses, but supports the flexibility that the Law Commissions' proposals will bring. Samantha explained: "We're aware that student registration imposes some significant costs on students, training providers and the GOC, and we will examine our current system with an open mind.

"It's important that the legislation allows us, and other regulators, the

flexibility to adapt to changes in the sector, and we hope the new legislation will do that. But it's equally important that any changes to current arrangements are necessary, proportionate and do not create unnecessary costs or disruption for the sector," she added. "How optical businesses are regulated also merits further exploration in the context of the review of our legislation."

The GOC intends to commission research into the optical business sector and will consult extensively with stakeholders before proposing any changes to how optical businesses are regulated. ■



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Lily, Tina, Grace and Peter



Company support for charity

## Peter and Tina say 'I do'

ABDO vice president Peter Black and contact lens optician fiancée Tina Arbon tied the knot on Saturday 21 April at Belchamp Walter Church near Sudbury Suffolk almost exactly seven years after they first met while examining for the Association in Malaysia.

Peter and Tina's children, Lily (four) and Grace (three) were flowergirls. ■

Delegate booking forms and Conference Club forms are available from ABDO Membership Services on 01227 733902, 01227 733912 or 01227 733922.



## Boost from optics' Livery Company

The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers has donated £8,000 to Vision Care for Homeless People to meet the running costs of the opticians' practice which operates within the Crisis centre in Whitechapel, East London and to facilitate another day's clinics each week.

Harinder Paul, the optometrist charity founder, said: "The lens companies, glazing labs, frame

providers and diagnostic technology specialists are tremendously supportive but we still have some overheads in terms of premises and this wonderful cheque goes a long way in meeting those. Our own optical City Livery Company connecting with a charity which is so close to home is particularly pertinent." Harinder is pictured receiving the donation from the SMC Master, Professor John Marshall. ■

## More work needed on drivers' vision

The Optical Confederation (OC) has cautiously welcomed clarification of the new eyesight standards for drivers following publication of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) report on the consultation on driving licence standards for vision.

The DVLA published its report on 30 May although some changes to standards came into force on 1 May. Main changes announced for Group 1 (car and motorcycle) drivers are:

- Drivers will be required to declare when applying for a licence that they have never been told by an optician or doctor that their vision is below that of the minimum required standard (6/12, 0.5 decimal)
- There will be no requirement for 'an optician's certificate' at the driving test or on licence application or renewal

- The onus will be on the applicant or driver to notify the DVLA if a formal eye test reveals Visual Acuity of less than 6/12 and the licence will then be refused or revoked
- The current distance at which the number plate test is read will remain unchanged (20m)
- Drivers who fail the number plate test, but meet 6/12 on Snellen testing, will still fail and no 'exceptional cases' will be allowed for those failing both tests

The Confederation said it was disappointed that the outdated number plate test had been retained, that there was still no requirement for formal vision testing throughout the driving career, and that the reliance on drivers to self-report relevant disabilities remained. Information will

be provided to drivers, and to the medical and optometry professions, to make clear that a measurement of less than 6/12 is a relevant disability and the driver must notify the DVLA.

On behalf of the Confederation, Geoff Roberson said: "Overall the standards for Group 1 drivers seem to have been tightened slightly rather than relaxed as the DVLA had initially proposed. Although we welcome some clarification of the new arrangements, there are still many issues to be resolved." The Confederation will be issuing full guidance to its members on all the changes, including the new visual field standard for Group 1 drivers and revised visual acuity and vision correction requirements for Group 2 (lorry and bus) drivers. ■



Liz Rhodes



One Show's Dr Mark Porter

## Supporting troops coming home

Spurred on by a staff member with a teenage son on a tour of duty in Afghanistan, Martyn Kemp Opticians (MKO) is boosting the Yorkshire Regiment's effort to improve the lives of troops coming home.

MKO, South Yorkshire's largest independent firm of opticians, is selling wristbands for a minimum of £1 at its 10 practices to raise cash for The Yorkshire Regiment in Afghanistan Fund, which supports soldiers' convalescence and training activities to

bring them back to normality.

Nineteen-year-old Connor Millward, an infantry man in 3rd Battalion Yorkshire Regiment which was deployed to the Helmand province in April, is the son of Liz Rhodes, who has been based at the firm's City Road practice for seven years. Martyn Kemp said: "We are privileged to do our bit for such a worthwhile effort to ease the distress of military service in this particularly challenging area of the world." ■

## Show plans hotting up

More than 60 per cent of floor space has been sold for Optrafair 2013, taking place at the NEC Birmingham from 13-15 April.

"New opportunities are on offer for 2013 with an enlarged and more exclusive Fashion Quarter, dedicated areas for contact lens and technology businesses, and the chance to position a company alongside compatible or even competing ventures," said Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) chief executive, Malcolm Polley.

Optical CET provider Replay Learning is working with the FMO to create a three-day educational programme. Under the banner, 'Optrafair Replay Learning Education Theatre', the programme will embrace international speakers bringing the latest advances in eyecare to the UK. The purpose-built arena, seating up to 150 delegates, will be a key attraction. Exhibitors will be encouraged to present seminars on finance and taxation, IT, practice management and fashion styling.

Visit [www.optrafair.co.uk](http://www.optrafair.co.uk) and follow the show's progress on Twitter @optrafair2013 ■

## TV doc attends UV lens event

More than 100 guests attended an Essilor party at Carden Park Hotel in Chester recently to celebrate the launch of Crizal UV. During the afternoon, the guests enjoyed a welcome from Mike Kirkley, Essilor MD, followed by a presentation on UV and general health from Dr Mark Porter who regularly appears on BBC's The One Show.

Bill Harvey, clinical editor of *Optician*, spoke about UV hazards in relation to ocular disease, while Dr Colin Fowler spoke about UV protection in relation to spectacle lenses. Essilor International's Alain Riveline finished the afternoon with a

presentation on Crizal UV lenses and E-SPF (Eye Sun Protection Factor). The event continued into the evening with a champagne reception, followed by a gala dinner and dancing.

Essilor's head of marketing, Justin Rocyn-Jones, said: "Our guests already appreciate the dangers of UV and are pleased that Essilor has a new lens that can completely protect their patients from the UV danger. Information sharing at this level continues to be a key part of our 2012 strategy and confirms Essilor's commitment to providing innovative and high quality products that continue to be ground-breaking." ■

## Alliance on ageing eyes

The Optical Confederation has joined the Age Action Alliance to promote vision and eye health amongst older people.

The Age Action Alliance is an independent alliance formed to improve the lives of older people. Building on the success of the recently announced eye health indicator, the Optical Confederation will be working with a range of new partners through the Alliance to improve eye health and promote the role

that good vision can play in keeping older people active for longer.

Jenny Gowen, head of public affairs for the Optical Confederation, said: "Throughout this year we are looking at options for joint working with Age Action Alliance partners to improve eye health and vision for older people. National Eye Health Week [17-23 September] will also provide an opportunity for individual practices and practitioners to get involved." ■



Ceilidh in full swing



Donald Cameron and Peter Black



Fiona Anderson, Frank Hamilton and Brenda Rennie

## Area news

### Area 2 (North East): Busy start to the summer

Area 2 has made a busy start to the summer; first we welcomed 22 third-year students to our Student Training Day, we then sent our chair Phil Quinby down to the ABDO President's Consultation Day in London, we set up a Facebook page (ABDO Area Two) and have made great progress on arranging what will be our fourth full day CET event. Area 2's annual CET day will be held on Sunday 28 October at the Weetwood Hall Hotel, just up the road from the Village at Headingley, Leeds. As always it will be a great opportunity to network, catch up with friends, and of course meet our sponsors – Zeiss, Visualeyex LVA Products, William Morris, ABDO College just for

starters – who will provide an exhibition area giving us the chance to order stock and find out about products on the market.

To date we have confirmed the following speakers: Barry Duncan on Rx problems and issues; Jennifer Brower on low vision; Phil Gilbert from Zeiss on tinted lenses; Kim Devlin on contact lenses for DOs; Stuart Graham from Luxottica on frame production; and a VRICS quiz from ABDO CET on myopia. The day is open to members from other Areas. Please register your interest at [cetsunday@hotmail.com](mailto:cetsunday@hotmail.com) to be sent further updates when available.

**Report by Janice Fletcher, Area 2 secretary** ■

### Area 12 (Scotland): Dinner, dancing and honours

I am pleased to report that Area 12 had a very successful 'first' in May with the first-ever combined gala dinner and CET event to be run in Scotland. Some 60 guests enjoyed dinner and a traditional Scottish Ceilidh into the 'wee small hours', followed by a very full half-day of CET with seven CET points on offer to the 40 plus delegates who attended. During the course of the evening, Area 12 honoured two very distinguished

guests. ABDO bestowed Honorary Fellowship on Donald Cameron, joint programme director NES (NHS Education for Scotland) Optometry and optometrist and founder member of Optometry Scotland. Donald, who has worked tirelessly promoting the skills of all opticians in Scotland, was presented with his Fellowship by ABDO vice president Peter Black.

Area 12 also honoured a

very long serving contributor to optics in Scotland – Frank Hamilton. Frank has been on the GOC register for more years than he cares to remember, and I was delighted to present Frank with a crystal decanter and the obligatory bottle of scotch to fill it, with Brenda Rennie, Area 12 secretary/treasurer and CET officer. I think it is fair to say that both Donald and Frank had no idea they would both be singled out and presented with these honours, but that makes it all the more special as they are both are highly deserving.

Once again a huge thank you goes to our sponsors – Carl Zeiss Vision, CIBA Vision, Continental Eyewear, De Rigo, Essilor, Hoya, Lens Pro, Nikon, Novartis, Orange Eyewear, Viva Eyewear and William Morris Eyewear. On a personal note I would like to say a huge thank you to all who attended the event and made it the success it was. Also to the ABDO staff who ventured north of the border, to Barry Duncan, members support manager, and Brenda Rennie our secretary, CET officer, treasurer and 'magic maker', for all their help and support during the organising and running of the event.

**Report by Fiona Anderson, Area 12 chairman** ■

### Diploma proving a high street hit

The latest qualification from the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) is winning favourable reviews from high street opticians.

The Level 2 Diploma in Optical Retail Skills, which was launched last year, is designed for optical and dispensing assistants. Training and assessment is carried out in the practice, with learners choosing a combination of units tailored to their specific requirements.

Peter Black, retail development director at Conlons Opticians, said: "We have 20 optical advisors working towards the diploma, at all levels of experience and ability. It is proving a fantastic tool for new recruits, offering practice managers a route map for work-based training."

Leightons Opticians has also given a warm welcome to the new qualification. Rebecca Sharp, Leightons' director of business development and HR, said: "We're delighted to be adopting the Diploma in Optical Retail Skills, which we're piloting in our Hempstead Valley Store."

Visit [www.spectaclemakers.com](http://www.spectaclemakers.com), email [training@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:training@spectaclemakers.com) or telephone 0207 236 2932. ■



Rachel Simons



Peggy Savage



Lynette Hunter



Hayley Bendall

## Getting to know the ADONZ team

ABDO and the Association of Dispensing Opticians of New Zealand (ADONZ) will be working more closely together in the future for the benefit of members in both countries. Last month we introduced the ADONZ executive. Now meet the rest of the team . . .

### Rachel Simons - executive committee

Hi, or should I say Kia Ora (Maori for hello). I have been working in optics since 2001 for OPSM, which is a part of Luxottica Retail and I became a registered dispensing optician in 2006. Coaching and developing others is something I am passionate about (plus the All Blacks and optics). I can be a bit OTT when it comes to rugby. I have two beautiful children, Carl and Kayla, and my husband Lance who loves the outdoors and puts up with me when I talk optical geek language. I live in the best part of the country –

Canterbury in the South Island.

### Peggy Savage – executive committee member

Kia Ora and greetings. I'm Peggy Savage from New Plymouth – the best city to live, work and play, where the beach is a 40 seconds walk and the mountain is 40 minutes' drive. I have come from an accounting and banking background into optics, and have been extremely happy with this change of career path. Being employed as a dispensing optician and practice manager in an independent practice, I have several years'

experience within the industry and am very committed and enthusiastic. I am actively involved locally and nationally and have a passion for continuing education for all dispensing opticians and assisting students. My husband John is very supportive and now our children are all married, I have the time to support my interests and am inspired to see everyone reach their full potential.

### Lynette Hunter - executive committee

I started my career in the optical industry working for Dollond and Aitchison in Southampton as a receptionist in the late 1980s. On moving to New Zealand I continued my career working for independent practices and gained experience in all aspects of the practice. I completed the TAFE, NSW Certificate in Dispensing and became a registered dispensing optician in 2002. I am currently working for General Optical Wholesalers as an account manager travelling around the North Island of New Zealand servicing the independent practices and optical outlets. I joined the ADONZ committee last year as an executive member and enjoy working with passionate team of experts

in supporting our ever-changing industry.

### Hayley Bendall - administrator

I began working one day a week for the ADONZ in November 2004. This has gradually expanded as the membership and their requirements grew, to now working approximately 30 to 35 hours a week. I am the sole employee of ADONZ and am lucky enough to have a fantastic job that is full of variety. I work closely with the executive committee and because we are all spread throughout New Zealand most of our conversations are by email. I'm the first point of contact for our members, and provide the administrative support for the ADONZ committees and the Optometrists & Dispensing Opticians Board DO CPD accreditation committee. A large part of my job is helping to plan and run our annual conference, and entering CPD credits and maintaining up to date balances through our CPD recording system. The ADONZ office is based at our home near Hamilton in the Waikato region (where the best dairy cows are from – not sure if that's a claim to fame) with my husband, six-year-old son and a growing family of chickens. ■

## Optician Index - April 2012 summary

- Practice turnover at 173 Index points is the highest value since June 2010
- Total sight tests at 113 Index points is the highest value since February 2011
- Sample average total dispensing up by 8 per cent from April 2011 to 98 Index points
- Contact lens new fits are 6 per cent higher than last month and solution sales improve too

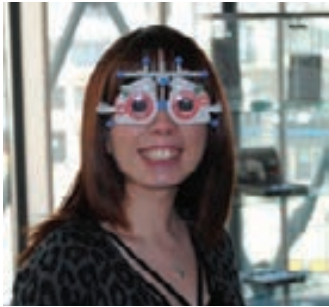
The full April 2012 Optician Index report was published in the 25 May 2012 issue of Optician

Optician

BUSINESS BENCHMARKS



The Blues Brothers meets fixation disparity



So this is what progressive lenses are like



Hero's Square in Budapest

## Teaching old dogs new tricks

### Andrew Kierl reports on the first trip by UK and Ireland practitioners to the new Hoya Faculty in Budapest

Earlier this year, I was privileged to join 11 other eyecare practitioners from the UK and Ireland on a three-day visit to the Hoya Faculty in Budapest. The faculty is Hoya's new education and experience centre for dispensing opticians, optometrists and ophthalmologists who want to enhance their knowledge of Hoya products and how they should be prescribed and dispensed. The faculty's philosophy emphasises knowledge and experience exchange through direct dialogue with participants and consists of a seminar room for up to 60 delegates, practical

refraction areas equipped with high tech instrumentation, workshop rooms, a lounge with wireless internet connection and a reception. It also has facilities for simultaneous translation.

The faculty designs each course with the need of the delegates in mind. Our course focused (excuse the pun) on the correction of presbyopia with progressive power lenses. A previous course for Russian ophthalmologists only covered the prescribing of cylinders and prisms. The flexibility of the programmes offered by the faculty means that it can offer

training in the latest lens technology, refraction techniques or simply enable participants to brush up on their basic knowledge.

#### Theory and practice

We arrived in Budapest from our various departure airports on Sunday 4 March, meeting up for dinner in the evening. The next morning we partook of some gentle sightseeing to get to know each other before the serious business of learning started in the afternoon. The lectures were mostly delivered by European optometrists and Monday afternoon's topics included prescription optimisation and indoor lenses. On Tuesday, freeform technology was discussed at great length not only from a theoretical point of view but from a practical point of view. For example, we were given several top tips on how the refraction, correction of fixation disparity, the prescribing of lenses, careful fitting and patient selection can optimise the performance and wearer satisfaction of these remarkable lenses.

Tuesday's programme also contained a familiar face in the form of Dr Fiona Fylan, a psychologist from the UK who has many years' experience of teaching optometrists and dispensing

opticians. Fiona's lectures and workshops covered the psychology of the presbyope and the importance of recognising visual and lifestyle needs. The final day of lectures and workshops covered the thorny issue of the causes of non-adaptation to progressive power lenses. Once again, these were very hands-on, interactive sessions and we all gained as much from listening to each other as from the information contained in the excellent presentations.

In summary, the UK and Ireland's inaugural visit to the Hoya Faculty can only be described as first rate. The facilities were excellent; the presentations were of a very high quality, the lecturers knowledgeable and helpful and the workshops provided a good balance between listening and doing. As always, Hoya's hospitality was second-to-none and we were admirably looked after by Latha Kovi and Russell Bickle.

**Andrew Keirl runs his own independent practice in Cornwall. He is ABDO's Principal Examiner for Professional Conduct in Ophthalmic Dispensing and a Performance Assessor and Expert Witness for the General Optical Council. ■**

## City courses offered

**Qualified DOs and students who have fully completed their dispensing qualifications may apply for a place on the Year 1 Contact Lens Course at City & Islington College starting this September.**

**Costing £2,200 excluding exam fees, this course is day release from 9am to 6pm for 30 weeks and prepares for the theory papers of the ABDO Contact Lens (CL) Certificate qualification. Qualified DOs who have completed the CL Certificate theory papers are eligible to apply for a place on the Year 2 CL course, to prepare for the CL Certificate Practical exam. This course runs from 10am to 4pm on alternate weeks for 15 sessions, also commencing in September 2012. The course fee is £1,450 excluding exam fees**

**To apply for a place, email Tony Harknett [tharknett@candi.ac.uk](mailto:tharknett@candi.ac.uk) or Ian Forrest [ianf@candi.ac.uk](mailto:ianf@candi.ac.uk) or phone 020 7520 7452. ■**

## Let us further your career

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:

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- Committed to the furtherance of dispensing optics
- Established by the profession for the profession
- A proven track record of success for over a decade

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The Contact Lens Certificate course provides an ideal opportunity for opticians to further their career by specialising in contact lenses. The course leads to the ABDO Level 6 Certificate in Contact Lens Practice qualification.

#### Course features

- A one year course commencing in September 2012
- Two separate weeks block release at Godmersham
- Block release accommodation can be provided

#### Entry requirements

- ABDO Fellowship Diploma and GOC registration
- Qualified, registered optometrists and ophthalmologists are also eligible to enrol

Application deadline:

**24 August 2012**


For further information and application forms for these and other courses, or to request a copy of the 2012/13 ABDO College Prospectus, please contact the courses team at ABDO College on:

**01227 733 920**

or email [info@abdocollege.org.uk](mailto:info@abdocollege.org.uk)

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Growth is fundamental to a business irrespective of its size and complexity, writes Paul Surridge

# Sustaining growth in a tough economy

The UK market for optics is probably the most competitive in Europe. Consumers have an abundance of choice when choosing a practice to visit and, as we know, yesteryear's loyal patients are today's surfers. The two-for-one, 50 per cent off business model has proved successful, and that proposition is likely to sustain itself well into the future. However, this price led approach rarely works for independents, and not just in the world of optics. A time will come when the market for optics will polarise, with one facet of the market moving significantly towards retail, and the other with a more defined clinical bias. Both will have their followers, but will both business models flourish? I happen to think they will.

In a tough economy, you can either accept that times are tough and hope things will get better, or have strategies that drive the business forward. No business achieves 100 per cent of its potential all of the time, so there's plenty of room for improvement. For more than 15 years, Sight Care has spent a good deal of time encouraging independents to differentiate their business model from the price led approach. As an organisation, we have argued that independents need to constantly invest in systems, processes, procedures, staff training, marketing

and, very importantly, the latest consulting room technology as prerequisites for a successful business model where charging appropriately for clinical time is the key driver. We also believe that practices invest in suitably qualified dispensing opticians to ensure that patients receive the very best advice about lens technology, frame styles, materials and design. These are all extremely important in an ever-changing fashion environment where consumers need advice and demand value for money.

## Long-term strategies

The growth challenges facing practitioners in today's unpredictable economic times are considerable, but not insurmountable. Concentrating solely on the fundamentals of attracting business today, rather than long-term strategies that may be relevant post-recession is a mistake. Both need attention. Identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a practice and its competitors is a fundamental starting point in determining an individual practice's differentiators. Those differentiators should determine the type of consumer a practice should be aiming to attract.

Logically, growth can only come from existing patients and/or by attracting new patients. It makes sense,



Paul Surridge

therefore, to have a strategy for both. Too few independent practitioners in the UK, consumed by the challenges of running their businesses on a daily basis, devote sufficient time to such analysis. Inevitably, business planning and marketing are low on the agenda. The result is that too many practice owners rely on luck rather than judgement to achieve their objectives. In the future, this will have to change if those practices are to remain viable.

It's all about communication; both internally among the team in terms of delivering on stated objectives and standards, and externally to consumers in the community about the differentiated service on offer. The latter demands an intelligent look at the best methods of PR and promotion, and a strategy that will deliver both short and long-term results. Social media is a powerful and growing part of the mix. Whatever is deemed appropriate, it requires funding. A dedicated budget that equates to at least five per cent of turnover is not excessive, and it should be spent. Having a constant presence in the community is vital if a business is to capitalise on its potential. At Sight Care we offer independents a complimentary marketing health check to see if they are doing the right things.

# Disjointed jottings from an office desk . . .

## Commitment to change

Growth demands a commitment to change, to doing things differently, and that requires an understanding of the basic principles of business planning, financials and marketing. Further, the practice owner/manager must find the time to manage the process and maintain a momentum. It is the latter demand of finding the time to manage the process where the project often fails. In optometrist owned practices this is especially challenging as the practitioner often sees the need to spend as much time as possible with patients, rather than allocating dedicated time to working on the business rather than just in the business.

Dispensing opticians, on the other hand, are often more in tune with the commercial needs of a business, and respond more readily to the work that needs to be done. Practice owners, or

those delegated the responsibility of business development, should religiously devote at least one half day a week (not evenings and weekend) to planning and executing activity plans. It's a false economy to think differently.

In the past, the growth practices needed year on year to remain profitable could be achieved by carefully nurturing existing patients; today it's not that simple. New closely targeted patients are an essential part of the mix as loyalty wanes. Despite the eroding loyalty factor, the need to constantly encourage existing patients to return remains essential. In the US, it's reported that practitioners aim to see patients once or twice in between eye examinations, taking advantage of opportunities to offer new products and services closely matched to the needs of the individual. Importantly, it's an opportunity for building closer

relationships. A patient regularly in touch is less likely to go elsewhere. Unfortunately, this strategy is rarely adopted in the UK.

The key to overcoming a tough economy and the challenge of competition is to understand your strengths and weaknesses – capitalising on the former and eliminating the latter. It's about visibility and having a powerful local presence. It's about investing in all forms of technology and practice aesthetics. It's about a whole team effort where everyone knows what the objectives are, and contribute to their attainment. It's about being totally customer centric but not in a philanthropic way. Profitability fuels the engine of business – ignore that at your peril.

**Paul Surridge is chief executive of the Sight Care Group. ■**

## Frequently asked questions

Answered by Kim Devlin FBDO (Hons) CL

### Who may insert a contact lens?

**Q.** A member telephoned with an unusual query. As a non CL DO, could he insert a contact lens into a patient's eye to enable them to see themselves while choosing new spectacle frames? He explained that he was a contact lens wearer so more than able to handle contact lens safely.

**A.** There is a very fine line here and great care must be taken not to be guilty of professional misconduct whilst genuinely trying to help a patient select the best frame during a dispensing.

Firstly, let's look at the law. What constitutes a 'contact lens fitting'? The law strictly governs who may and may not fit contact lenses. In brief only a registered optometrist, a registered CLO or a medical practitioner may fit contact lenses. The law obviously makes allowances for students, both pre-reg optometrists and trainee CLOs, to fit contact lenses under the supervision of a suitably qualified person.

As the DO in question would argue, inserting a contact lens for the sole purpose of aiding a patient's frame choice cannot constitute a fitting. I would agree except that I feel there should be some safeguards before any contact lens is inserted into an eye. The very safeguards that I believe are necessary, checking

corneal integrity on the slit lamp and calculating the best power for the task of frame selection to name just two of them, could be deemed to be 'fitting' the contact lens.

Is there a safe, legal way to give patients the undoubted advantage of good vision whilst selecting a frame? I think that any such act must be done under the supervision of the optometrist who conducted the eye examination, and who would have knowledge of the cornea; or a CLO who is on the premises, able to check to their own satisfaction that the patient is not at any risk and calculate the appropriate lens power to aid dispensing. Not to do this may also put the DO concerned at risk. It may well be that the experience is so good as to encourage the patient to continue with a full contact lens fitting.

If we, as a profession, wish to keep the moral high ground that all contact lenses are fitted by properly qualified practitioners we must demonstrate that in every circumstance the wellbeing of the patient is our first concern.

**Kim Devlin is chair of ABDO's Advice and Guidelines Working Group ■**



The sun shone on the ICC Birmingham



Dr Catharine Chisholm takes over as BCLA president



'Competing for Excellence' was this year's theme

# Sunshine and CET at the ICC

**Just over 1,200 visitors from 45 countries attended the recent 36th British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) Clinical Conference and Exhibition at the ICC Birmingham**

As the city of canals basked in some glorious summer sunshine, contact lens professionals of all disciplines, academics, industry leaders and students flocked to Birmingham for an action-packed four days of CET, workshops, business meetings, networking and socialising. The Association welcomed 1,060 registered delegates this year, in addition to 143 visitors who came just for the three-day exhibition, which was supported by 167 industry

representatives from around 50 companies. On the opening day of the exhibition alone (Friday 25 May) 695 people were scanned into the hall to view the stands and learn about the latest innovations at the popular Exhibitors' Pavilion.

Around half of this year's delegates were from the UK (484) with the largest overseas contingents coming from the USA (110) – followed by France (54), Sweden (37), Italy (36), Denmark (32) and Germany (28). The conference also saw its first ever delegates from Costa Rica and Swaziland.

## Product innovations

A host of new products were unveiled over the three-day exhibition, including Biotrue ONEday from Bausch + Lomb – heralded as the next generation daily disposable lens material. It is made from HyperGel, an innovative material that is said to combine the best features of conventional hydrogels and silicone

hydrogels. The lens offers high water content and delivers more oxygen than a traditional hydrogel – all without the need for silicone – while maintaining the comfort of conventional hydrogels. The bio-inspired material helps the lenses to retain moisture and optical shape even after hours of wear and allows oxygen to flow freely through the lens. Biotrue ONEday contain 78 per cent water, the same water content as the cornea, while delivering virtually the same oxygen level as the open eye, said Bausch + Lomb. The outer surface of the lens is designed to mimic the lipid layer of tear film, which prevents dehydration of the lens. "It works like your eyes for comfortable vision throughout the day," said Joe Barr, Bausch + Lomb vice president, global clinical and medical affairs and professional services vision care.

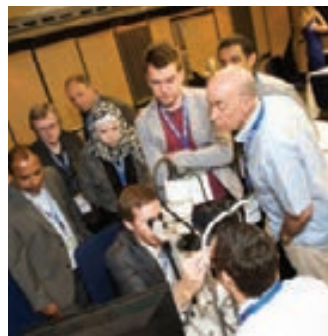
CooperVision also had a new launch with Proclear 1 day multifocal – a high-performing hydrogel utilising PC technology, a material that attracts and maintains moisture and the only lens material approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for the claim: "May improve comfort for those who experience dryness or mild discomfort during lens wear". Not to be outdone, Sauflon came to Birmingham with yet another 'world first' with Clariti Multifocal 1 day – the first silicone hydrogel contact lens for presbyopia. Sauflon's Clariti 1 day family is now available in sphere, toric



Delegates relaxing in the evening



Sue Cockayne of Sauflon extols the benefits of new Clariti Multifocal 1 day



CET workshops drew the crowds



Wild West themed gala dinner was popular



2012 BCLA Medal recipient,  
Professor Alan Tomlinson



GB Women's Volleyball players  
support sports vision session



A thriving three-day exhibition



Trying to beat 'the Stig' on the  
CooperVision stand

and multifocal designs providing a lens design to suit the majority of patient requirements. A stimulating session, entitled 'How my product is better', saw representatives from Bausch + Lomb, Sauflon, CooperVision, CIBA Vision and Johnson & Johnson, presenting the merits of their latest lenses for presbyopes – a potentially huge market for contact lens practitioners.

### Sports and socialising

For the first time ever, the conference included a session on contact lenses and sports in a nod to the event's Olympics inspired theme 'Competing for excellence'. The highlight of the track was when members of the GB Women's Volleyball team turned up to participate in a special 'Vision in Elite Sport' session. Prior to this leading UK sports vision specialists, Geraint Griffiths, Gavin Rebello, Kristine Dalton and Dr Michel Guillon discussed the contact lens assessment and vision correction of athletes. The athletes then helped to show the relationship between athletes' coaching and conditioning staff and the input of sports vision practitioners.

The audience was treated to a live demonstration of the players' volleyball skills and an insight into what it takes to be picked to represent your country in the Games. Other speakers included Simon Fanning, a sports science graduate with a particular interest in volleyball coaching,

alongside Gavin Rebello, Martin Lloyd and Dr Michel Guillon who are sports vision optometrists working with a number of elite athletes in the run up to this month's Games.

The BCLA conference is renowned for its fantastic social programme and this year was no exception. At Johnson & Johnson Vision Care's Patron's Party and dinner on the Friday evening, guests enjoyed a talk by inspirational speaker Miles Hinton-Barber. Around 800 guests attended this year's Wild, Wild, West themed Gala Dinner, with cowboys, cowgirls and Indians whooping it up at the New Bingley Hall in the city centre. Announced at the Gala Dinner were 19 new BCLA Fellowships, a mark of esteem in the field of contact lenses, which allows recipients to use the letters FBCLA after their names. Past BCLA president, William Thomas, who stepped down from the BCLA council at the 2012 AGM upon his retirement from the industry, was awarded an Honorary Life Membership. BCLA president, Shelly Bansal, then handed over the chain of office to Dr Catharine Chisholm, lecturer at Bradford School of Optometry and Vision Science.

### Focus going forward

Speaking after the conference, Catharine said: "I am delighted to become President of the BCLA and it will be an honour to serve the Association and its members. I hope the coming year will be as fruitful as

the last – with a truly memorable conference of 1,060 registered delegates enjoying an exciting, innovative programme, a major milestone with our journal *Contact Lens and Anterior Eye* gaining an Impact Factor thanks to the hard work of its editor, Dr Shehzad Naroo, and some very insightful evening CET meetings and workshops.

"In the year ahead I hope to lead the BCLA in taking our online offering to a new level and developing innovative business and educational resources for practitioners just starting out in contact lenses, as well as those wanting to build further their contact lens business. I would like to see the BCLA become the focal point for the whole contact lens community," Catharine added: "On behalf of the BCLA Council, I would like to thank Immediate past president Shelly Bansal for his commitment and passion over the last two years. He has done an amazing job and has left some very big shoes to fill."

Andy Yorke, managing director of Topcon UK and past BCLA council member (Technical Representative), is BCLA president elect. The 37th BCLA Clinical Conference and Exhibition will take place at Manchester Central, UK, from 6-9 June 2013. For more information about BCLA events and how to join the Association, visit [www.bcla.org.uk](http://www.bcla.org.uk), email [events@bcla.org.uk](mailto:events@bcla.org.uk) or call 0207 580 6661. ■

### What participants said afterwards

"It's always a bit of a gamble trying a new venue but the ICC Birmingham was a great success. I didn't hear any negative comments from any delegates or other exhibitors – in fact just the opposite – everyone was raving about it." **Gill Narramore, group operations manager, UltraVision**

"Many thanks to the BCLA and conference organising staff for a wonderful few days. I'd like to thank in particular Shelly Bansal, Professor James Wolffsohn and Amir Khan for the extreme courtesy that was dedicated to me during my Fellowship application process. It is fantastic to now be a Fellow of the BCLA." **2012 BCLA Fellowship recipient, Marco Tovaglia of Italy**

"This year's conference exceeded all my expectations by really acting as the bridge between world class academic expertise, and how to apply this evidence based optometry into practice. The best example of this was one of my 'eureka' moments at the conference. Perversely this was not in the clarity of near vision with multifocal contact lenses, but in the diagnosis of my own blepharitis, the assessment of the degree of anterior eye UV changes, and the initiation of treatment within the Exhibitors' Pavilion." **Martin Golden, optometrist, Carlisle**

"We had our best BCLA ever this year. The location was brilliant – so much better than the NEC. We enjoyed being able to get some fresh air and not being locked up in one building all the time – and the food was outstanding." **Philip and Roxanne Saunders**

## CET answers: Contact lens complications

### 1. Giant papillary conjunctivitis (GPC) is most common in:

- a. Soft contact lens wearers
- b. Rigid gas permeable contact lens wearers
- c. Hard contact lens wearers
- d. None of the above

**a is the correct answer.** Giant papillary conjunctivitis is most commonly seen in soft contact lens wearers

### 2. Management of GPC does NOT include:

- a. Change to preservative-free regimen
- b. Administering artificial tears
- c. Application of H1-antagonist
- d. Application of H2-antagonist

**d is the correct answer.** Anti-histamines that block the H2-receptor are not used in the management of giant papillary conjunctivitis. These receptors are actually present in the stomach and H2-antagonists help reduce the production of stomach acid!

### 3. A bulls-eye appearance as the condition resolves is characteristic of . . .

- a. Contact lens peripheral ulcer (CLPU)
- b. Contact lens acute red eye (CLARE)
- c. Microbial keratitis
- d. None of the above

**a is the correct answer.** This clinical sign is highly indicative of contact lens peripheral ulcer

### 4. What percentage of CLARE cases reoccur?

- a. 10.0%
- b. 33.3%
- c. 50.0%
- d. 100.0%

**b is the correct answer.** A third of CLARE cases reoccur

### 5. Which symptom is characteristic of bacterial keratitis?

- a. Foreign body sensation which resolves on contact lens removal
- b. Foreign body sensation which worsens on contact lens removal
- c. Pain which improves as condition progresses
- d. Metamorphopsia

**b is the correct answer.** A symptom highly suggestive of bacterial keratitis is pain worsening after contact lens removal rather than improving

### 6. Treatment for microbial keratitis may include . . .

- a. Fortified antibiotics
- b. Cycloplegic drops
- c. Cold compresses
- d. All of the above

**d is the correct answer.** Fortified antibiotics are prescribed to alleviate bacterial infection. Cycloplegic drops reduce the risk of synechiae development and improve patient comfort as they stop ciliary spasm. Cold compresses improve patient comfort

### 7. Complications associated with microbial keratitis include:

- a. Primary cataract
- b. Glaucoma
- c. Diabetes
- d. Conjunctivitis

**b is the correct answer.** Secondary glaucoma can occur as a result of microbial keratitis due to the blockage of the

trabecular meshwork with inflammatory cells

### 8. The most common type of bacterial keratitis is caused by . . .

- a. Staphylococcus aureus
- b. Pseudomonas aeruginosa
- c. Streptococcus
- d. None of the above

**b is the correct answer.** 70% of bacterial keratitis cases in soft contact lens wearers are caused by pseudomonas aeruginosa a rod shaped bacteria

### 9. Which is the most appropriate management of CLPU?

- a. Contact patient triage at local casualty unit to arrange an ophthalmological consult urgently
- b. This condition will self-resolve. See patient routinely or sooner if symptoms develop
- c. Patient to cease contact lens wear at present. Frequent monitoring arranged to ensure that condition is resolving. See patient sooner if symptoms develop
- d. None of the above

**c is the correct answer.** CLPU is normally self-resolving on cessation of contact lens wear. The patient should be seen regularly to ensure that the condition is resolving and to rule out any infective cause. The contact lens wearer should be advised that if their symptoms worsen to contact the practice as soon as possible for advice or if this is not possible to attend casualty and to take their contact lenses, contact lens case and solution with them. They should also be advised not to drive there and if possible to attend accompanied as their pupils may be dilated

### 10. A risk factor for fungal keratitis is . . .

- a. Previous corneal surgery
- b. Contact lens wear
- c. Chronic steroid use
- d. All of the above

**d is the correct answer.** Previous corneal surgery, contact lens wear and chronic steroid use have all been associated with a slightly increased risk of fungal keratitis

### 11. Radial perineural infiltrates are characteristic of which condition?

- a. Fungal keratitis
- b. Contact lens peripheral ulcer
- c. Acanthamoebal keratitis
- d. Bacterial keratitis

**c is the correct answer.** Infiltrates following the course of the corneal nerves are indicative of acanthamoebal keratitis

### 12. An infiltrate with indistinct raised borders and a dry appearance is characteristic of which condition?

- a. Acanthamoebal keratitis
- b. Contact lens peripheral ulcer
- c. Contact lens acute red eye
- d. Filamentous fungal keratitis

**d is the correct answer.** A common characteristic sign of fungal keratitis caused by filamentous fungi is a branched infiltrate with raised feathery borders. It can be incorrectly diagnosed as herpes simplex. Patient history and clinical signs need to be taken into account when making the differential diagnosis

After the closing date, the answers can be viewed on the 'CET Online' page of [www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk). To download, print or save your results letter, go to 'View your CET record'. If you would prefer to receive a posted results letter, contact the CET Office 01206 734155 or email [cet@abdo.org.uk](mailto:cet@abdo.org.uk)

# Diary of events

**July 9**

**Independents Day 2012** - 'Close encounters of the patient kind', the National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham. For details visit [www.independentsday.co.uk](http://www.independentsday.co.uk)

**July 17**

**Area 2 (North East)** - Air your views and ask questions on the vote on the ABDO name change and the new Articles of Association with Peter Black, vice president, also Chris Bottomley FBDO, on handmade frames, and a visual recognition quiz on myopia, 3 CET points, buffet 6.30pm, Bluebell Inn, Wentbridge WF8 3SP (between Pontefract and Doncaster off the A1M, near Jnt 32 on the M62). Contact [Area2secretary@hotmail.com](mailto:Area2secretary@hotmail.com)

**September 17-23**

**National Eye Health Week** - For details log-on to the Vision Matters website [www.visionmatters.org.uk](http://www.visionmatters.org.uk)

**September 19**

**BCLA** - Presidential Address, Dr Catharine Chisholm to present 'Life in the fast lane' contact lenses and driving', Royal Society of Medicine, London W1. For details email [events@bcla.org.uk](mailto:events@bcla.org.uk)

**September 29-30**

**ABDO Conference and Exhibition** - Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon. For sponsorship opportunities and to book exhibition space contact the ABDO Conference Office (Event Exchange Ltd) by email at [rsvp@eventexchange.co.uk](mailto:rsvp@eventexchange.co.uk) or call 01225 869000. Delegate booking forms are available from ABDO Membership Services on 01227 733902, 01227 733912 or 01227 733922.

**October 13-15**

**Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (AIO)** - Annual Conference 2012, Cotton's Hotel, Knutsford, Cheshire. For

details visit [www.afio.co.uk](http://www.afio.co.uk) or email [secretary@afio.co.uk](mailto:secretary@afio.co.uk)

**October 16-20**

**International Opticians Association (IOA)** - Convention to be held in Perth, Western Australia. All ABDO members are members of the IOA. If you would like more information regarding this trip contact Ros Kirk on 01189 871020 or Jane Burnand on 020 7298 5102 or email [jburnand@abdolondon.org.uk](mailto:jburnand@abdolondon.org.uk)

**October 18-19**

**NOC 2012** - organised by AOP on behalf of LOCSU and the Optical Confederation, sponsored by Topcon, there is a wide range of speakers and sessions on offer, Hilton Metropole, Birmingham. Tickets, which include a seat at the AOP awards dinner, are available from [www.locsu.co.uk](http://www.locsu.co.uk)

**October 28**

**Area 2 (North East)** - 4th Annual CET Day and Exhibition, Weetwood Hall Hotel, just up the road from the village at Headingley, Leeds LS16 5PS. Open to members from other Areas. Please register your interest at [cetsunday@hotmail.com](mailto:cetsunday@hotmail.com) to be sent further updates when available

**November 22**

**BCLA** - 9th BCLA Pioneers Conference and evening lecture, Royal Society of Medicine, London. For details visit [www.bcla.org.uk](http://www.bcla.org.uk)

**November 25**

**Eyecare 3000** - London, The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London. For details visit [www.eyecare3000london.com](http://www.eyecare3000london.com) or telephone 01848 332020

**April 13-15 2013**

**Optrafair** - Federation of Manufacturing Optician's industry show, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. For details visit [www.optrafair.co.uk](http://www.optrafair.co.uk) ■

## dispensingoptics

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[www.abdo.org.uk](http://www.abdo.org.uk)

**ABDO members are welcome to attend Area meetings in any area they wish**

## Reminder for the end of CET period

Registered practitioners are reminded that the current CET period ends on 31 December 2012. By that date, to ensure continued registration with the GOC, you must have accrued 36 points as a dispensing optician or an optometrist, or 54 (36 +18) points as a contact lens optician on the GOC's CL Specialty list. The points must be confirmed on your CEToptics record. Pending, or unconfirmed points will not count towards your requirement. If you have any enquiries about your points record, contact CEToptics (0843 208 5487), or for other enquiries, contact the ABDO CET Office (01206 734155 Tuesday - Friday).

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