



dispensingoptics

May 2014



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A fond farewell

In our special interview on pages 22-25, we recognise the outstanding contribution made by Sheila Hope to this journal over the past 27 years. Over the years, Sheila has built a reputation for herself and the journal, which is unmatched. *Dispensing Optics* is a well read, well produced and well respected publication. Sheila has been at the forefront of its development and deserves the thanks and admiration of all members for her efforts on our behalf.

However, there is much more to Sheila and her unique contribution to ABDO. She is a good friend to the many members who worked with her on the journal over the years. She is, and always has been, a popular face at ABDO events, especially at conference as well as in the wider world of optics at events such as Optrafair.



Front cover:
Cecil Gee range available
from Norville Eyewear
Frame shown CG006

Cover point

To her colleagues on the staff, she has been an invaluable source of help and support. Her endless enthusiasm for, and interest in, the work of ABDO has been inspirational and will be greatly missed. From a personal point of view, it is hard to describe my personal thanks to Sheila for her many years of service. Suffice it to say that her loyalty and dedication will long be remembered.

Conference 2014

We review our recent Conference in the Country in this issue on pages 12-20. Without doubt it was a spectacular success and a real move forward in size as well as in the range and quality of CET provision. The whole weekend was enhanced by the presence of ITN and the EYE TV programming. This was a huge step forward in the push to promote the profession. The Association is greatly indebted to Elaine Grisdale and the team from Event Exchange for arranging such a successful conference and stunning gala dinner.

The Board has decided to revert to an annual conference and move back to a September date. Roll on 2015.

Tony Garrett ■

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The voice of opticians

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May 2014

- 3 Cover point**
- 4 Continuing Education and Training**
Aftercare for the low vision patient
by Anne Eyre
- 10 Continuing Education and Training**
Competency requirements for CET
by Paula Stevens
- 11 CET answers**
Key considerations when
dispensing children's spectacles
- 12 ABDO conference**
Energy, enthusiasm and CET
at ABDO 2014
- 22 A fond farewell**
Sheila has left the building
- 26 Membership matters**
Welcome on Board
- 29 Area news**
- 30 Patient and practice management**
Using locums, freelancers
and flexible workers
by Antonia Chitty
- 32 #BCLA2014**
What's in it for me?
- 33 Frequently asked questions**
- 34 The new NHS**
NHS changes – one year on
- 36 Black arts**
by Peter Black
- 38 Newsbrief**
- 44 Disjointed jottings from a DO's desk . . .**
Man off the Board
by Ted Moffatt
- 46 Book review**
Clinical Procedures in Primary
Eye Care
- 47 Diary of Events**

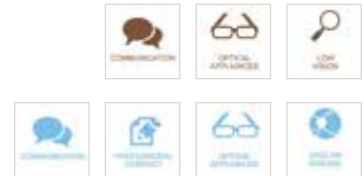


Aftercare for the low vision patient

by Anne Eyre BEd (Hons)
FBDO (Hons) LVA

Competences covered:

Dispensing opticians: Communication, Optical Appliances, Low Vision
Optometrists: Communication, Professional Conduct, Optical Appliances, Ocular Disease



Whilst there are many local and national protocols advising on the best practice for low vision assessment, the importance and structure of aftercare is less well documented. The purpose of this article is to consider some of the factors which influence the need for aftercare and to consider appropriate time frames.

It is possible to identify a number of reasons why aftercare is required, these are summarised in **Table 1**.

The underlying pathology

The nature of the underlying pathology may dictate the pattern of aftercare. Where the pathology present is a progressive disorder, the visual acuity is likely to change more quickly than in a stable condition. The obvious cause of rapidly reducing acuity is Exudative Macular Degeneration.

Although there is now the option for management of this disease with Lucentis injections, these do not always stabilise the condition. These patients need regular review of their magnification needs.

An additional condition, which requires regular review, is diabetes. In both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, retinal laser (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation)¹ photocoagulation is needed to seal leaking blood vessels in the retina. This type of laser produces heat, which results in scarring and leads to a patchy field loss. Aftercare following photocoagulation is therefore necessary. It is also important to remember that a large percentage of patients seen in low vision clinics are elderly and so there is an increasing likelihood that they may have more than one pathological condition.

Handling and reinforcement techniques

The initial aftercare appointment provides the opportunity to assess the patient's experience with the aid, to identify any difficulties and to determine whether it has fulfilled the needs and expectations of the patient. It is also an opportunity to assess the correct handling of the aid and to determine if any additional training is needed. The aid should be inspected for any defects and replaced if damaged.

This appointment is also useful to reinforce the information given at the assessment about working distance, the correct use of lighting and the use of spectacles. This is particularly important when using stand magnifiers. Anyone with insufficient accommodation needs to use their reading spectacles when



This article has been approved for 1 CET point by the GOC. It is open to all FBDO members, including associate member optometrists. The multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for this month's CET are available on page 9 and **online**. Insert your answers to the six MCQs on the inserted sheet or online at www.abdo.org.uk. After log-in, go to 'CET 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 the September issue of *Dispensing Optics*. The closing date is 9 August 2014.



C-35328

- The underlying pathology
- Assessment of handling and reinforcement of techniques
- Suitability of the aid for the selected task
- Address any additional needs not dealt with at the initial appointment
- Provide motivation and support for the patient
- To introduce additional strategies as appropriate
- Monitor acuity changes and suitability of registration category
- Introduce more complex aids as needed
- Identify change of needs due to alteration in personal circumstances

The pattern of aftercare will be influenced by each of these factors – but each patient is different and so thought about when to provide aftercare, and the format it will take, needs to be tailored for the individual patient.



Figure 1: Struggling with a new situation

Table 1: Influential factors for aftercare of the low vision patient

using a stand magnifier to overcome the divergent rays produced – the exception being myopes, who are able to use the emergent vergence to correct their refractive error without the use of spectacles.

Suitability of the aid for the task

Aftercare enables the low vision practitioner to determine whether the aids are being used for the task for which they were dispensed, and if they are suitable. The clinical surroundings of the testing room vary widely from the home environment so it is important for the patient to try the aid in their own surroundings to assess its suitability. Aids can be changed at this appointment.

Address additional needs

Following on from the initial assessment, the patient may have identified other areas of need, which may be helped by the provision of an additional aid. This may be something connected to a hobby, their work, their home, or other environment (see **Figure 1**). Different aids, optical and non-optical, may provide a useful tool to improve the life of the patient. Giving too many different aids at the initial assessment may confuse and overwhelm the patient. Once they have had time to become accustomed to their initial aids then additional ones can be added.

Motivation and support

The use of aftercare can help us to provide a framework for the motivation and support of our patients. The aftercare appointments allow us to provide support for our patients. It can help to provide reassurance and encouragement to

the nervous and frightened patient. It also gives the opportunity to engage with patients who have previously refused help because of their emotional state at the time of their initial assessment.

Loss of vision is a very emotive issue; none of us can appreciate how we would react if faced with it. Many of the patients who attend for low vision assessments are elderly and have previously had good vision; they are often bewildered about the cause and

are unable to accept that a change in their spectacle lens will not resolve their difficulties. The psychological problems associated with visual loss are likened to those experienced following bereavement and describe a series of emotional stages through which the patient may pass as they try to come to terms with their visual impairment (**Table 2**).

To maximise the support required necessitates an understanding of the emotional state of the patient. Looking

1. **Shock.** Immediately following the loss of vision, patients may appear unresponsive and slow. This has been described by Mehr and Freid (1975)² as a form of emotional anaesthesia.
2. **Depression.** The patient is in a state of helplessness and often feels that nothing can be done to help them. At this stage, they often reject any offer of help by eyecare professionals, deeming it a waste of time. Older patients who live alone are three times more likely to suffer depression, and sight loss has been identified as one of the top three causes of suicide in older people³.
3. **Anger.** This may be anger in general about the unfairness of the condition or, more seriously, anger directed at a particular person, often a healthcare professional who is deemed to have delayed referral or given incorrect treatment.
4. **Anxiety.** This is an ongoing problem, especially in progressive disorders where the patient is aware of a gradual reduction in visual acuity. They are often anxious about the involvement of the second eye or the likelihood of total blindness.
5. **Denial.** Patients will often refuse to accept that their condition is permanent.
6. **Disbelief.** Whilst similar to denial, these patients recognise that they have a visual problem, but cannot accept that a cure is not possible. They refuse to accept any aid unless it is in the form of spectacles.
7. **Realistic acceptance.** The final stage in the process; here the patient is able to accept and understand the eye condition and its prognosis and is willing to adapt to new strategies and to use aids, which will enable them to utilise their remaining vision to best effect.

Table 2. The Loss Model



Figure 2: Using a computer could be made more comfortable than this by using specialist software

at the Loss Model, it is possible to identify the likely effects resulting from visual loss. The impact on each individual will differ and is dependent on their personality, their ability to cope with adverse situations and, to some extent, on their age at the onset of the condition.

Acceptance and adaptation are both important factors in dealing with visual loss. As we age, our ability to adapt reduces. The acceptance of a changed visual state is also challenging.

Additional strategies

Steady eye strategy and eccentric viewing techniques can be used to improve reading ability in patients with a central scotoma. Eccentric viewing involves identifying areas of preferred retinal location. These are areas where retinal function is the clearest. Once identified, the patient can utilise these areas in order to maximise their residual vision.

Combined with this technique is the Steady Eye Strategy: using the preferred retinal location, the patient keeps their head and eyes still and passes text across their field of view. Both strategies can produce significant improvement, but can be time consuming to teach⁴. An aftercare appointment can provide an opportunity to demonstrate and teach these strategies to patients.

Acuity changes

During each follow-up appointment, it is also important to re-check the patient's acuity and to measure their contrast sensitivity. The measurement of contrast sensitivity is done using

specialist charts, such as Pelli-Robson⁵. This chart does not provide a complete description of visual performance, but provides a better indication of the patient's functional ability to cope in the 'real' world of multi-contrast.

Large changes in acuity or a significant reduction in contrast sensitivity may be indicative of either an additional pathology or a worsening of an existing condition, which may need referral to the ophthalmologist. An increase of magnification may also be indicated, which needs to be addressed. Reduction in acuity may mean that the patient, who was previously not eligible for registration, now meets the criteria and should be referred back to the ophthalmologist for certification.

Britain is alone in having a dual system of registration. Those with the poorest sight are registered as Severely Sight Impaired, and those with better acuity are registered as Sight Impaired. In each case, the distance acuity, along with the degree of field loss determines the registration category. The certification and registration of the visually impaired is voluntary. Some patients are reluctant to accept registration, however, the aftercare appointments can be used to explain the benefits of being registered.

More complex aids

During an aftercare appointment, it may be possible to introduce more complex aids. These may include telescopic aids, monocular or binocular, for either distance or near vision. Telescopic aids require mastery

of additional skills in order to use them effectively. A training programme covering localisation, spotting, focusing, tracing and tracking will need to be drawn up.

Recent advances in technology have increased the availability of electronic aids for the visually impaired (see **Figure 2**). Discussion about the benefits of these aids should be included in the aftercare appointment.

Alteration in personal circumstances

In some instances the needs of the patient may have changed since their initial assessment. This may be due to the onset of a medical condition, a change in personal circumstances, for example the death of a family member or partner, a change of job or, in the case of children, a change of class or school. Any of these situations may require additional aids or support.

One of the biggest responsibilities we have as low vision practitioners is the management of children. Although we have five senses at our disposal, up to 80 per cent of information is transmitted to us via visual means⁶. The visually impaired child is, therefore, at an immediate disadvantage compared to their sighted peers. Specialist schools for the visually impaired are no longer considered appropriate, so these children are normally educated alongside their sighted peers in mainstream schools.

Whilst there are social advantages for this approach, the special educational needs of these children are not always met. The biggest challenge comes at the transition from primary to secondary school. Not only are the schools much bigger, lessons are not conducted by a single teacher in one room. The visually impaired child has to move from room to room.

Children with special educational needs should be identified by the Local Education Authority (LEA). Teachers, together with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, will draw up an individual Education Plan for each child detailing set targets



The logo features a stylized orange and yellow swoosh above the word "Norville" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "eyewear" in a smaller, lowercase, italicized font below it.

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The logo consists of the word "Barbour" in a white, bold, sans-serif font inside a dark green rectangular box. Below the box, the word "EYEWEAR" is written in a white, spaced-out, sans-serif font.

and a timetable for completion. Where the resources required are beyond the finances available to the school then a statutory assessment is required, which may result in a statement detailing the extra help needed and its provision. This statement is reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

A careful review of the potential needs and additional resources should take place before the child starts their secondary education. It is advisable to liaise with the specialist teachers for the visually impaired as well as the social workers, rehabilitation officers and mobility officers. It is useful for the mobility officer to accompany the child to the school before term starts, to help them navigate around the building and to identify any potential risks. Depending on the needs of the child, specialist equipment needs to be put in place and the allocation of additional support drawn up.

Having considered some of the factors influencing the aftercare, it is important to address the question of when to provide aftercare and the most appropriate format. Each patient we see is unique, so any aftercare programme needs to be tailored to their individual circumstances.

The advice given in Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) guidelines⁷ is that following the provision of an aid, the patient should be reviewed after four weeks, with additional aftercare at six months and 12 months to assess their progress and address any problems which have occurred. If a shorter time frame than four weeks is used, then the patient may not have had time to fully assess the benefit of the aid, whereas a longer time frame could lead to a struggling patient becoming disillusioned and abandoning the aid in frustration. The use of a hand or stand magnifier is a new experience for most patients. Like learning any new skill, practice is needed and good practice needs to be reinforced.

The ABDO guidelines suggest that it is acceptable to telephone the patient;

this can be beneficial in some cases in determining whether a visit is needed. If the patient is coping well and has no immediate difficulties, they may feel that they do not need to attend in person. However, this does not provide information about correct handling. In many instances, it may be better to see the patient for an initial aftercare appointment and use telephone communication with the established user of aids.

The use of a short time frame also enables the practitioner to ensure that the aid is functioning properly and is effective for the purpose for which it was prescribed. It is possible that the patient may be discharged at this point with advice to return if there is a change in their circumstances, or alteration in the vision such that the aid is no longer appropriate. However, a study by Jackson *et al* (1987)⁸ found that 28 per cent of the group needed replacement, repair or additional aids within six months of the initial assessment. The remainder of the group continued without aftercare for 12 months, when it was found that a further 24 per cent needed different aids.

The timing of additional aftercare appointments will depend upon the individual patients and their needs. With a stable condition, a 12-month review may be sufficient. Those patients with progressive eye disease may well need three-monthly reviews.

Written information detailing how contact can be made with the low vision service is important along with contact numbers. This enables the patient to access aftercare when needed. However, not all patients will use this type of system, even if they are experiencing difficulty using their aid, while others may use it purely to obtain a replacement of a damaged unit. It is impossible to identify an ideal system of aftercare, which does not overload the clinical time available.

With children, regular contact is important to assess the effectiveness of the aids supplied and to identify additional areas where help is needed. Liaison with the peripatetic

teacher for the visually impaired can be useful in monitoring difficulties in the school environment.

The need for aftercare of the low vision patient is significant. If we fail to monitor the progress of our patients, they may become disillusioned and abandon their aids, or struggle with an aid, which no longer gives them reasonable acuity. The number of aftercare visits will be determined by the needs of the individual. Where the condition is stable, a patient may be discharged from the clinic, but should always be able to self-refer back should they experience any difficulties.

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Multiple choice questions (MCQs)

Aftercare for the low vision patient

1. Which statement is true regarding aftercare for a patient with low vision?

- a. Progressive pathology always dictates irregular re-assessment
- b. They should be seen after 4 months
- c. The time interval will depend on specific conditions and situations
- d. They should be referred after 1 week

2. An elderly emmetropic patient using a stand magnifier will need to wear reading spectacles to...

- a. help overcome a central scotoma
- b. increase the field of view
- c. increase the magnification produced
- d. overcome negative emergent vergence from the magnifier

3. Steady eye strategy relates to...

- a. use of a functioning area of the retina
- b. reducing peripheral distortion wearing a monocular distance telescope
- c. rotation of the eye to reduce nystagmus
- d. assessing the dominant eye where acuities are similar

4. What is the value of measuring contrast sensitivity during an aftercare visit?

- a. To give an indication of visual performance in varying light conditions

- b. To assess the effects of glare
- c. To apply a compensation value to the measurement of visual acuity
- d. To determine an optimum contrast value for everyday tasks

5. Regarding the management of children with low vision, which statement is FALSE?

- a. A statutory assessment is necessary for a Special Educational Needs Coordinator to be consulted
- b. Visually impaired children can experience additional difficulties during the change from primary to secondary education
- c. Visually impaired children attend mainstream schools
- d. An Individual Education Plan is devised by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator

6. Aftercare appointments are most likely to prove successful if...

- a. several low vision aids are supplied and regularly changed
- b. the practitioner is able to increase magnification at each visit
- c. there is an updated assessment of the patient's needs at each appointment
- d. the aftercare intervals comply with published advice

The deadline for posted or faxed response is 9 August 2014.
The module code is C-35328.

Online completion – 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. 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 on 01206 734155 or email cet@abdocet.infoman.org.uk

Occasionally, printing errors are spotted after the journal has gone to print. Notifications can be viewed at www.abdo.org.uk on the CET Online page.



Judy Finnigan rehearses her BBC Lifeline appeal

Eye charity appeal to feed research

Sight loss charity Fight for Sight secured some high profile support recently when TV presenter turned novelist, Judy Finnigan, fronted a new BBC Lifeline appeal on its behalf, which was shown on BBC One on Easter Sunday.

Judy, whose mother lost her sight to age-related macular degeneration when she was in her mid-70s, suffered a detached retina in 2010 and had to have an operation to close a macular hole. Fight for Sight is currently investing £8m into eye research at 35 UK universities and hospitals, and recently announced the awarding of nine new PhD studentships worth a total of £872,476 for

research into aniridia, corneal disease, thyroid eye disease, uveal melanoma, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, Coats' disease, retinopathy of prematurity and children's eyesight at school.

Joanne Abbott, ABDO CET assistant, recently attended a Fight for Sight supporters' open day at the Institute of Ophthalmology in London. She told *Dispensing Optics*: "The money raised and donated by the many supporters – myself included – is certainly being put to good use in the many different research projects being funded. Unfortunately, Fight for Sight currently turns away four out of five potential research projects due to lack of funds. That's four out of five opportunities to work towards finding the answer to treating or preventing sight loss for the 1.8 million affected in the UK."

Find out more and get involved in the many fun fundraising events that Fight for Sight arranges throughout the year at www.fightforsight.org.uk

Competency requirements for CET

ABDO CET coordinator, Paula Stevens, summarises the competency requirements for CET

In 2004/2005, the General Optical Council (GOC) devised, for dispensing and optometry, a set of competencies to be achieved by registration point. The dispensing optician (DO) competencies were arranged according to the elements that comprised the DO's scope of practice. There were eight areas of competence for dispensing opticians in 2005 – and in 2008, the competencies became more detailed, but nevertheless described as 'outline', core curriculum for dispensing opticians.

In 2010/2011, another competency was added: paediatric dispensing. Since 2005, when the statutory CET scheme began, the CET presented to DOs has had to address the core competencies to gain CET approval.

Current competencies

The competencies, and their subdivisions of 'Performance Criteria' and 'Indicators', are quite comprehensive, and show the wide scope of the work and knowledge of the dispensing optician. To find out what you, as a modern DO, should know and be competent at, have a look at the 2011 competency document in the 'Standards' section of the GOC website at www.optical.org. DOs, newly on the register after their studies, must be proficient in around 175 different skills – and that's not counting their underpinning knowledge...

The Enhanced CET scheme's requirement is that, over a three-year period, the DO must address all nine competencies. Fortunately, nearly all

CET is approved for more than one competency – with most addressing two or more. Most members will now have discovered the 'My CET' section of the GOC's website, which is accessed from 'My GOC' on the main GOC website. The GOC's 'Enhanced CET scheme – a guide for registrants' is an information booklet available at www.abdo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/GOC_CETChanging_A5-Booklet_v5.pdf, or from the GOC website.

All members are advised to read the guide. Page 13, part of which appears

in **Figure 1**, shows an optometrist's 'Track Progress' page (the DO's page is very similar), and tiles across the page to show the current status with regard to the registrant's points. A warning triangle, 'You are behind target', or a tick 'Requirement met' is added to the tiles, depending on progress. On each tile, the points achieved so far are in the centre, with the three-year requirement stated at the base of the tile. Contact lens opticians (CLOs) will have a 'Peer review' tile as shown here, but DOs will only have four tiles, as they don't have a peer review requirement.

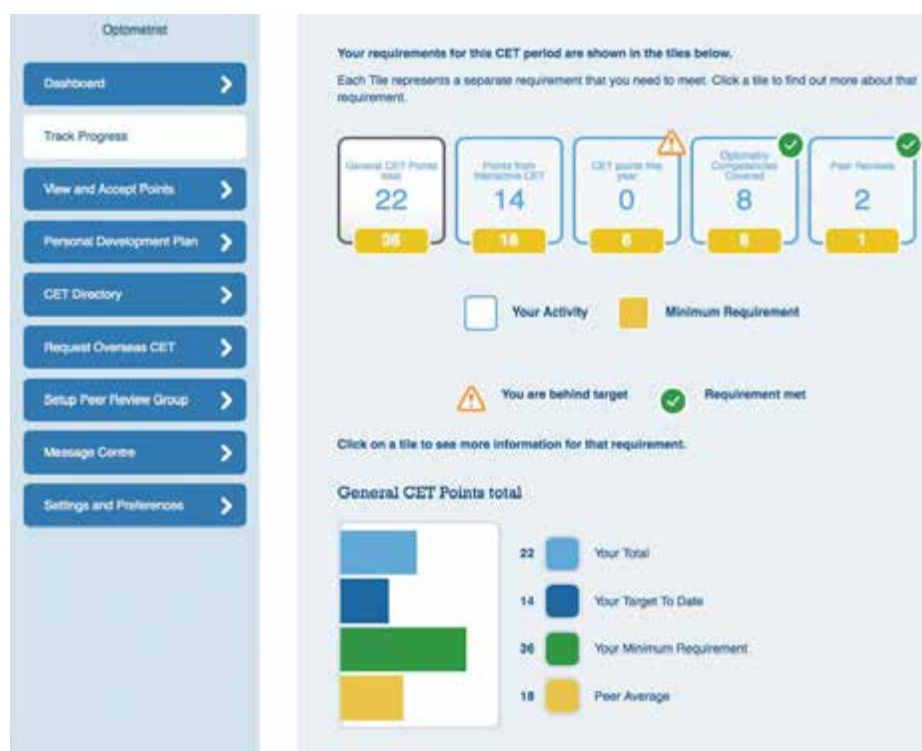


Figure 1: An optometrist's 'Track Progress' page on the GOC website

Competency requirements for DOs

The DO competencies are:

1. Communication
2. Professional conduct
3. Ocular examination for DOs
4. Optical appliances
5. Contact lenses
6. Low vision
7. Refractive management
8. Ocular abnormalities
9. Paediatric dispensing

DOs must complete CET covering all nine competencies over the three-year CET period. The minimum six-point requirement in each year can be in any of the competencies.

Competency requirements for CLOs

The CLO competencies are:

1. Communication

2. Professional conduct
3. Ocular examination for CLOs
4. Verification and identification
5. Contact lenses

CLOs must complete CET covering all five competencies for CLOs as above, plus competencies three to nine of the DO competencies. CET completed in CLO communication or CLO professional conduct also counts as the DO requirement. CLOs should ensure that, when there is a choice, communication or professional conduct points are accepted as CL points, rather than 'General'.

Restoration to the register

Those who apply for restoration to the register of dispensing opticians will need a minimum of 12 CET points gained in the 12 months before they can be restored. However, the GOC

registrar will also look at their CET record as a whole. If the potential registrant shows a shortfall in the previous period, there may be a further requirement to make up the shortfall in addition to the 12 points minimum. For restoration, the 12 points must cover all the competencies, and at least six points must have been gained by interactive means. CLOs who wish to apply for restoration to the contact lens specialty list are advised to contact the GOC for their individual restoration requirement.

The ABDO CET Office can advise on the best approach to the CET requirement before application for restoration, and there is some guidance on the ABDO website. Go to the CET page and click 'Rejoining the GOC register' on the left menu. ■

Multiple choice answers

Key considerations when dispensing children's spectacles by Eirian Hughes

1. The term 'duality of the patient' means:

- a. involving the parents/guardians at every stage
- b. making sure the patient understands what is happening
- c. being assertive and ignoring technical queries
- d. concentrating solely on the patient

a is the correct answer. It is necessary to employ appropriate communication skills for both the patient and the patient's carer(s).

2. Which statement regarding spectacle lenses is false?

- a. Nasal edge thickness will increase if a positive lens is decentred inwards
- b. Polycarbonate material is more prone to surface abrasion than CR39
- c. The lower the Abbe number the more colour fringing may be noticed
- d. All plastics lenses provide UV radiation protection up to 380nm

d is the correct answer. Some plastic plano sunlenses offer poor UV protection.

3. A pantoscopic angle of zero is preferred for a young child because . . .

- a. the optical centres of the lenses should be central in the frame
- b. the lower edge of the rim must be clear of the cheeks
- c. the angle of side should be zero
- d. this prevents them looking over the top rim

b is the correct answer. Because a child's bridge may be flatter than an adult's, a standard pantoscopic tilt of around 10° may cause the lower rim to rest on the cheeks. The pantoscopic tilt should be adjusted to prevent this.

4. Frames with plastic sides are not ideal for very young patients because . . .

- a. it is not usually possible to shorten them effectively
- b. the thickness presses against the temple
- c. the length of the drop cannot be altered
- d. they are not hypoallergenic

a is the correct answer. Although sometimes plastic sides can be shortened with a good cosmetic and practical result, the amendments that can be made to many plastic side designs and measurements are very limited.

5. In young children, what would not be treated by wearing spectacles? . . .

- a. Amblyopia
- b. Accommodative esotropia
- c. Anisometropia
- d. Anisocoria

d is the correct answer. Anisocoria is the term for unequal pupil sizes. Spectacles will not affect this condition.

6. The boxed centre distance of the frame and the binocular distance PD should be equal because . . .

- a. there should be equal decentration in each eye
- b. vertical centres should be on the horizontal centre line
- c. temporal and nasal edge thickness will then be the same in each eye
- d. pressure along the temples should be avoided

c is the correct answer. This is the ideal situation for the best dispense.



ABDO president, Peter Black

Energy, enthusiasm and CET at ABDO 2014



Vice president Kevin Gutsell – winner of the 'par three nearest the pin' at the pre-conference golf tournament which took place at the Warwickshire Golf and Country Club on the Saturday afternoon

This year's ABDO conference put the profession centre stage, providing renewed enthusiasm, top-class education and many happy memories

Taking place at the Chesford Grange Hotel in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, the ABDO Conference in the Country attracted some 600 delegates to participate in five tracks of CET, covering all core competencies including contact lenses, communication and peer review. Along with the reintroduction of contact lenses to the programme, there was a bustling trade exhibition where delegates could improve their product knowledge and network with industry supporters, and a full social programme including a pre-conference drinks reception and glamorous gala dinner at the nearby Dallas Burston Polo Club.

The event also saw the official launch of EYE TV News – a joint initiative between ABDO and ITN to create a dedicated news programme to provide a unified voice for the sector, and to challenge perceptions of dispensing opticians. Fronted by national newsreader Natasha

Kaplinsky, the programme is presented from the national news studios at ITN. During the conference, pre-recorded interviews with ABDO members and supporters were relayed on big screens so that delegates were the first to see the programme. ITN reporter, Sarah Lockett, and a team from ITN

Delegates enjoying the exhibition



ITN reporter Sarah Lockett interviews Jo Holmes





Annette Ball and fellow delegate



Sunday's keynote lecture, 'The future for optics in the UK: a perspective of a critical friend', presented by Professor Darren Shickle

Productions carried out further interviews with conference delegates over the two days, in order to capture important moments and opinions from the conference.

Interactive CET galore

One of the highlights of this year's CET programme was Sunday's keynote lecture, 'The future for optics in the UK: a perspective of a critical friend', presented by Darren Shickle, Professor of Public Health at Leeds University. Based on his webinar, hosted on the ABDO College website in association with Canterbury Christ Church University last June, Professor Shickle presented his research into the poor uptake of eye examinations and examine strategies for ophthalmic public health, models of delivery of optical services and the importance of dispensing opticians and optometrists in primary eyecare and public health.

On the Sunday and Monday, Paul SurrIDGE, chief executive of the Sight Care Group, presented a business-focused workshop on, 'Maximising

Tony Garrett, Jo Underwood and Deanne Gray



dispensing opportunities: improving conversion rates and dispensing values'. Speaking after the conference, Paul said: "I was delighted to be asked to attend and present at this year's ABDO conference, and met so many truly lovely people. I was especially impressed with the depth and breadth of the programme and the introduction of EYE TV News, which just added to the professionalism. The gala dinner was spectacular. Elaine Grisdale was a star facilitator on the evening, as she always is. ABDO has come on leaps and bounds in recent years and does such a great job for its members."

For those requiring contact lens CET points, there was the chance to participate in contact lens peer review and hear from leading experts in the field, such as Sarah Morgan presenting her top 10 tips for success with contact lens patients, Andrew Keirl discussing the optical advantages and disadvantages of spectacle lenses and contact lenses, and Martin Conway exploring 'simply sclerals'.

Ian Hardwick and Lesley Parkinson from Area 5



These were supported by a number of contact lens workshops, led by Professor Christine Purslow, Bradley Rogers, Mark Chatham and Steve Wright.

Remarking on the contact lens element, which was sponsored by CooperVision, Somerset contact lens optician, Mat Bailey, said: "The retina frazzling contract carpeting at the Chesford Grange Hotel failed to detract from the very high quality of CET available to us. The organisers pulled out all the stops to combine a wide choice of subjects, the best educators in the business and a wide range of exhibitors. It was really great to attend several interactive contact lens sessions, top up my points and rub shoulders with fellow CLOs."

For those with an interest in low vision, discussion workshops ran throughout Sunday alongside general dispensing. LV workshop leader Annette Ball said: "The ABDO conference was another great success in the ABDO calendar.

Justin and Paula Hall from ABDO College





Peter Black being interviewed by ITN Productions



Darren Shickle, Professor of Public Health at Leeds University



Michael Gilsenan, who spoke about school screening

As the new girl at presenting workshops, it was a pleasure to meet delegates who were eager to learn something new or refresh their memory on a subject that was not part of their everyday job. Participation in the varied programme made gaining those CET points a pleasure. The venue offered spacious and comfortable surroundings allowing delegates to appreciate the number of companies who created the exhibition. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to create a great event – September 2015 is definitely circled in my diary."

Past ABDO president, Jennifer Brower, who also led low vision workshops, commented: "I was very pleased that so many delegates chose to attend the two low vision discussion workshops because it shows the continuing interest our members have in one of our protected functions. Discussions were lively and interesting and feedback was very positive. The conference as a whole was a great success, well organised and most enjoyable. Delegates were drawn to

the high number of CET points on offer but were also enthusiastic about the exhibition and the social events. I think EYE TV is a fabulous new venture for ABDO, which I hope will enhance and highlight the role of dispensing opticians in modern day optics."

Other practical workshops included rimless tailoring techniques led by Stuart Jones, refraction workshops with Fiona Anderson, Chris Bottomley, Sue Deal and John Hardman, dispensing protective eyewear with Ted Moffatt, ocular emergencies with Paula Stevens, and Kevin Gutsell on unusual (or not so unusual) cases. Professor Mo Jalie presented 'Sliding, electronic and fluid adaptive spectacle lenses', while paediatric dispensing was covered by Michael Gilsenan, who spoke about school screening, Dr Andrew Blaikie who explored amblyopia management, and Barry Duncan and Fiona Anderson, who presented paediatric dispensing workshops. Dr Scott Mackie discussed 'the AMD epidemic', while Angela McNamee reminded delegates, 'Don't forget the

conjunctiva'.

Commenting on the workshops, Carole Jenkin of Smith and Swepson Opticians, said: "I enjoyed the workshops I went to, which were good informative talks with time given over to group discussions. It's often during these times that you glean handy information and ideas from others. The exhibition felt a little disjointed but was well attended by a good range of companies. But the highlight had to be the gala dinner. What an amazing location. Great venue, food, wine and company – thank you Silhouette for inviting us!"

CET for independent prescribers was also available via a presentation given by Nick Rumeny on 'How to use IP optoms in a world without ophthalmology access'. Speaking after the conference, Nick said: "ABDO conferences used to be a very optional attendance by non-DOs. No longer. This was my second. It was slick, well organised and completely up-to-

Gaining CET points at a workshop – just a pleasure



President Peter Black visits Nick Boys on the William Morris stand



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Elaine Grisdale hosting the evening at the splendid Dallas Burston Polo Club



Kate Clarke is presented with the Hamblin Memorial Prize by John Hardman



Ian Anderson is presented with the Area Prize by Peter Black

date, not least for the impressive free wifi. The CET was well attended and the delegates did the sponsors and exhibitors proud; the stands were packed even accounting for the sunshine. The gala dinner was an exceptional venue and with good food."

Nick continued: "If I had to sum it up I'd say it provided the sort of attention to detail and in-depth quality content that makes it a conference to put on anyone's year planner. I was exceptionally impressed at the multidisciplinary, generic and non-partisan eyecare sector approach taken by ABDO in engaging with ITN Productions, and their team was similarly highly professional. ABDO is to be highly congratulated for drawing this together. I sense potential progress in our sector and a great story."

Monday morning saw an 'Optical question time' session, chaired by Barry Duncan, which enabled delegates to question: ABDO president, Peter Black; Association of Optometrists chairman,

Lyndon Taylor; and LOCSU managing director, Katrina Venerus. Delegate Liz Stringer said: "The conference this year exceeded my expectations in every way. The organisation, the venue and the presentations were most impressive. I came away with renewed enthusiasm and happy memories." These sentiments were echoed by Brenda Rennie of Area 12, who said: "I'd just like to congratulate Elaine and all the team for organising such a successful conference. The event was buzzing and full of energy. The surrounding area was quite spectacular and the Polo Club was out of this world."

Emotional night to remember

As one of Britain's grandest sporting and social venues, the Dallas Burston Polo Club provided a splendid setting for the 2014 ABDO gala dinner and awards, hosted by Elaine Grisdale, ABDO head of professional services and international development. After a short presentation by John Schubach, business director for the UK and Ireland at Transitions Optical, the

evening's sponsor, ABDO president, Peter Black, took to the stage to briefly reflect on his 12 months in office. He told guests: "Last year the ABDO Board set out its strategic priorities for the year ahead and the three areas we deemed of most importance to the membership and the future of the profession were: providing adequate CET to our members to meet the demands of the new enhanced CET rules; obtaining a research base; and promoting the profession."

"It is a credit to our CET department and the conference team, that despite such new competition from 100% Optical and Optrafair London in what has become a very crowded spring optical calendar, we have managed to attract delegates for CET in such large numbers. Additionally our Area committees are also providing CET in unprecedented levels. In 2010, if you've attended every ABDO CET event you could have got yourself 60 points – last year that had increased to 270 and this year promises to be even higher."

Guests enjoying pre-dinner drinks on the balcony at the Dallas Burston Polo Club before the ABDO gala dinner and awards





Ted Moffatt receiving his Medal of Excellence from Peter Black



Dame Mary Perkins is presented with an Honorary Fellowship by Peter Black



A standing ovation for Medal of Excellence winner Andy Hepworth, with his wife Alison

Peter continued: "We have recently set up the ABDO Research Fund and have our first member doing a PhD in ophthalmic dispensing via Aston University, and we'll be launching our own Masters programme next year in conjunction with CCCU. Finally, we have embarked upon an ambitious programme to promote the profession. Every member who stands for the Board almost without exception places a priority on communicating the role of the dispensing optician to the general public, of differentiating DOs and CLOs from optometrists and promoting our profession – and I believe we have made great strides in this regard over the past year."

Before leaving the stage, Peter expressed his hope that the EYE TV initiative would provide a great opportunity for ABDO, the profession and the sector to promote themselves to a wider audience, and said he hoped other organisations would get involved in the future. After a sumptuous three-course meal, it was time for guests to sit back and enjoy a

Dancing the night away . . .

short clip of EYE TV News in the presence of senior producer, Elisabeth Fisher-Robins and the ITN team, who had joined the Association for the gala dinner.

The annual ABDO awards then followed. This year's Hamblin Memorial Prize was presented by John Hardman, learning and development manager at Boots Opticians, to Kate Clarke, Area 4 chairman. Kate told *Dispensing Optics* afterwards: "I was stunned and extremely proud to hear my name called out. Although I have supported ABDO in my Area for the majority of my career, and have met and admired many of the previous recipients of the award, I never ever thought that one day it would be awarded to me. I have made many friends through supporting my Area and would recommend it to all members to get involved. I was so amazed to hear my name that I actually forgot to pick up my walking stick to aid me to the stage. This weekend was my first foray out without my crutches after a hip replacement.

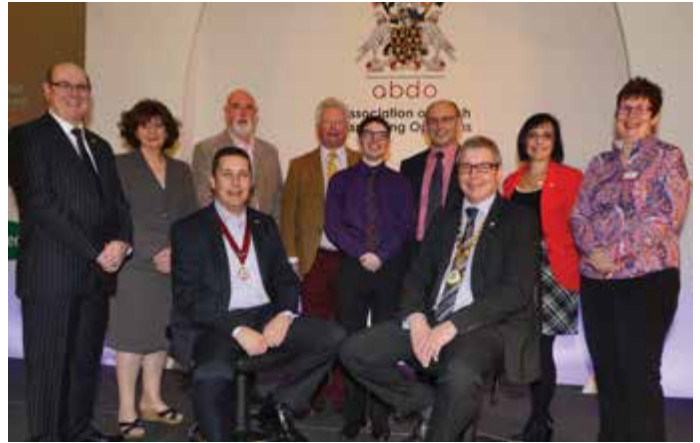
Thankfully John came down the steps to meet me! Thank you once again for awarding me this prestigious prize. I will treasure it."

Peter Black then returned to the stage to present the remaining awards – beginning with the Area Prize to Ian Anderson, chairman of Area 11. Ian told the journal: "I was gobsmacked when Elaine announced that I had won – it was a complete surprise. To have the work I have done for the London Area and *Dispensing Optics* recognised by the Association and my fellow peers is a great honour. I enjoy helping to organise the London Area events, and I have terrific support from my committee. The events keep me in touch with friends and colleagues as well as up-to-date with new products and encourage members to do the same. It is my hope that newly qualified members and those qualified for a while will see the work that ABDO and the Areas do, and be encouraged to uphold the quality of dispensing that ABDO has set the standards for."





Delegates enjoying CooperVision's interactive CL discussion workshop



The ABDO Board, from left to right, Kevin Milsom, Jennifer Brower, Keith Cavaye, Tony Garrett, Anthony Blackman, Clive Marchant, Jo Holmes, and Fiona Anderson, front, Kevin Gutsell and Peter Black

The next award was one of two Medals of Excellence presented that evening and it went to Ted Moffatt, who recently left the ABDO Board after serving seven years (see *Disjointed Jottings* on page 44). Ted said afterwards: "Awards like this are so special because they come from your peers. It is my proudest moment in optics and means so much. It was a real surprise." The next award was an Honorary Fellowship presented to Dame Mary Perkins, director of Specsavers Opticians, who said afterwards: "I was very honoured to receive the Fellowship Award. As an optometrist from back in the swinging 60s, I can remember being taught glazing by hand, measuring frames and actually making frames. I was a whizz at pinning and soldering!

"The knowledge our ABDO qualified dispensing opticians have nowadays is essential for today's customers, who recognise that professionalism extends beyond the sight test where those customers demand choice of product to suit their needs with quality,

Paula Hall with delegates on the ABDO College stand



irrespective of what their income might be. The career choice now for dispensing opticians is vast, from contact lenses, low vision dispensing, paediatric dispensing to business management, to name a few. The ABDO conference had a wide curriculum of workshops and lectures, bringing delegates up-to-date with the latest developments as well as awarding CET points to help their important continuing registration. The UK optical market needs more qualified dispensing opticians who are able to progress their careers in a changing environment and ABDO is a body able to do just this," concluded Dame Mary.

In the final award of the night, Elaine made an emotional tribute to "one of the good guys in optics". Introducing the award, Elaine said: "The recipient is a DO who no longer practises but who is a staunch supporter of the dispensing profession and is a loyal ambassador for ABDO wherever he goes. He is a much loved presenter and is a regular on the lecture circuit

Visiting the exhibition



with his lectures being amongst the most popular on any programme. For all the support that he has given ABDO over the past years, for his integrity, his enthusiasm, his professionalism and good humour, I'm sure you'll agree that Andy Hepworth is a worthy recipient of ABDO's Medal of Excellence."

Guests gave Andy a standing ovation as he collected his medal from Peter Black and posed for photos with his wife, Alison. Speaking to *Dispensing Optics* later on how it felt to receive his Medal of Excellence, Andy said: "Put simply I was shocked, amazed and deeply proud of the award. In particular I can't thank ABDO enough for their recognition and of course the guests for their response."

Products to boost practices on parade

Two days of exhibition allowed delegates to view some of the latest products on offer from some 40 companies representing frames, sunglasses, low vision products,

Sally Bates explores dispensing for facial disfigurements





Sarah Morgan presenting her top 10 tips for success with contact lens patients



Tony Garrett with ITN Productions



Concentrating on dispensing matters

contact lenses, equipment, practice management software, lenses, nutritionals and more. Speaking after the conference, John Schubach of Transitions Optical, said: "In the midst of a busy conference year, the ABDO conference was a great success. As sponsoring partners, we were thrilled with our participation and exposure, having enjoyed numerous productive conversations on our display stand. The gala dinner, however, stands out as the highlight. The evening was amazing, from venue hire, menu, décor, the emotion of the awards, to the live band. The attention to detail was incredible, with our brand exposure expectations being superseded in every way. Congratulations and thank you."

It was an ABDO conference first for Abigail Gavin, trade marketing manager at De Rigo, who said: "This year's ABDO conference provided us with the chance to showcase each of our sought-after brand portfolio, and to focus on our newly appointed brand ambassador in Neymar Junior –

quoted as the next Pele, playing football for Barcelona FC and his beloved Brazil – for Police. With an exciting season ahead and the World Cup now imminent; we were excited to launch our Police Partner Programme, offering customers a cleverly designed 40-piece display unit as well as a fully supported marketing calendar. The event was extremely enjoyable and even provided a delightful evening gala enabling some all-important networking. A huge thank you to all at ABDO from the De Rigo UK team."

Nick Boys, sales director at William Morris London, said: "The ABDO conference poses a particular magic, since they attract a passionate, optically minded set of people who wish to learn and further their business. We at William Morris love the energy of the event and the fact that we can present our British brand to British opticians; you can't get a better fit than that. It was a superb event run by a special team of people. See you next year."

Chris Beal, managing director of Menrad UK, was delighted with how the exhibition went for the company, saying: "It was a pleasure to meet with so many customers – new and old – peers and friends under one roof and to be part of the positive atmosphere that was generated there." Meanwhile Tom Duesbury, area sales manager at Hoya Lens UK, commented: "The ABDO conference was a great opportunity as a manufacturer to meet with practitioners who you otherwise might not get much time with during the normal working week. We were able to interact with a large portion of customers and discuss our latest product and promotion opportunities."

Hermann Baumann, OWP manager of international sales, reported many contacts by customers interested in the company's products and said the team was looking forward to next year's event. Phil Mullins, business development director at the National Eyecare Group, commented: "We had three current Optinet users sign to

Optical question time chaired by Barry Duncan



Peter Black



Katrina Venerus



Lyndon Taylor





CooperVision's Bradley Rogers

upgrade to Optinet Flex, and a couple of practices booked full demos. Delegates also showed interest in our patient education software from Eyemaginations – Echo. The idea of being able to email patients animations to back up what is said in practice was a talking point, as was the ability to draw over the animations."

As delegates went around the exhibition, they were given the chance to enter a prize draw to win a brand new iPad and other prizes. The winner of the iPad was Emily Jakeman of Smith and Swepson Opticians, who said: "I have never won anything before, so it was a bit of a shock. It definitely was the cherry on top of such a great evening at the gala dinner. As I am still a student at ABDO College, I did not need to do any of the CET lectures. However, I had a great time at the exhibition and gala dinner. It was a huge success." The winner of a VIP package to the 2015 ABDO conference was Anu Sharma from Optometry in Delhi, while Anthea

Meeting old and new friends



Keith Cavaye and Angela McNamee being interviewed by ITN Productions

Goddard from Michael Charlton Opticians won a two-day delegate package to ABDO 2015.

Feeling of cohesion

Speaking to *Dispensing Optics* after the conference, Elaine Grisdale said: "Looking back on the event, I think the thing that struck me most was the energy and the great buzz around the conference. Whether it was exhibitors, delegates or ABDO staff, there was a cohesion, good humour, lots of smiling, chatting, a coming together of like-minded people determined to have a good time, catch up with old friends and bag their CET points. The conference was slick and professional and underlined how far we have come in terms of organisation. The quality and breadth of the CET offering and the array of top class speakers proved why we are one of the most successful providers of CET.

"The collaboration with ITN provided an extra plus to the proceedings, was a fantastic talking point and projected ABDO and its members as key players

Winner of the prize draw, Emily Jakeman, receives the iPad from Elaine Grisdale



Kevin Gutsell and Peter Black enjoying the exhibition

in the optical landscape. The gala dinner stands out for me – as it does for many others – for the fantastic venue, emotional awards ceremony and the fun generated through the evening. It's an important part of the weekend from a networking perspective and I'd like to thank Transitions Optical for once again supporting us and allowing us to make the dinner accessible to all.

"Now the dust has settled, I'd like to do it all again but this time without the stress! The next ABDO conference will be in September 2015 and I'm already drafting out an even more ambitious programme. We have just put bids in with a few venues and are waiting to see what comes back. We can't confirm the date until we know exactly what we want to do and if the venues can accommodate us, but as soon as we can we will update members on developments."

Visit www.abdo.uk.com to view EYE TV News. ■

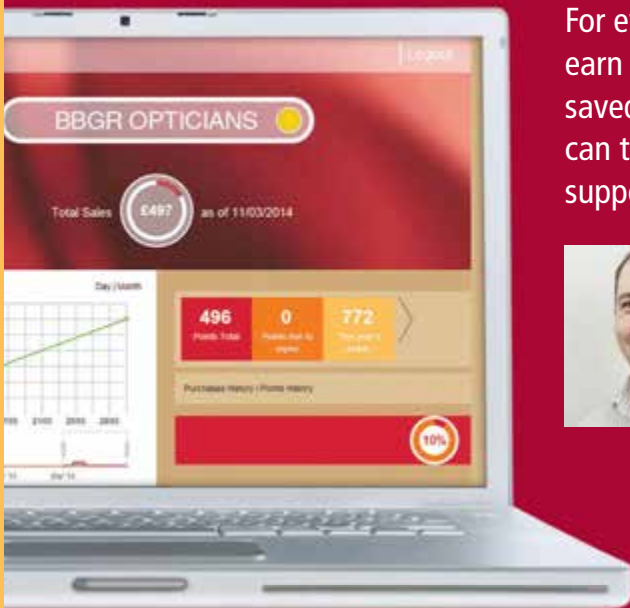
President Peter Black is disappointed that the highly successful conference has come to an end





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Always closer





Sheila has left the building...

After 27 years with the journal, *Dispensing Optics* production editor, Sheila Hope, is hanging up her press badge, packing away her back copies and looking forward to new adventures with family and friends – free from the pressures of that monthly production deadline

We talk to Sheila about her time with the journal, which began in 1987 under the editorship of ABDO general secretary, John Roskill...

DO: When did you start working for *Dispensing Optics* and who were your colleagues back then?

Sheila: I started working on *Dispensing Optics* on 11 August 1987, and the first issue I worked on was September 1987. At that time, the journal was published by Weald of Kent Publications in Tonbridge, Kent, and printed by K&SC (Printers) Ltd, in Tunbridge Wells. My boss at the time was John Roskill, who was ABDO general secretary. At the end of 1989 Neil Hird, the managing director of Weald of Kent, retired and ABDO Publications Ltd was formed to carry on producing the journal. The Board was made up of John Roskill, Ros Kirk and Peter Hall and we moved into the offices of the then publishing manager, Shelagh Hardy, in Crowborough, East Sussex.

The first issue to be published by ABDO Publications was the January/February 1990 issue. Deanne Gray started working with us as administration manager soon after our move to Crowborough. Shelagh stopped working for ABDO Publications after the January/February issue 1992, and Ann Johnson joined the team as features consultant. John Roskill retired in April 1995 and Major General Malcolm Hunt became the next ABDO general secretary of ABDO and, therefore, my boss.

When Malcolm retired in 1999, Sir Anthony Garrett (Tony) became my boss – and *Dispensing Optics* editor. Barbara Doris started working for Malcolm at the beginning of 1999 as his PA, and became assistant editor. Barbara retired in May 2011 and Jane Burnand became Tony's PA – although she and Barbara had been working alongside one another for a few years; Jane is now assistant editor. Our current printers, Lavenham Press based

in Suffolk, first worked the presses for us on the August/September 2004 issue.

In 2008, Nicky Collinson joined the team as news editor and then became news and features editor when Ann retired in 2010. Now that I'm leaving, Nicky is taking on the role of managing editor and Ros Argent will be responsible for the design and production of the journal. So, there have been some changes in journal staff over the years but considering the years that have passed – not too many!

DO: What was it like working on *Dispensing Optics* in those early days?

Sheila: Very different to nowadays. Publishing has changed a great deal in the past 27 years. In the old days, I sub-edited the copy, which meant marking it up for the printers – the font, size and leading and the copy was marked up to show where text should be bold, italic and so on. The printers



1998: With Ann Johnson and Deanne Gray at the conference in Harrogate



2006: On board the Royal Yacht Britannia with BBGR



2008: With Ann and Deanne at the ABDO conference in Manchester

A photograph of several clear contact lenses stacked on a reflective surface. The lenses are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner, with the top lens in sharp focus and the others blurred in the background. The surface they are resting on is highly reflective, creating a clear mirror image of the lenses below them.

Do you hold the ABDO 'Contact Lens Certificate'?

Have you thought about continuing your studies to achieve the advanced contact lens diploma – and use the suffix FBDO (Hons) CL – but are unsure of just where and how to start?

ABDO College is introducing an Advanced Contact Lens Diploma Preparation Course to guide and support those interested in attaining the higher qualification.

The ABDO College Advanced CL Preparation Course will take place on 28 and 29 May 2014 at ABDO College in Kent. This will be followed by a series of distance learning projects to provide structured revision, in readiness for the winter 2014 examinations.

The sections of the examination are as follows:

- A Toric lens fitting
- B Presbyopia correction
- C Remedial fitting, such as keratoconus, post refractive treatment and orthokeratology
- D Current knowledge, to include materials, designs, care products and current practice
- E Case records

The units may be attempted in any order within a three-year period but all units must be achieved within five years.

Full costs for the two days of tuition plus distance learning modules are £700 but there is generous sponsorship of £300 per delegate from **Contamac** and **No 7 Contact Lenses** for the first **six** delegates enrolled, so the cost to these delegates will be £400.

Course information and application forms are available from Rachel Blazyca at ABDO College on 01227 733 921 or email her at rblazyca@abdocollege.org.uk.



2008: Having a Silhouette style consultation at the Manchester conference

would then send me galley proofs, which I had to physically cut and paste onto a layout sheet whilst marking the photographs to fit into a layout. I would return that and then, when they had completed the pages, I would visit the printers to check the



2009: Receiving Honorary Fellowship from the then ABDO president, Barry Duncan



2009: With Ann at the ABDO conference in Brighton



2009: A visit from granddaughter Maisie at the Brighton conference



2009: With Elaine Grisdale, Katie Docker and Deanne Gray at Optrafair

pages. The advertisements were organised by the advertisement manager and his assistant. I started working in Quark XPress on a Mac in 1994 – just before John Roskill retired.

DO: How much has the journal and the organisation changed in your time?

Sheila: Over time, I have become totally responsible for the publishing of *Dispensing Optics* – some of it just happened and some was because of changes in staffing. Probably the biggest changes were when we went from cutting and pasting galleys onto layout sheets to the design software we use, QuarkXpress. Also, when we changed from nine to 12 issues, which increased my workload considerably. Over the years, improvements to QuarkXpress have altered my job and now I upload the entire journal, including photographs and advertisements, to an FTP (file transfer protocol) site at the printers and they download everything and produce a soft proof for me to check before they make the plates ready for printing.

DO: What memorable occasions stand out from your time with *Dispensing Optics* and ABDO?

Sheila: Most of my time at *Dispensing Optics* has been great but technology

that isn't working properly can be hugely frustrating. For instance, when the computer crashes and you have to do the last eight pages again, or when emails can't be sent or received. But there's always technical help at hand to sort these blips out, so that I can get the journal out on time and in one piece!

Of course, I've enjoyed all of the ABDO conferences and seen many interesting cities that I would probably never have visited otherwise. One of my first conferences was in Torquay in 1988. BBC weatherman Ian McCaskill opened the conference, and there was a large exhibition and lectures. Newsreader Jan Leeming was the cabaret compère at the close of the conference on the Sunday evening and Tom O'Connor, Wayne Dobson and the Brotherhood of Man entertained us.

Glasgow was great too, as was Manchester, Harrogate, Stratford-upon-Avon, Nottingham and Brighton in 2009, where I was presented with Honorary Fellowship of ABDO. This was a great honour and I was delighted. The eight-course anniversary banquet at the Langham Hilton Hotel in 2000 to celebrate 75 years of the ophthalmic dispensing profession was a fantastic occasion too. But perhaps one of



2009: Getting a feel for sight loss on the Guide Dogs stand at Optrafair



Trio of former bosses – ABDO general secretaries Malcolm Hunt, Tony Garrett and John Roskill



2010: Waiting for the arrival of HRH The Countess of Wessex at ABDO's 25th anniversary Luncheon, with Katie and Jane



2012: Presenting the journal CET prize to Duncan Counter at the ABDO conference in Stratford

my most lasting memories will be of the celebration of ABDO's 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Luncheon at Plaisterer's Hall on Friday 6 May 2011 with guest of honour, HRH The Countess of Wessex. It was a wonderful occasion, which so many optical friends attended and I was very proud to be a part of it.

I have also enjoyed joining ABDO at events with the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM), which I became part of in 2004 – going on to become a Liveryman in 2007. I am a member of the WCSM's membership committee and the vice chairman of the Spectacle Makers' Society Committee. There have been some splendid industry partner events that I've been to over the years. The ones that stand out are the BBGR trip to Edinburgh, which culminated with a black tie dinner on the Royal Yacht Britannia. Another memorable trip was to the Cheltenham Gold Cup races with Essilor.

DO: What are you planning to do with your retirement?

Sheila: I'm looking forward to having more time to spend in my garden, walking my dog Tilley, a golden retriever, on Ashdown Forest and

spending more time with my friends and family with the occasional retail therapy slipped in.

DO: Will we still see you at ABDO events?

Sheila: Yes, I hope to still help out at ABDO conferences and the annual Graduation and Prize Giving Ceremony at Canterbury Cathedral. Optics has been good to me, and I've made some terrific friends over the years, so I'm glad I'll still be able to catch up with them from time to time in the future. Ros and David Kirk have been a great help to me over the years, especially when I first started, and theirs was the first practice I ever visited.

The support of everyone who has been on the Journal Advisory Committee over the years, the ABDO Board and ABDO College staff has been wonderful. As too has been the support of my bosses, John Roskill, Malcolm Hunt and Tony Garrett, their PAs Sue Roskill, Barbara Doris and Jane Burnand, my colleagues Ann Johnson, Nicky Collinson and last but not least – my great friend Deanne Gray who I have worked with since March 1990. Of course, none of it would have been possible, as they say, without the

support of my husband, Richard. It's been a great 27 years and I'm sure *Dispensing Optics* will keep going from strength to strength – and I will keep on reading it to stay up-to-date with ABDO and my friends and former colleagues. ■



2012: Having fun in Stratford



2012: With Deanne at the ABDO Graduation and Prize Giving Ceremony



2013: With Lana Delambre, Jane and Paula Stevens at Optrafair



2014: With Alison Potter, Paula Stevens, Pavan and Joanne Abbott at the 2014 conference in Kenilworth



Fiona Anderson



Clive Marchant



Jo Holmes

Welcome on Board

Nicky Collinson catches up with re-elected ABDO Board member, Fiona Anderson, and newly elected members, Clive Marchant and Jo Holmes

Nicky: Can you tell me a bit about your career background and current role – or roles?

Fiona: I left school in 1983 and started my career in optics by becoming a full-time student at Glasgow College of Technology, which is now Glasgow Caledonian University, and studied there for two years to gain my Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing. I then headed north to the 'Granite City' – Aberdeen – to work with Duncan & Todd, and do my 'pre-reg' year, qualifying in August 1986.

I stayed with Duncan & Todd for almost 25 years gaining valuable experience in several roles – firstly as a practice manager, then accessories buyer, then area manager responsible for 11 practices, and finally as group training manager responsible for all aspects of training for DO colleagues, trainee DOs and all ancillary staff. They also sponsored me to study for a BSc (Hons) in Business Administration, organised by ABDO in conjunction with Brunel University, which I graduated from in 2003.

After a short-lived 'mid-life crisis' I left Duncan & Todd and became a locum for two years, which gave me the freedom to pursue other interests – namely training for the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers, examining for ABDO, practice visits for ABDO, and being on the ABDO Board of Directors. Since June 2012 I have been a partner in two independent practices – Optiko The Opticians in Aberdeen and Ythan Opticians in Ellon, Aberdeenshire. I work three and a half days a week with my optometrist partner, whom I have known for some 18 years. The rest of my time is spent doing the other bits of optics that I enjoy such as training, examining and visiting.

Clive: I began my career when I went to work for Scrivens Opticians in 1976 aged 18 as a trainee dispensing optician. I started the ABDO correspondence course in September 1977, attending Bradford College for block release, and qualified in August 1980. During my time with Scrivens, I progressed from tea boy to practice manager in several practices; in those

days you 'managed', although you were a trainee and supervision was minimal. I also spent some time working in a mobile capacity.

I had an invaluable experience with Scrivens, meeting many people and experiencing many different types and sizes of practice. In 1980, I joined my brother-in-law, Colin Lee – a past ABDO president – and my sister Linda Lee to open the third Colin Lee Opticians practice. We grew the group to seven practices by the late 1980s but closed one and sold another during the late 1990s, expanding again some 10 years ago to seven practices.

I completed the ABDO contact lens course in 1982 but regrettably did not take the examination due to my wedding that year; however, I became a certified contact lens optician, as was possible at that time. During my time with our family company, I have progressed from running one practice to managing director. Linda and Colin are now semi-retired but during our early days, Colin and I shop-fitted all our practices

ourselves and glazed in our own lab at night. These days we employ about 60 staff in the seven practices and have a glazing lab, which glazes for the whole group. I have been an ABDO Area 5 committee member for as long as I can remember, serving in all offices and yet again I'm Area chair. I'm also a member of two LOCs, Birmingham and Staffordshire, and a member of the ABDO CET committee

Jo: I qualified in 1991 and have been at the same independent practice ever since – Pilgrim Optical in Tiverton, Devon. I worked my way up to become a director, and over the years have never felt the need to move on. The practice was recently bought over by dispensing optician, Nick Gleed, who also has another practice in Bude, Cornwall. I am now practice manager and without Nick's support I don't think I would have been able to join the ABDO Board. It's important to have the full support of your practice team when getting involved with activities outside the practice.

Nicky: What motivated you to become involved with ABDO at Board level?

Fiona: After some 20 years as a grassroots member of ABDO, I decided it was time to get more involved and give something back. In 2003/4, I applied to become a practical examiner and became more exposed to the actual workings of the Association. I very quickly realised that the Association relies on people – and without them it might cease to exist. I became more active within my Area and finally decided to stand for election to the Board in 2008. I was unsuccessful that year and again in 2009, but third time lucky I was elected in 2010. I am nothing if not persistent! I am a 'do'er' and a very straightforward person – what you see is what you get – and I think my common sense, no nonsense approach to all things in life, is an asset to the Association

Clive: I had a mad moment one night! Seriously, I have been on the edge of involvement for many years as Area chair and at the president's consultation days. I supported my brother-in-law, Colin Lee, through his time with the Association, running the

business while he was away. I had wanted to put myself forward for election for many years but the demands of work have always been too great and I expect they always will – but it was a case of 'now or never'. I feel I'm young enough to put energy into the role and old enough to bring a little of life's experience to the Board.

Jo: I have been involved at Area level, in Area 7, for many years having been chair and helping to organise CET events for about the past four or five years. It was actually Barry Duncan, ABDO members' support manager, who suggested that I might be a good candidate for the Board and he asked me if he could put my name forward. Like Fiona, I'm a 'do'er' and Barry thought I'd be the right person for the job. My Area team were also extremely supportive and said they would vote for me. Once the seed was sown I really wanted to do the job!

Nicky: How do you see your role on the ABDO Board?

Fiona: I think I have to be a spokesperson for ABDO members – they have elected me and it is my job as their elected official to represent anything and everything that concerns them. It is the job of the Board to listen to its members and act in their best interests when representing them in the wider world of optics. Obviously we can't please all of the people all of the time, but I think we must try to address the concerns of the membership.

Clive: I expect this will be a rapid learning curve, but I do feel I have the experience to contribute. I still find time to practise as a dispensing optician and contact lens optician, keeping me in touch with the real world, as well as running a small group of practices – both of which I feel are essential to act in the best interests of our members. For better or worse, I'm always willing to express my opinion but with the interests of our membership at heart.

Jo: From using and visiting the ABDO Bulletin Board I can tell that among the grassroots membership there can sometimes be a feeling of 'them' and 'us'. I feel that I can help to bridge the gap between 'bread and butter' DOs and the Board; to ensure that

everyday members are being heard, and likewise that members know how hard the Board and staff work to support them and that they do listen to their concerns. I am also looking forward to continuing my work with the ABDO Benevolent Fund as a member of the management committee. It's extremely fulfilling work but is often forgotten about until there comes a time when support is needed with loans, financial advice or one-off grants. I'm proud to be a part of that process.

Nicky: What causes, professionally, are you passionate about?

Fiona: Professionally, my main interests are ophthalmic lenses and relating them to quality dispensing – people call me a 'lens anorak'. In 2012, I undertook the WCSM SMC (Tech) qualification, which has helped me greatly in that area. I trained to be a dispensing optician and I value the fact that my training allows me to dispense – not sell – to my patients and to tailor patients' eyewear to their individual needs.

Another area I particularly enjoy is training and mentoring. I get a kick out of helping trainees and seeing them qualify. It not only ensures the public will be well looked after but it continues to grow our Association. I am also actively involved in CET provision for ABDO and have relished delivering CET to ABDO members and our colleagues from optometry in many guises and events. Lastly, but by no means least, I am passionate, if not near obsessive, about paediatric dispensing. I think the standard of dispensing to our nation's children at this point in time falls short of the mark. I have often been found 'sitting on my hands' on public transport as I have wanted to adjust a small child's spectacles behind their ears because the ones they are wearing just don't fit. With the arrival of ABDO's anatomically correct Paediatric Heads, we can hopefully go some way to correcting this.

Clive: Dispensing opticians are so undervalued by other eyecare professionals and the public; most don't know what a DO is and purely see us as sales people. We must strive to promote our worth in every possible

way. I would love to see the public demanding to be dispensed by a DO, and our optometrist colleagues insisting that they will only work alongside a DO.

Jo: One of the issues that concerns me is CET; many members still don't understand what's required of them and of course we don't receive any financial help to undertake CET. This is why in Area 7 we have always been determined to make CET accessible and affordable. We are extremely lucky with the support we get from sponsors, which enables us to provide free CET. Whenever we make a surplus we plough the money back into future events. Barry Duncan, Paula Stevens and Katie Docker and others in the team are doing a sterling job in supporting the Areas in CET provision – but we must keep pushing for CET to be more accessible to DOs.

I am also passionate about promoting the profession, and regularly go into schools to talk to children and parents about what we do. I'm looking forward to getting involved with ABDO communications as part of my new role on the Board. I am really keen to see better paediatric dispensing and more screening in schools whilst getting the message across to parents about the importance of children seeing their optometrist – and qualified DO if needed – as early as possible. Promoting eye health in general is also important to me; many people who are going through the hospital eye service, say due to glaucoma monitoring, don't realise they still need a full eye exam with the optometrist so we need to keep reminding them.

Nicky: Do you have any specific aims/aspirations to achieve during your time serving on the ABDO Board?

Fiona: I am not naturally one who puts their head above the parapet, but when it is something I believe in then the boundaries shift. I hope, in the three years I have already served on the Board, I have brought some meaningful contribution. I do believe that I am well placed to be a spokesperson for the members I represent – I engage regularly with members at Area events, not just in Scotland, but I try to get 'over the border' as often as I can and am often seen at president's

consultation days, conference and other optical events. I am also a practising DO so I am only too well aware of the pressure and constraints DOs face day-to-day in practice.

I would like to continue engaging with the profession and representing them to the best of my ability and to work to raise awareness of the profession, of DOs and of what we do. I would also like to encourage more females to get more involved in Association business – whether this is at Board level, Area level or wherever they can. There are more and more females entering our profession and this is not borne out on our Board or in our Areas. I know with family pressures, working full-time etc, the Association falls down the priority list, but without active members it all falls apart. Undoubtedly, the most prestigious part of being on the Board is the ability to be nominated as vice president and then president of our Association. This would be the pinnacle of my career and a role that I would be honoured to do, should my fellow Board members choose to propose me in the future.

Clive: Promotion of DOs is high on my list of priorities, as is the delivery of quality CET from the existing Area structure, but with better recognition for the Area teams who are taking this enormous task on board. Being proactive in delivering what our members require from their Association, we must recognise the changes in our membership. We now have more female members than male and a growing number of ethnic members.

Expanding the role of our membership and giving those who want to the opportunity is something else I'd like to focus on. Such areas would be school vision screening and shared care in areas such as minor eye emergency examination. Expanding the optical training ladder from optical assistant to DO, CLO, optom etc, would also be a desire. Optical assistants are an essential part of modern practice; gone are the days of the receptionist manning the front of house. We must have control over the training of our OAs and give them the opportunity to progress when desired.

Jo: My over-riding aim is simply to be there to support the everyday ABDO

member and provide additional help where required. If a member needs help and support for whatever reason, then I want them to know that they can come to me.

Nicky: What do you do to relax outside of optics?

Fiona: Outside of optics I enjoy travelling. I have been very fortunate to visit a lot of fabulous places and my husband and I particularly enjoy city breaks where we both dabble in amateur photography. I also do a bit of power walking and completed the 2008 Moonwalk in Edinburgh. I continue to 'walk the walk' in various charity half marathons and 10k races and events with a group of 'eclectic' friends from all walks of professional life. I also enjoy good food and, of course, the obligatory good wine to go with it – often combining this with my other great pastime of socialising.

Clive: What is relaxation?! My spare time is very much centred around family life with my wife Kim, also a DO, and children Ben, 26, and Jade, 23. Ben is an orthoptist working in a local hospital near to our practices, who gets married this month, while Jade is an accounting technician. I also enjoy a spot of DIY, so much so that the staff have nicknamed me 'Bob the Builder' as I always turn up in jeans carrying a tool box. I also enjoy gardening and holidaying in the sun, and whenever possible stay in our holiday home in Tenerife where I find myself doing more DIY. I'm also a Freemason, which I joined 30 years ago, enabling me to constantly expand my friendships and, along the way, do my bit to help others.

Jo: If you've ever seen that TV show, Outnumbered, well our house is exactly like that. I spend a lot of time on the football pitch cheering on my son Leo, 14, from the sidelines – plus ferrying my daughter Grace, 13, to various extra curricular activities. My husband, Richard, is a manager of a local Sure Start Centre and I can often be found supporting him in fundraising and charity events. Of course, ABDO takes up a lot of my time when I'm not working – so there's not always much chance to relax! But I enjoy it, so it doesn't always feel like work. ■

Area news



Angela McNamee updates delegates on the conjunctiva



Area 5 delegates take note during one of the presentations

Area news

Area 1 (North): Valuable revision opportunity
Tuesday 11 March saw Area 1's first CET meeting of 2014. "We were delighted to welcome a full capacity of over 60 delegates – as has been the case for our last few meetings," said Louise Ballantyne of Area 1. "We enjoyed a very informative lecture from Caroline Levante of Essilor, entitled 'Protection from the sun's spectrum', and completed a fantastic VRT on myopia, which really had us thinking back to our training in some detail."

Area 1's CET conference will take place on 1 June at the Novotel, Newcastle. "This promises to be a fantastic day packed with networking opportunities as well as up to 14 CET points available," said Louise, who will attend the President's Consultation Day in London on 14 May on behalf of Area 1. "If any members have any questions they wish me to put forward at the open forum please do not hesitate to email me at ABDOArea1SLO@hotmail.co.uk," said Louise.

Area 5 (Midlands): Sunny CET at the Riverside
Report by Ian Hardwick
Area 5 held its latest CET day on 3 March at the Riverside Centre, Derby. On a bright and sunny springtime

morning, our Area chairman Clive Marchant welcomed a 96 per cent turnout of pre-booked places of 166 delegates, saying that he hoped everyone would enjoy the day ahead and take something informative back to practice. Clive also thanked our exhibitors and sponsors, Spectrum Thea, Orasis, Mainline, Sauflon, Essilor, Menrad, William Morris and Continental Eyewear.

The morning session start was held back for 15 minutes due to traffic problems on the M1, then we had three presentations all offering one CET point each: 'You looking at me? A guide to binocular vision' by Liz Stringer, orthoptist, dispensing optician and ABDO examiner; 'To refer or not to refer?' by Angela McNamee, dispensing optician, optometrist and educator; and 'Comfort is king' by Andrew Symons, dispensing optician and CLO.

Between each of these lectures, we had a 15-minute refreshment break, and during the last one of the morning I spoke to one delegate who said: "It's such a good day, as the Area 5 committee tries to cover all the required CET criteria. Socially it's nice to meet and chat

with colleagues from other practices."

At about 1pm we broke for a very nice buffet lunch. Considering numbers were our highest ever, the catering staff of the Riverside Centre did a great job, making sure all were fed and watered in good time ready for the afternoon session to commence. We reconvened at 2pm to listen to Andy Hepworth, professional relations manager of Essilor, talk on 'Filtering blue'. We then had two more presentations during the afternoon: 'Understanding the misunderstanding' by CLO Wendy Sethi; and 'Treat the cause of dry eye not the symptoms' by Andrew Price, optometry clinical manager for Spectrum Thea.

During the afternoon interval, I caught up with Eric Woakes, territory manager of Menrad, who said: "I find this event very rewarding, enabling me to see and talk to many dispensing opticians out of practice, who are able to take a more relaxed view of the frames and the company I represent. Having worked the Area for 15 years, I see it as important for me to attend."

From registration and then throughout the day, we ran a poster quiz worth two CET

points. Delegates were required to be in teams of three to go about answering the 12 questions at any time to suit them during the day. We also ran a CLO peer discussion session, worth three CET points. Delegates were given the opportunity to take part, and around 20 decided on the two-hour session taking place just after lunch, upstairs in the private meeting room.

The conference came to a close at around 5pm, and Clive once again thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that our next Area 5 CET day would be taking place on Monday 29 September at the Manor Hotel, Meridan, Solihull. He then invited all delegates to stay for our AGM, around a dozen of whom did.

Area 5 committee are very pleased that they already have 80 bookings for the next CET day and as the venue holds around 180 delegates, are very confident we shall once again be fully booked. For details of booking a place please email me at ianh.abdoarea5@gmail.com. The cost is £20 per ABDO member, £45 per non-member and, as previously, booked on a first come first served basis. So to avoid disappointment, please email as soon as possible.

Area 10 (Kent): Warm invitation to Canterbury
Area 10 chairman, Julian Silburn, and the Area 10 committee warmly invite members to their next CET evening to be held on 13 May at Canterbury Cathedral Lodge for a 6.30pm start. There will be at least five CET points available on the evening, and the committee members look forward to seeing members there. Please register to attend by emailing Julian@spectrumeyecare.co.uk ■



Utilising locums in your practice comes with legal responsibilities, writes Antonia Chitty

Using locums, freelancers and flexible workers

Do you use regular locum professional staff? Do you have a pool of people who you can call on to cover reception at short notice? Most practices use occasional and locum staff and they are invaluable to cover holidays, sick days and to help at busy times. However, it can be easy to forget the regulations and recommendations for good practice in recruiting and retaining extra staff. In this article, you can hear from expert Annabel Kaye and get the insider view from a locum and an employer.

Utilising locums in your practice comes with legal responsibilities. Expert Annabel Kaye of Irenicon Employment Law says: "The term locum misleads everyone, it has no legal significance or status. There are different types of locum. Some are employed in chains to go from branch to branch to cover. They are a normal employee – but in their contract they will have something like 'southern region' rather than a branch.

"I find that employers who are big enough to need employed locums have normally got their act together with regard to contracts. The major problems come with business owners who see locums as self-employed freelancers with no rights. This person is

in fact viewed by HMRC as a worker and they have their own rights. The first right is to minimum wages. For locums in a profession that isn't usually a problem.

"Next, workers accrue statutory holiday. This is about 11 per cent of salary. If a locum has done a thousand hours and you haven't considered holiday pay, you can be caught out significantly as people can go back six years. There are strict rules that cover how holiday can be dealt with so you can't simply say, 'The rate I pay includes your holiday entitlement'. Some businesses will have contracts that fulfil HMRC criteria, but beware if you have people working for your practice without a contract, or if you are uncertain if your contract covers this issue. Get legal advice."

Annabel also advises: "All workers have the full set of equality rights. You need a robust termination process even for temporary staff, and it can be wise to include them in grievance processes, which can avoid an expensive court appearance." She adds: "HMRC enforces minimum wage and also gets involved in statutory holiday. If HMRC decides that you tell your locum where to work, what to do and you provide the tools, it is an

employment relationship, albeit temporary. If you have no contract with the locum, the HMRC can decide how it interprets it, and can come back to you for back tax and insurance with 50 per cent penalties for not having paid this in the first place. In the worst case, HMRC can then apply this to every other freelancer that you've employed."

One further vital issue to cover when using temporary staff is data protection. You need to cover this in the contract you have with any locum. With most data in practice being digitally based, Annabel says: "One bright spark can log in to your database and download everything.



Annabel Kaye

What is your policy on people having their own devices in the workplace? What are you doing to make sure patient data isn't copied? Your policy may be in the staff handbook, but does that go to people who are not staff too? Your well thought out policy may not reach freelancers."

Tips for good practice

If you employ locums, make sure that you have a written agreement. This will help you avoid any ambiguity and a possible dispute between all parties. Then HMRC, locum and employer are all clear about the status of the relationship. As well as the points raised above by Annabel, an agreement with a locum should include:

- The date of the booking
- The duration
- The location
- The hours of work
- The hourly rate
- Travel or other expenses including mileage rate and any cap
- The notice period to be given or received in the event of cancellation by either side
- When payment will be made

It is also good to include a short description of duties and the workload the locum might expect. Always seek professional advice on your contracts.

Finding a locum

One of the plus points of using a locum is that if you feel they don't fit with the practice, you don't need to use them again. However, most practice owners and managers would rather find someone who does fit. It can be a struggle to find the right person. You may want to use a locum agency, which will add to the cost of the locum's fees. Alternatively, as optics is a relatively small world, local networking will help you find out about good locums in your area.

Keeping a good locum

If you find a locum who meshes with the practice ethos, you'll want to retain them. To do this, here are a few tips: good communication is key; be clear about when you will need them to work, and stick to it; if you need them at very short notice, be grateful if they can help; always be clear about

what you need in the way of an invoice; and finally, pay on time.

Resources

If you have concerns that your locum contracts may not be fit for purpose get in touch with Annabel Kaye for a review via info@lrenicon.co.uk

Former optometrist Antonia Chitty now writes on business topics. She has written books including 'Making Money Online', 'Blogging: The Essential Guide' and 'Marketing: The Essential Guide', providing effective ways to grow your practice. ■



Jayesh Maru

A locum's view

Joanne Abbott says: "I've been a locum DO for 10 years covering multiples and independents, and now continue to do regular locum work alongside my part-time role at ABDO CET." If you're looking for work as a locum, Joanne advises: "The most important start is to get friendly with the agencies. Once you have your foot in the door, get the employers to feed back so they know you are reliable and you'll be at the top of their list. Be social – attend all the ABDO Area and LOC events. That way you'll get your name out."

Joanne's own career has developed over the years. She says: "It was a mix to start with. I worked everywhere, from supermarkets to Specsavers to independents in the 10 years I have been locuming. I now have regular days and regular practices, which is great. I've been doing regular days for four years at the practice I'm working with now. They really embrace the knowledge I have in all sectors. If someone comes in with a varifocal from a different chain, I can usually identify it."

Being a locum isn't always easy, and Joanne has been let down. She explains: "I'd been doing two to three days a week for six months plus at an independent practice, based on an ongoing gentleman's agreement that this would continue. I was given a day's notice that they wouldn't need me anymore. This has happened to me twice. On both occasions I found that another locum had undercut my rate by £10. As a locum there's nothing you can do." Joanne has a tip to help if you are concerned that this might happen to you: "There is no guaranteed work as a locum. Some locum colleagues have insurance against not getting work. This is crucial if you have a mortgage or other financial commitments."

An employer's view

Jayesh Maru has been a dispensing optician for more than 20 years, and operates three Specsavers stores in East London. He says: "We employ a team of nine optometrists and six DOs and use locums for sickness and holiday cover. We've found locums through word of mouth and agencies. We look for people who will fit in with the practice team and ethos; in many ways the only difference is the way they are paid. It is of the highest importance that a locum can offer the same level of customer service and professionalism as any other practice team member."

While most of Jayesh's experiences have been positive, he says: "Occasionally we have had locums who want to head straight out of the door as soon as the practice closes, or prioritise their breaks over customer care. We don't ask them back."

Recruitment is always a challenge, as Jayesh explains: "When you only meet someone for an hour it can be hard to tell if they will fit in. After an initial meeting, we invite locums to work for us for a day or half day. During that day, we buddy them up with an experienced member of staff. We run through the customer journey with a new locum too, and their reaction to the different stages can help us know what the person is like. One warning sign I've noticed is that if the first things someone asks about is the rate of pay, they may not fit with what we need."



Nick Rumney, BCLA conference programme coordinator

#BCLA2014: what's in it for me?

As next month's BCLA conference draws near, we ask conference programme coordinator, Nick Rumney – what's in it for ABDO members?

DO: What's different about this year's conference?

Nick: The biggest change we've made to the format this year is that the event will take place from a Friday to Monday rather than the traditional Thursday to Sunday. The thinking is that many High Street practitioners find it difficult to take a Friday and/or Saturday out of practice, as these are often the busiest and most profitable days of the week. By including a Monday in the four-day schedule, we can offer practitioners the chance to participate on a traditionally more quiet practice day.

We also realised that many practitioners just can't come for the whole four days, due to work and/or family commitments, so we have introduced a new two-day value package. It offers a saving of £50 when compared to booking the two days separately, and includes entry to the CET sessions, exhibition and our brand new 'Unceremonious event' on the Sunday night. This will be a free and informal networking evening with drinks and a 'Best of British' buffet – a great chance to unwind after a busy day at conference.

DO: So if members just come for the Sunday and Monday, what can they expect?

Nick: One of the highlights of Sunday's programme is a contact lens business session entitled, 'The right mix: excellent business supporting excellent contact lens practice', led by optometrist Ross Grant of ToolBox Training & Consultancy. Also presenting, on topics such as patient communication, marketing and money management, are Andy Chance-Hill, Peter Noakes, Andy Pearce and Nick Atkins. Contact

lens peer discussion will also run on the Sunday at no additional cost. Professor Bruce Evans will present his keynote address on paediatric contact lens practice, and delegates can also enjoy a new 'On the sofa' session with Professors Phil Morgan and Lyndon Jones.

Meanwhile, Monday will see our first-ever 'live surgery' event with Professor Sunil Shah undertaking a standard modern day phacoemulsification procedure with implantation of an intraocular lens, followed by a Lensar femtosecond laser cataract procedure with a premium lens implant. The procedures will be transmitted 'live' to the ICC and Professor Shah will then return to the auditorium to join in the discussion. Monday will also provide CET workshops on presbyopia and OCT, a specialty lens spotlight with Professor Patrick Caroline and Martin Conway, and Professor Phil Morgan's BCLA Medal Address, 'Changing the world with contact lenses'.

DO: Isn't the BCLA conference more for the highly skilled, rather than the everyday, contact lens practitioner?

Nick: The BCLA is proud of the fact that its annual clinical conference features the world's leading experts in contact lenses and the anterior eye, as speakers, workshop presenters and as delegates. Beyond that, there is abundance on offer for those who wish to up-skill in a variety of clinical and practical areas – and in business too. In fact, this year we have a renewed focus on everyday contact lens practice issues such as comfort, keratoconus and myopia control.

The speakers are the life-blood of clinical conferences, and they all started somewhere. Additionally,

anecdotal case reports are often the first one hears of a new technique or clinical case. Many will have a story to tell but may be unsure how to approach it. In 2014, we are introducing a new 'Ask the Oracle' session providing expert guidance on skills such as how to write a conference abstract for submission, how to prepare case records, and how to undertake clinical research in practice. This session will take the form of short presentations followed by round-table discussions, and presenters include Professor James Wolffsohn, Professor Lyndon Jones and Caroline Christie. This is a chance for skilled practitioners less experienced in presentation – yet keen to become more involved at conferences and events – to go to the next level.

DO: Are there any changes to the exhibition this year?

Nick: Yes. Because the programme is so packed, it can sometimes be hard to find the time to get round the exhibition. So this year, we'll be hosting our welcome drinks on the Friday evening in conjunction with an early opening. The exhibition will therefore cover all four days of the conference, opening on the Friday at 3.30pm, then we will have welcome drinks in the exhibition hall from 6pm to 7.30pm, for an exclusive look around the stands. There will be a slightly later opening on the Sunday morning, at 10am, to give delegates and exhibitors a little lie in after Saturday night's partying. The exhibitors' pavilion will be back, offering bite-size chunks of product and technology education within the exhibition hall during coffee and lunch breaks – except on the Sunday afternoon when the poster and photographic competition winners will be announced.

DO: Is there anything else that might particularly interest ABDO members?

Nick: Contact lens patients have been proven to have great practice longevity and be vital for the clinical and business well-being of any practice, not only through contact lenses but also through additional dispensing arising out of many extra visits. This is the take-home message of the Global Contact Lens Forum taking place in association with International Vision Expo on Friday 6 June. This new forum, the first of which took place during Vision Expo East in New York in March, offers the perfect blend of science, education and business content and includes speakers from both sides of the Atlantic. The aim is to provide delegates with practical take-home tips that they can put into practice straight away. A networking lunch is included and there will be a follow-up workshop session on Saturday 7 June.



Professors Lyndon Jones and Phil Morgan will take part in an 'On the sofa' session



With this year's programme, we are really striving to enhance the conference's appeal and to deliver more educational opportunities for delegates from all walks of professional life. Please review the latest programme on the BCLA website and download the new BCLA app from the

Google Play Store or iTunes, to find out what the conference can offer you and your contact lens practice team.

#BCLA2014 takes place at the ICC Birmingham from 6-9 June. Visit www.bcla.org.uk ■

Frequently asked questions

answered by Kim Devlin FBDO (Hons) CL

When a prescription is made up elsewhere...

What to do if a patient takes their prescription elsewhere and then doesn't like the spectacles? That was the question asked last week, and many times before that.

I'm sure we all have warnings written on our prescription forms when we issue a private prescription, but I do wonder if any of our patients read them or understands them if they do. There's nothing on the NHS form about such dangers. It's hard to find a way of emphasising the importance of having the spectacles dispensed where the eye examination took place without sounding protectionist.

The query was the standard one: a patient takes a prescription from your practice to another optician who makes it up but then the patient non-tols. Who, then, pays for a new pair lenses? There is no black and white answer; it is always a question of compromise and good will. Firstly, you must check that there hasn't been a clerical error (it's easily done). Every prescription issued by your practice must be legible and accurate, whether it's taken elsewhere for dispensing or not. If a genuine mistake has been made, you must of course rectify it at your own cost.

The spectacles that are unacceptable, for whatever reason, should then be checked to see if they comply with British Standards. Again, if they are not within British Standards, a simple explanation to the other practice would resolve the issue. A re-check of the prescription itself, by your practice or the practice that made the lenses, can be done – although at whose cost is negotiable. A judgement has to be made as to the fitting and glazing quality of the specs; centration in particular can be a minefield.

There is likely to be a disagreement between practices as to why the original specs were giving problems; one will claim it's the prescription the other it's the fitting of the frame or the positioning/centration of the lenses. It all becomes very unpleasant, for everyone. Out of the many complaints received by OCCS over the years an amazingly

large number were for when a dispense was done somewhere other than the practice where the prescription was issued. It is one of the most significant shortfalls of the legislation that freed up the supply of spectacles.

What to do? It rather depends on how badly you want to keep your patient (and their friends and family). If you go the extra mile, reimbursing the costs incurred or replacing the spectacles at no charge, even if you feel you were not to blame in the first place, will usually go a long way to reminding the patient why they came to you in the first place.

On the other hand, if you say "You made your bed now lie on it" to the patient (more politely than that of course) are you laying yourself open to a charge of unprofessional conduct? Not necessarily, because the prescription was issued by an optometrist (or doctor) employed by your practice. It would be necessary for the patient to show that an error had been made in the consulting room, but this is very difficult to prove (we all know a prescription can vary over the course of time). The fact that a patient may prefer one to another is not necessarily proof that an error has been made. If your practice takes every reasonable care to identify and rectify any error, you cannot be called unprofessional.

There is a very old military saying: "Get over heavy ground as lightly as you can", which might be a useful dictum in these cases. We all hate it when patients take their prescriptions elsewhere but it happens to us all. You can get over the heavy ground by remembering to treat such queries with great courtesy, do everything reasonable to resolve the problem (up to and including supplying new lenses) and then you can walk away from it. Annoying as it is, it is part of modern practice life; deal with it and move on.

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



Katrina Venerus,
LOCSU managing director

What does a year of change mean for ABDO members? Katrina Venerus, MD of LOCSU, explains

NHS changes – one year on

'Reforms so big you could see them from space' was the cry from NHS commentators when fundamental reform of the health service was introduced last April. One year down the line, and with much of that landscape still to be mapped, Katrina Venerus, managing director of the Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU), explains what the changes mean for the optical sector and dispensing opticians specifically.

Fundamental reform to the NHS, introduced in April last year, was seen as the biggest shake-up to the health service since its birth in 1948. The changes swept away primary care trusts and replaced them with NHS England and a system of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) responsible for commissioning community services across England. And, with more than 200 CCGs, LOCSU is working with local optical committees (LOCs) to help CCGs understand local eye health needs and commission services accordingly.

"CCGs are increasingly understanding that much of what is done in the Hospital Eye Service can – and should – be done out of hospital in the community – drawing on the skills of primary care practitioners," Katrina explains. "Given the unprecedented financial pressures facing the NHS and the increasing demands arising from

an ageing population, there is now a real urgency for change in the way services are commissioned. There are challenges and opportunities – for practitioners and CCGs – in similar measure."

Katrina is confident that momentum is building as the dust of the reforms settles. She highlights comments by Sir David Nicholson, in a valedictory interview, urging an "unsustainable" NHS to ditch its outmoded reliance on hospital-based treatment and switch to a new model of community-based care. "Eye health practitioners across England are and will increasingly have the opportunity to put their core skills and training to good use," she says.

"But it's not just clinical skills that will be needed. The growing use of primary eyecare companies [LOCSU's template vehicle for delivering community services] means that there will be a greater need for leadership skills and more involvement from DOs at a local level." Dispensing opticians have a great range of skills honed on the High Street that will be of benefit to an LOC, Katrina believes: "The most effective LOCs have a great combination of clinical focus and leadership skills."

Community eyecare opportunities

So, with the NHS reforms bedding down what does Katrina see on the horizon for community eye health? "As

outlined earlier," Katrina says, "I expect there to be a lot more opportunities for community eye health services as more and more CCGs look to ensure that all health services are patient-centred and provide maximum value to the NHS. I expect a growing number of services that are integrated across the whole patient pathway in primary and secondary care will be introduced around the country as CCGs develop their roles and further understand their remits."

LOCSU has pioneered the use of new LOC primary eyecare companies that enable a network of local practices to bid for contracts and deliver services. The LOCSU Company model is attractive to CCGs that wish to contract with a single entity, be that via an Any Qualified Provider (AQP) procurement, competitive tendering or direct commissioning. "The LOC company model is fast becoming the norm as both commissioners and sub-contractors see the benefits of this tailored approach to commissioning community services," explains Katrina.

However, one concern is that there is no consistent approach across the commissioning landscape - with very few CCGs having access to an eyecare lead. Katrina is calling on CCGs to team up more effectively and operate more strategically across bigger areas to deliver reconfigurations.

She was upbeat that the emerging local eye health networks (LEHNs) that are being hosted by NHS England area teams would become a valuable resource for CCGs as they become established.

Katrina concedes that there is a lot of work to do: "Despite the positive signs, there is still a long way to go. But I have no doubt that embedding strong leadership skills into all LOCs will help us deliver better eye health outcomes for both the NHS and the patient in the years ahead," she adds. ■

Get involved

If you are interested, there are three steps to getting involved with your LOC:

- Contact your LOC to make sure you are on their mailing list and are kept up to date with what is going on locally
- Find out when the next committee meeting is
- Let the organiser know that you would like to attend the next meeting as an observer

ABDO and LOCSU can help dispensing opticians get involved in their LOC, and shape the future of local eye health services. For more information email info@locsu.co.uk



New NHS, new approaches: a case study

Given the increased number of patients who will pass through practices as a result of more community services, it is hoped that dispensing opticians will generally welcome the NHS reforms as a business opportunity and will want to get involved with their LOC.

Former NHS manager and now LOC manager, Lisa Barker, explains that non-clinical skills such as communication, motivation, persuasion and people skills, are a crucial part of the mix to develop successful pathways and make the most of business opportunities.

"My background is purely in commissioning and health administration; I don't have a clinical background," admits Lisa, who is business manager for Primary Eyecare North Yorkshire and Humber, covering three LOCs (North Yorkshire, East Riding and North and North East Lincolnshire). "In fact, that is the main reason I was head-hunted. As a non-clinician, I can have those frank conversations with commissioners who are keen to get the services out of the hospital."

Lisa's work as optometry lead for a PCT means she has the trust of the profession, knowledge of commissioning and a reputation as a 'do-er'. "Changes to NHS commissioning require new thinking, change management, patient satisfaction, explaining how the service works, managing expectation and communicating with the public and the medical profession," she says. "There is much more to becoming a successful LOC than just having clinical skills."

Backstory: NHS changes

The Health and Social Care Act, which came into force on 1 April 2013, established NHS England and abolished primary care trusts (PCTs) and strategic health authorities (SHAs). These were replaced by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) responsible for commissioning the vast majority of NHS services.

NHS England: NHS England's remit is to improve the health outcomes for people in England. It oversees the work of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and holds them to account. It has four regional commissioning offices, 19 commissioning support units and 27 area teams supporting CCGs.

Clinical commissioning groups: England's 211 CCGs are responsible for £65bn of the £95bn NHS commissioning budget. They now plan and commission hospital care and community health services, such as eyecare. Each CCG board must include one hospital doctor, nurse and member of the public.

Health and Wellbeing boards: These have been established in local authorities to promote integrated working across health and social care. They identify local priorities for commissioners through joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) and joint health and wellbeing strategy (JHWS).

GOS contracts: NHS England is responsible for the commissioning of primary care services, such as General Ophthalmic Services (GOS).

Local eye health networks: All 27 area teams will have a LEHN to facilitate clinical input and leadership in service improvement and commissioning at local level. Every LEHN has a clinical chair and dispensing opticians and optometrists can get involved with the development of local services via their LOC.

LOCs working with NHS area teams: There are currently 81 LOCs in England. In some cases, several LOCs will be linked to each area team. For dispensing opticians who are LOC members or officers, it is important to work closely with colleagues in neighbouring LOCs in relation to both GOS matters and LEHN issues.



Peter Black

Black arts

Our best conference yet – IMHO...

In these busy times, the ABDO 2014 conference will probably already seem a distant memory. However, as you will have seen elsewhere, it was a great occasion and the feedback from members, speakers and exhibitors has been better than ever.

Having taken the decision to move to spring to even out the optical calendar by alternating with Optrafair, we expected record numbers and set ourselves an ambitious target of 800 delegates. Then 100% Optical was announced and predictably – and in my opinion necessarily – the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians responded by developing Optrafair London.

This sudden new competition for both exhibitors and CET delegates meant it was going to be a struggle to draw delegates from London and the South East to the Midlands, and so it is a credit to the ABDO team that we managed to attract record numbers of both delegates and exhibitors. Nevertheless, the ABDO Board has already taken the decision that our conference will return to the autumn in 2015, with the second or third week in

September looking favourite at the moment.

Welcome return for contact lenses

It was particularly gratifying to see contact lenses make a comeback both to the CET programme and the exhibition, and I must extend special thanks to CooperVision, which in addition to being a gold sponsor of the CET programme also provided trainers and facilitators for the peer review events. It is a great shame that we became aware of the new reduced requirement for peer review (to be only one hour instead of two) after the programme was finalised and had gone to print – as this would have surely made the contact lens track more popular.

Getting our contact lens offering right is something we will work hard to achieve in the future, by working with our industry partners to try to more accurately match provision to need. It is unclear whether the lack of demand is because of competition from other events such as the British Contact Lens Association's annual conference or supplier roadshows, or because contact lens opticians are leaving it to

the last minute to get their interactive points.

At any rate, we hope the General Optical Council (GOC) can provide us with meaningful data so that we can more accurately predict contact lens CET requirements for next year. Additionally, we are in talks with a variety of optometric CET providers to see how we might share costs and put on joint events that are even more attractive to exhibitors and sponsors.

Well-deserved recognition

The highlight of ABDO 2014 for me was the gala dinner, set in the fabulous Dallas Burston Polo Club, a brand new venue that will be difficult to beat in the future. Here we recognised a handful of individuals, selected by our awards committee from nominations provided by members.

John Hardman presented the Hamblin Memorial Prize to fellow Boots dispensing optician, and East Anglia Area chair Kate Clarke, recognising more than four decades of professional service to her patients and the profession. I then presented four awards, including the Area Prize to

London Area chair Ian Anderson, and the Medal of Excellence to fellow examiner and Board colleague, Ted Moffatt.

Dame Mary Perkins was awarded an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of the support Specsavers has given our profession, making it central to the optom/DO 'dream team' in the joint venture concept, and employing and training more dispensing opticians than anyone else. Finally, the greatest applause of the evening was reserved for Andy Hepworth who received the Medal of Excellence for his personal support of the profession as professional relations manager at Essilor.

Optical QT raised industry concerns

The morning after the night before kicked off with a few dozen dedicated individuals joining Katrina Venerus, managing director of the Local Optical Committee Support Unit, Lyndon Taylor, chairman of the Association of Optometrists, and me for an Optical Question Time chaired by Barry Duncan. We needn't have worried that the small audience might run out of questions,

as we could probably have gone on all day.

There was immediate concern for the lack of supervision of paediatric dispensing. It is important to recognise that an optometrist carries full responsibility for the supervision of all ophthalmic dispensing in the practice in the absence of a dispensing optician, and particularly they are responsible for the supervision of regulated dispensing. The public have the right, when attending a registered optical practice, to expect dispensing of the highest quality whether or not it is carried out by an unregistered person, and whether or not they fall within a regulated category.

New BS Extracts answer important questions

Another question concerned the lack of back vertex distances (BVD) on many prescriptions, and whether this was a legal requirement. This has been a bugbear of mine for some time, however, without an up-to-date British Standards Extract (which is referred to in the Opticians Act/GOC Rules)

it has been impossible for the average member to know the Rules fully without spending thousands of pounds on the full British Standards.

It is incumbent upon the registrant to ensure that all non-registered dispensing assistants are competent to carry out the tasks required of them and, furthermore, that they are also aware of the limits to what they can and can't carry out. According to the Rules, all suppliers are required to meet British Standards that requires that for all prescriptions where at least one lens is over +/-5.00 dioptres in the highest meridian (including the incorporation of a reading addition where applicable) then a back vertex distance is required.

Non-qualified staff (or internet sites) should not dispense prescriptions of this power unless they can firstly measure the BVD to the frame and, secondly, make the necessary calculations to determine whether or not a change in lens power is required. If a dispenser or a glasses website thinks that BVD doesn't matter then they are working to different BS...

Valuable bookshop additions now available

The new BS Extracts mentioned above is now available from the ABDO College bookshop, as is the completely updated 2014 Lens Availability, with hundreds of new products and several new suppliers making it the most comprehensive lens catalogue available anywhere in the world. Go on treat yourself!

GOS a danger to public health?

A protracted discussion took place during the ABDO conference about the unfairness of the cross subsidy of NHS eyecare by private sales of products. Most practitioners believe this is an argument we can never win with the Department of Health. But I disagree. It is often suggested that because free private eye exams exist, we will never get an economic rate for the GOS test, however, when you look carefully at these special offers outside of competitive war zones you find the free private test is dependent on the purchase of spectacles.

The cut price eye test is the sprat required to catch the mackerel, that is, the

private spectacle purchase that is essential for the viability of any optical business that also provides GOS sight tests and spectacles for GOS3 voucher patients. The NHS could save money if they forced practices to claim the lower of the prevailing NHS rate and the private fee in force on the day of the test, but the real issue is that optical practices are simply not interested in seeing uneconomic patients who don't wear prescription glasses.

The sector, especially organisations that purport to be for the public good, need to gather evidence that the ready readers generation are falling through the net and only seeking the help of an optometrist or ophthalmologist when it is too late and they have permanently lost vision – at massive future cost to the NHS.

In a country with a Vision 2020 objective to halve preventable sight loss in the next six years, it is projected that actually visual impairment will double by 2050. Could GOS be the reason? I believe it is – and evidence from Scotland might just prove it very soon.

Peter Black ■

Draft health regulation bill welcomed

The General Optical Council (GOC) has welcomed the UK Law Commissions' draft Bill on the regulation of health and social care professions.

The GOC hopes the government will introduce the bill to parliament later this year. It is intended to replace the laws covering the UK's nine healthcare regulators – including the Opticians Act – with a single piece of legislation

covering all healthcare regulators. The GOC also hopes the bill will be a step towards introducing a "level playing field" for optical businesses. It would enable the GOC to ensure that all businesses carrying out restricted functions, such as testing sight, are required to register.

The Optical Confederation commented: "It is not yet certain

whether the government will wish to process the bill through parliament before the general election. However, whenever it goes forward, the Optical Confederation will work with partners across the sector and in primary care to ensure that only reasonable and proportionate changes are applied to the optical front line and only where there is a clear need to protect patients from harm." ■



Contact lens World Cup fever



Joy receives the practice award

Campaign kicks off for World Cup season

Johnson & Johnson Vision Care and Acuvue have launched their biggest campaign to date by being an official sponsor of the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil.

The sponsorship and the corresponding promotion allows patients to participate in a free trial of Acuvue contact lenses and demonstrates how contact lenses are an essential part of playing sport successfully and can aid performance. Patients will also have the chance to win a trip to the 2014 FIFA World Cup Final. Marcella McParland,

director of professional affairs Johnson & Johnson Vision Care UK and Ireland, said: "It doesn't get much bigger than the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil and Johnson & Johnson Vision Care are committed to supporting eyecare professionals through this exciting initiative to drive more patients to try contact lenses and reap the benefits they can offer. This is an incredible opportunity for people to get involved, celebrate the role of contact lenses in sporting performance and try something new." ■

Great joy for charity box award

Hynes Optometrists in Ealing is celebrating after Optometry Giving Sight (OGS) presented the practice with the top donation box prize for a second successive year.

Joy Hynes, optometrist and practice owner, with her team came first place across the nationwide competition after raising £1,060 from their donation box throughout 2013. They were presented with the Cardiff Acuity Test, valued at over £500, donated by Fogarty Associates.

"I'm absolutely thrilled," Joy said, whose practice has raised more than £5,000 in the last seven years. "You have no idea how much this means to me, especially to be recognised again for the second year running." During the presentation, which took place at one of the practice's fundraising tea mornings, Joy added: "I really must say thank you to all of you who are here today for being so generous and contributing so much to our chosen charity Optometry Giving Sight." ■

Splendid setting for summer exams

This summer will see ABDO hold its Dispensing and Contact Lens Theory Examinations at the Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Birmingham.

"Listening to feedback from members, the department took the decision to look for a new venue this summer and is pleased with our new partnership with the Macdonald hotel," said Mark Chandler, ABDO head of examinations and registration. "This is a beautiful hotel, located by the main line railway station and centrally located to Birmingham town centre. Members can stay at the hotel during their examinations and we do have a preferential rate on rooms – just quote ABDO on booking."

The address is: Macdonald Burlington Hotel, 6 Burlington Arcade, 126 New

Street, Birmingham B2 4JQ. Telephone 0121 633 1716. The hotel is two minutes' walk from Birmingham New Street Station, and nine miles from Birmingham International Airport.

Please note: the Dispensing practical

examination venue is still at Aston University, the Optometry Clinic, Vision Sciences Building, Birmingham. Accommodation is available on site at the Aston Conference Centre and this can be arranged by telephoning 0121 204 3050. ■

Optician Index - February 2014 summary

- Total practice turnover increased by three per cent from January to 173 Index points and this is half a per cent higher than February last year
- Total eye examinations improve by three per cent to 105 Index points on January and this is the highest Index value since February last year
- Sample average total dispensing increased by three per cent from last month to 95 Index points
- Progressive lenses show positive annual growth compared with single and bi/tri focal lenses, which are both slightly negative

The full November 2013 *Optician* Index report was published in the 31 January 2014 issue of *Optician*

Optician

BUSINESS BENCHMARKS



CET for CLOs at #BCLA2014



New Framed magazine



Mark Truss

50 hours of CET on offer at #BCLA2014

From 'sclerals for the faint-hearted', tips and tricks for dry eye assessment and management, through to characterising corneal infiltrates, #BCLA2014 will offer some 50 hours of interactive CET for optometrists, independent prescribers and contact lens opticians.

CET points will be available across all core competencies over four days of clinical, scientific and business learning, networking and partying at the British Contact Lens Association's (BCLA) 38th clinical conference and exhibition being held from 6-9 June at the ICC Birmingham.

Six of the seven CET workshops have so far been approved for a total of 18 CET points, and clinical lectures and peer review will provide up to a further 35 CET points. Four hours of continuing education have

already received COPE (USA) accreditation, including all of this year's keynote presentations.

More than 1,000 delegates are expected to attend this year's conference, which will also provide non-CET events to support delegates in everyday practice. These include: a business session, a new 'Ask the Oracle' session with Professor James Wolffsohn, Professor Lyndon Jones and Caroline Christie, the second BCLA/Vision Expo International Global Contact Lens Forum, and a new 'On the sofa' session with Professors Lyndon Jones and Phil Morgan.

The latest programme can be found at www.bcla.org.uk/events along with registration details. Full details of the conference can also be found on the BCLA app, available to download from Google Play or iTunes. ■

FMO vice chairman appointed

Norville sales director, Mark Truss, has been elected as vice chairman of the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO), supporting chairman Barry Dibble.

"I consider it to be a great honour and aim to contribute much," Mark said. "The FMO is to be celebrated for drawing all spheres of optics together as demonstrated by recent leaders. Former chairman John Conway knew the lens sector extraordinary well, Barry the lab sector and my knowledge of frames and sunglasses brings a complete cross section." ■

Network launches consumer eyewear magazine

The SPECS network has launched a new consumer eye fashion magazine and redesigned website to support its members with local marketing activity.

Established in 2012 by a collaboration of companies led by Seiko Optical UK and the National Eyecare Group, the SPECS (Specialist Provider of Eye Care Solutions) network is a co-operative of independent practices that collectively market their businesses direct to the public. Via www.specsnetwork.co.uk, the benefits of quality independent eyecare are actively promoted – with around 300 independent practices now involved.

Its new magazine, called Framed, has been designed

so that the front cover can be personalised for SPECS network opticians to distribute locally. It features the latest releases from frame companies and distributors that work closely with the independent sector.

Richard Hollings, Seiko Optical UK commercial manager, said: "Framed represents another opportunity for SPECS network opticians to direct members of the public to their practice doors. It has been produced to appeal to a cross-section of spectacle and sunglass wearers of all ages – with a purely fashion focus." The new website includes a fashion area where Framed can be browsed, plus competitions and eye health information. ■

Branching out in south west Scotland

With locations in nearby Dumfries and Carlisle, Conlons and Sons (Opticians) has announced the takeover of Stephen Rowe Opticians in Annan. The existing practice team, including branch manager Trevor Sringgay, will remain in place.

As well as introducing some new ranges of designer frames and sunglasses, including RayBan and Oakley, the company plans to introduce professional

hearing care to the services at the Annan practice.

John Welsby, managing director of Conlons Opticians, commented: "We are proud to be a family business and delighted to be coming to Annan. We feel confident that we have taken on a fantastic location and excellent team and I look forward to working with them and getting to know the local community." ■



Club winners enjoy the Alps



Phil Howlett, DO of the Year

Rodenstock appoints new general manager

Niels Jensen has taken over the position of general manager at Rodenstock UK following roles as general manager of Rodenstock in Canada, and more recently general manager of Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

"Having been with the company for 16 years, Niels has not only very varied experience in the optical industry, but has been able to achieve considerable success in the Nordic region, which as well as being another price sensitive market, exhibits other similarities to the UK optical market," said the company. Dietmar Rathbauer who, following his extended contract in the UK, is to move on to another role within the Rodenstock Group.

* Practitioners and guests from the winning practices in the Rodenstock Club Awards recently enjoyed a long weekend in Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart. During the trip, 21 practitioners and guests spent time in the baroque city, staying in a boutique hotel overlooking the river and fortress.

In addition to a tour of the city, the party enjoyed a three-course dinner in the candlelit Baroquehall, prepared according to recipes of that period, listening to the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart performed by the Amadeus Consort Ensemble. Fun was had during a visit to the winter sports resort of Flachau in the Austrian Alps, where the party tried their hands at Alpine triathlon, giant skiing, snow-bike racing and laser biathlon. ■

Phil fits the bill as Dispensing Optician of the Year

Congratulations to Phil Howlett of Planit Opticians, Colne, who picked up the title, Dispensing Optician of the Year, at last month's 2014 Optician Awards.

No stranger to the annual awards, Phil and his business partner, optometrist Mike Procter, were the 2013 winners of the Start-up Practice of the Year award. Phil, who is pictured with the award at last year's ceremony, told Dispensing Optics: "I am absolutely delighted to win this prestigious award in recognition of my hard work and dedication to our profession. Being recognised as Dispensing Optician of the Year by industry experts is an amazing achievement, and an accolade I will cherish for the rest of my career."

Unable to attend this year's awards ceremony, held on Saturday 12 April at the London Hilton Park Lane, Phil's award was collected on his behalf by Nicola Haig-Brown of Haig-Brown Optometrists. Mike Kirkley, managing director of award sponsor Essilor, made the presentation. ■

ABDO CET

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New Fitness to Practise Rules come into force

New Fitness to Practise (FTP) Rules intended to speed up the handling of complaints received by the General Optical Council (GOC) have come into force. The GOC has also appointed 15 case examiners, 10 registrants and five lay people, who will play a central role in the new process.

The introduction of case examiners is one of the key changes under the new rules. Pairs of case examiners (one registrant and one lay) will work together to decide whether a case should be referred to a FTP hearing.

The Investigation Committee, which currently considers all complaints, will still decide on cases where the case examiners do not agree or where a formal assessment of a

registrant's health or performance is required. Other changes include a greater ability for the regulator to fast-track cases by allowing the GOC registrar to refer the most serious cases directly for a FTP hearing.

Mandie Lavin, GOC director of regulation, said: "The new rules will help us better protect the public by acting on complaints more quickly. This will also benefit registrants by shortening what can be a long and stressful process."

* The GOC has published the final version of its strategic plan for the next three years following a public consultation, and its business plan for 2014/15. Both can be found at www.optical.org ■



Bob Forgan with Google Glasses at Optrafair London



Making business connections

Glazeable Google glasses on show at Optrafair London

Waterside Laboratories stole a march on the opportunity to glaze Google glasses for those who need prescription lenses at Optrafair London last month.

Held at Olympia National from 11-13 April, the inaugural show staged by the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians and *Optician* magazine attracted 4,616 visitors through the doors to view the full spectrum of optical products.

"In four years' time it is estimated that 21 million Google glasses will have been sold," said Bob Forgan, Waterside MD. "With over 50

per cent of the adult population needing some type of visual correction this looks to be a phenomenal business opportunity. Optrafair London has provided the opportunity to give optical professionals the heads up on the product and what we can offer as a lab," he added.

A report on Optrafair London will appear in our June issue.

* Luxottica and Google have agreed to join forces to design, develop and distribute eyewear for Glass. The two major proprietary brands of the Group, Ray-Ban and Oakley, will be a part of the collaboration with Glass. ■

A case of lost and found

If you've got your ABDO membership card tucked away in your bottom draw gathering dust then it might be worth retrieving it, dusting it off and ensuring you keep it to hand. Katie Docker, ABDO head of membership services, explains why...

"Recently, one of our members lost their wallet in central London, which caused a massive inconvenience. They had to borrow money to get home as their rail tickets and cash cards were obviously in the wallet. Happily, we received a call from the person who had found the wallet. They knew to contact us to help find the wallet's owner because they had found their ABDO membership card whilst looking for ID. We were delighted to then be able to reunite the two."

Katie added: "This just shows the importance of having your ABDO membership card handy. It's not the first time it has happened – so it really does have its extra uses!" ■

To Russia with contact lens polymers

UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) has helped Contamac – which recently joined the official list of ABDO College sponsors – to secure key contacts and strengthen its brand name in Russia.

Essex-based Contamac is the largest provider of polymers to the specialist contact lens and intraocular lens market – and was recently named by the London Stock Exchange as one of the 1,000 most inspiring SME companies in the UK. In order to boost its business in Russia, the company joined UKTI's Gateway to Global Growth programme.

David Golden, Contamac sales manager, explained: "Through the Gateway to Global Growth programme we secured £3,000 of matched funding, which enabled us to make two

essential trips out to Russia with three key members of our team, including our interpreter and professional services expert." The trips enabled Contamac to be at two important conferences in Moscow attended by leading figures in ophthalmology and ophthalmic surgery.

Through the conferences and subsequent UKTI networking events, Contamac has gained crucial access to leading Russian healthcare figures. Further funding has paid for a member of the team to travel to the Global Speciality Lens Symposium in the US and to China to expand the company's network there. Our photo shows David Golden meeting minister counsellor, Barbara Habberjam, and UKTI trade advisers at the British Embassy in Moscow. ■

FODO expands policy team

Ann Blackmore has joined the Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians (FODO) as head of policy and strategy. She joins FODO from the Electoral Commission where she was head of media and public affairs, and will be supported by Jakob Stenkvist in the newly created role of policy officer.

FODO CEO David Hewlett said: "I am delighted that Ann is coming to join us. She will be a considerable asset for the Optical Confederation and the wider sector. Jakob also joined us recently and is already proving his value. We are delighted to have them both on board." ■



BBGR riders get on their bikes



Movie-making option

Pedal power of persuasion for Sport Relief

Jimmy Chan, BBGR customer service advisor, used his powers of persuasion to recruit a team to take part in the Manchester Sport relief 50-mile cycling event in March.

Despite poor conditions and an unexpected series of hailstorms, the four-strong team made it round in just under four and a half hours – raising £850 for charity in the process. “We have been overwhelmed by the support we have been given, both from our colleagues and also our loyal customers who have all given very generously to help us raise this money for such a worthy cause,” said team member Caroline Hart, BBGR commercial director. The other team members were Jeff Towers and Nick Howard.

* BBGR has teamed up with Transitions Optical to offer a new scratchcard promotion on all BBGR branded Transitions and XTRActive lenses until 31 July. Prizes to be won include iPads, shopping vouchers and iTunes vouchers. For details, telephone 0844 880 1349 or visit www.bbgr.co.uk ■

Film and photography packages on offer

Hoya customers can now redeem their VSE Loyalty Club points against practice filming or practice photography packages.

The practice video package offers VSE members the opportunity to film and produce their own promotional video, with optional photography and additional smaller videos. The practice photography package provides VSE members with a professional photographer to shoot the practice for marketing

materials, as well as staff for the website or social media.

Both packages are available to order from the VSE Shop using VSE points. Video and photography are provided by Yellow Video Productions, which specialises in producing HD marketing and training films that help increase sales, improve website performance and enhance reputation.

Find out more and register at www.vseloyaltyclub.co.uk ■

Practices back campaign for ‘generation tech’

More than 400 independent practices across the UK and Ireland are supporting a national consumer campaign by Essilor to raise awareness of the impact that blue light could be having on long-term eye health.

The ‘Think About Your Eyes Seeing Blue’ initiative reveals research findings from the Paris Vision Institute that suggest exposure to harmful blue light (blue-violet), sent out by most computers, tablets, smartphones and flat-screen TVs as well as energy saving light bulbs, can damage eye cells.

The campaign will educate consumers about blue light while highlighting the risk of age-related macular degeneration associated with prolonged exposure to blue-

violet light. The results of an accompanying survey revealed the average adult spends nearly seven hours of their day staring at a screen; 55 per cent of the 2,000 people polled said the amount of screen time they’re exposed to affects them – with the most common symptom emerging as eye discomfort.

Mike Kirkley, Essilor managing director, said: “It’s a sad but true fact that many consumers don’t appreciate the value of their vision until they’ve lost it. So if, through our PR campaigns, we can convince just one person to take eye health seriously and protect themselves against the dangers, then it’s very worthwhile. We encourage all independent opticians to back this campaign as many voices together are louder than one”.



New eye health campaign

Consumers are being directed to an online ‘Blue Light Riskometer’ on the www.thinkaboutyoureyes.co.uk website, developed to allow people to check their exposure and find out how they can protect their eyes. ■



Paul receives his Kindle Fire



Mary Glindon MP (l) with Sylvia Bailey



Mercy Jeyasingham MBE

CMO report into public health welcomed

The College of Optometrists has welcomed the publication of the chief medical officer's (CMO) annual report into the state of the public's health and particularly the latest findings regarding the causes and impact of visual impairment.

The report highlights the need for more research to be undertaken to understand the "substantially greater probability of those with blindness reporting with Alzheimer's or dementia" – an issue the College is currently researching.

The collaborative ProVIDe project (Prevalence of Visual Impairment in Dementia, funded by NIHR) aims to investigate the prevalence of vision impairment and eye health in people with dementia and to explore the experiences of eye health services of people with dementia, their carers and eye health professionals. The project is due to complete at the end of September and the findings published soon after.

The CMO's report also shows that more people are losing their sight to glaucoma and macular degeneration, and confirms a "substantial and significant" link between the prevalence of blindness and higher levels of socio-economic deprivation. The College of Optometrists has begun a new project looking at how the NHS can increase the number of people in poorer socio-economic groups accessing eyecare.

David Parkins, president of the College of Optometrists, said: "This is the first time the chief medical officer has looked at the impact of sight loss in such detail. It confirms our suspicions that not only are people with dementia more likely to have vision problems, but also that they are less likely to get the help they need to keep seeing clearly too. The report highlights how much more we could do to prevent sight loss and improve vision among vulnerable people in England. Our innovative research will help the NHS plan its response." ■

Lucky day for delegate

Congratulations to Paul Young of R. Young Opticians, Stanley, Co. Durham, who received the prize of a Kindle Fire HD after entering Menrad's free prize draw at the ABDO conference. Paul is pictured (right) with Richard Whitham-Lakin, Menrad territory manager. ■

Showcasing local eyecare services

Local MP for North Tyneside, Mary Glindon MP, visited JA Hicks Optometrist in North Shields recently to find out why regular eye examinations are so important in preventing blindness.

Practice owner and member of North of Tyne LOC, Sylvia Bailey, explained the health benefits of regular eye

examinations to the MP, who commented: "I was really pleased to visit JA Hicks and learn about the importance of an eye test, not only to maintain healthy eyesight but also to detect other possible health issues. This is a well-established business in North Shields and during my visit I saw first-hand how the staff there provide a great service to local people." ■

Vision 2020 UK appoints CE

Mercy Jeyasingham MBE has been appointed as the new chief executive of Vision 2020 UK, the umbrella charity for the sight loss and eye health sector.

Mercy has worked as a management consultant, researcher and trainer for the last 13 years and has held senior posts in both the voluntary and public sector. She has also been an executive and non-executive board member of a number of national and local organisations.

Mercy, who will begin her new role on 1 July following the retirement of Anita Lightstone, said: "I am really pleased to be joining Vision 2020 UK. It's an incredibly exciting organisation with a terrific history of working in partnership with the eye health and sight loss sector. I'm really looking forward to meeting the team and to the challenge ahead." ■

Benevolent Fund

If you know of a dispensing optician, or a dependant of a dispensing optician, who might benefit from the ABDO Benevolent Fund please get in touch with Jane Burnand on 020 7298 5102 or write to her at ABDO, 199 Gloucester Terrace, London W2 6LD





Ted Moffatt

Ted Moffatt reflects on his time spent serving on the ABDO Board

Man off the board

Last month I hung up my hat and left the ABDO Board after six and a half years' service – having jumped of my own volition. How did I become a Board member in the first place, you might ask? For many years, I have been an ABDO practical examiner – and it may (or may not) surprise you when I confide that after a long day examining, some of us would congregate in one of our hotel rooms over a bottle (well maybe two or three bottles) of wine and proceed to put the world of optics to rights. Those who know me well will not be surprised when I say that after a glass or two, I might become somewhat verbose.

Over time, I think my friends and colleagues became tired of me rattling on and suggested I 'put my money where my mouth was' and stand for the Board. For those of you who want to send out the 'hit squads', I will name the main culprits: Duncan 'Dunc' Counter, Elvin 'Stardust' Montlake and 'John Boy' Pugh. To everyone's surprise, I was elected – I think with three votes. This really surprised John Boy Pugh, who thought I was too old for anything. I was then re-elected for a second term, this time with four votes I believe.

Before I move on, I must say that the members recently elected – Fiona

Anderson, Jo Holmes and Clive Marchant – fill me with great confidence. I have sat in with them on a couple of Board meetings and have been delighted by their enthusiasm, input and knowledge. We are in good hands. Fiona, who was re-elected, is a marvel – and it would be one of my major disappointments if she did not go on to become ABDO vice president and then president in the near future.

I have really enjoyed my time on the Board over the past six years and have felt few disappointments. To serve such a fantastic group of people has been an honour and a privilege. We have a wonderful profession and it is all down to the people in it (could it be because a high proportion of our members are female)? However, knowing this makes one disappointment weigh all the heavier: the fact that so many of our members are undervalued and under-remunerated.

Memorable occasions

On a lighter note, I have enjoyed so many events and occasions whilst serving on the Board. One time, my wife Sue and I were asked if we would like to represent the Association at one of the Queen's garden parties (Tony Garrett's reattached arm has only just fully healed). On the day, the weather

was warm and balmy as we entered through the main gates of Buckingham Palace, which was all very grand. Once inside, we were able to wander at will around certain parts of the grounds and the Palace – taking it all in to the sound of the Guards Band playing brass band music. We even saw the Queen and Prince Phillip, although we didn't get to shake her hand. People from all walks of life were there, all having a great time. One silly thing that sticks in my mind was they didn't have 'toilets' – they had 'lavatories'. I knew then I was mixing with the upper classes...

Another time Fiona and Barry Duncan invited Sue and me to their Area 'shindig' in Edinburgh. Wow – what a great time we had. A huge proportion of our Scottish members were in attendance, and they really do know how to have a good time... Barry took us on a tour of Edinburgh. It was my first time visiting, though I had been to Glasgow before examining. What a lovely city Edinburgh was. There was a fantastic CET programme on offer, but the real highlight was the dinner dance in Edinburgh Castle, at which I received a presentation. To my great joy it was a bottle of gin produced in Scotland – you can't get better than that.

Disjointed jottings from a DO's desk . . .

As member get-togethers go, I've always really enjoyed the President's Consultation Day. All members from all Areas can attend, and many do – as well as their Area representatives. You don't need me to tell you what a phenomenal amount of work these people do on our behalf. It was at one of these meetings that I had one of my embarrassing moments...

We were doing a session on CET facilitation, in groups of about five or six. Each of us had to act as facilitator for a given scenario. To make it more testing, in some sessions there were two actors present who acted as agent provocateurs. Lee (Price) was in the chair, and the lady actor was giving him a hard time. Well, me being me, I joined her in creating even more disruption. After some time and much patience, Lee suddenly cracked and exclaimed: "For [bleep's] sake Ted – I thought you were supposed to be on my side!" We all fell about laughing. At the end of the session, Lee was in complete control and the lady actor and me were as meek as lambs.

Talking of embarrassing moments, another comes to mind: we were having a very enjoyable dinner where two or three members were to receive one of our prestigious awards. Things were going well and we were all enjoying ourselves – that is until I managed to knock a virtually full glass of wine all over our general secretary's shirt. Strangely he did not agree with the view that red actually suited him... After this incident, I noticed that on all subsequent dinners I have been moved further and further away from him. In fact at our last dinner, I was on a completely separate table...

I think the event I will miss most, now I have 'retired' from the Board, is our annual Prize Giving and Graduation Ceremony in Canterbury Cathedral. I have examined a few of these students and know how good they are, but to see so many smiling faces

on the day fills me with joy. I always sit there thinking what a wonderful group of people they are; no wonder our profession goes from strength to strength. Prior to the ceremony there is an eats and drinks event and Board members have the chance to mingle and chat to the students and their guests. I am always in awe of how committed they are and by the effort and sacrifices they have made to get to their goal. I am left thinking yep – the future is rosy.

Onwards and upwards

In terms of the future, however, it was a big disappointment to me that the Association name change proposal was defeated. I still think this was a mistake, but this is the great thing about our organisation – every member can have their say and vote. The other regret is that, in general, other organisations seem so opposed to us seeking to develop our remit and establish a career progression. However, I am confident we will. We are progressing and will continue to do so. The new Board is a good team. During my time on the Board we have made giant steps forward. These were started by Kevin (Milsom), moved forward by Barry (Duncan) and Peter (Black) is carrying this on. These guys have worked tirelessly, each helped greatly by Tony (Garrett) – or Sir Tony.

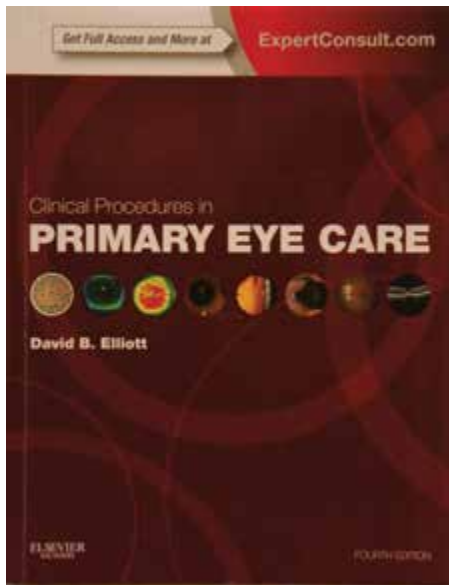
I must thank a few other people in closing. On a personal note Jane Burnand (Tony's PA) must top the list. Jane is always cheerful and on the ball, going out of her way to ensure things run smoothly. ABDO CFO Pavan, who helped get ABDO back into the black after the 'crash'. Through Pav's efforts our finances are now very robust. As ABDO CET coordinator, Paula Stevens does an incredible job in providing us with a fantastic CET programme – all this with the GOC changing the goalposts almost daily. Helping in this is members' support manager, Barry Duncan, who gets the Area members engaged whilst helping to promote the profession. Also I must mention Alicia Thompson

and Mark Chandler in the examinations and registrations department. Our exams are the envy of all, and they are certainly the gold standard, as reflected in the interest from overseas. In the recent exams in India, the students were saying how hard our exams were and how they were of a much higher standard than their own – and these were optometrists. As for Katie Docker, head of membership services, I don't have to tell many what a great job she does. Along with her other duties, Elaine Grisdale, head of professional services and international development, makes our conference better and better each time. Sheila Hope, now retired sadly, has made *Dispensing Optics* a journal to be proud of.

Meanwhile, Mike Potter, head of marketing and communications, ensures our image is vibrant and modern – a task he has succeeded in with our journal, our pamphlets and in setting up our partnership with ITN. What a fillip 'EyeTV' is in promoting the profession to the public. Jo Underwood and the team at ABDO College have elevated this learning establishment to elite status, which in turn has helped to enhance our organisation's reputation greatly. Finally, to all the examiners – you lot are great. These people are all good friends and some, very special mates.

There will be important issues facing us as a profession as we go forward, designed to enhance our standing and improve public awareness of who we are and what we do. If any of these require the membership to vote, then please, please do so. You will stand to gain much in doing so. Here endeth the lesson as I ride off into the sunset...

Ted Moffatt FBDO is an ABDO practical examiner and practice visitor, a member of ABDO's examinations development team, and a member of the Association's CET presentation teams (protective eyewear, hand made spectacle frames, paediatric dispensing). ■



Book review

Clinical Procedures in Primary Eye Care (4th edition)

By D. Elliott PhD, MCOptom, FAAO

Published by W.B. Saunders and available from the ABDO Bookshop priced £52.50 (ISBN 9780702051944)

Reviewed by Gillian Smith BSc (Hons), FBDO (Hons), SLD (Hons), LVA CertEd, senior lecturer at ABDO College, Godmersham, Kent

The fourth edition of Clinical Procedures in Primary Eye Care is a slimmer volume than the previous 2007 edition, the difference being partly due to a slight change in reference style. Full references are found at the end of each chapter as before, with in-text citations now numbered corresponding to the reference list citation. There is greater use of colour in this edition. Artwork has been extended and there is increased use of photographs, diagrams and colour plates, which help to bring the text to life for the reader. Tables and lists have been re-formatted, making them easier to follow.

The text is very well supported throughout by video clips, which are available on the ExpertConsult platform and demonstrate the various techniques discussed in the book. Prompts to the clips are embedded in the text, but clips can be accessed at any time individually and reviewed as

required. The online content also includes assessment quizzes available to test knowledge gained. The activation code for the free online content is found inside of the book's cover on a scratch strip. Using an iPad, it was necessary to download the InKling App to access the title and content. It appears that content can be shared via social media by other site users, although this facility was not tested.

Chapters in this edition have increased from seven to nine. A new and very useful chapter on contact lens assessment has been added, and a new section on optical coherence tomography (OCT) has been included in the chapter on ocular health assessment. The book still begins with a chapter on evidence-based practice – useful to both student and practitioner. There is now a specific chapter on communication, which is better organised.

Chapters are now more clearly labelled and divided into sub-sections, which have been re-titled and re-configured to make for more cohesive reading. There appears to have been a conscious effort to make the language used in the titles less formal and more user friendly. Each chapter is colour coded at the page corner, making navigation through chapters much easier and quicker.

This new edition is a good reference text and practical guide for optometry and dispensing students and practitioners. ■



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Diary of events

Please check event details online for up-to-date information at www.abdo.org.uk

11 May

Area 3 (North West) - Low vision skills workshop, Manchester Royal Eye Hospital

13 May

ABDO - annual meeting, 5pm, Pullman Hotel, London NW1 2AJ. For details email jburnand@abdolondon.org.uk

13 May

Area 10 (Kent) - CET evening, 6.30pm buffet for 7pm, Canterbury Cathedral Lodge, Canterbury Cathedral. Email julian@spectrumeyecare.co.uk

14 May

ABDO - President's Consultation Day, Medical Society of London, Lettson House, 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9EB. All ABDO members are invited and welcome to attend. To confirm attendance email jburnand@abdolondon.org.uk or call 020 7298 5102

14 May

Optometry Wales - CET evening, 6.30pm, the Oriol Hotel, St Asaph, Denbighshire. Email salidavis@optometrywales.com

15 May

Area 8 (Wessex) - CET evening, 6.30pm, Donnington Hotel, Newbury

15 May

Area 11 (London) - CET evening, 6.30pm, Holiday Inn, London

18 May

Area 2 - FQE Revision Day, 10am to 4pm, Bradford College.

Email keith@kdickinson.wanadoo.co.uk

26 and 27 May

Identify Optical Training - FQE Practical Exam Revision courses, £75 per day, Birmingham. For details contact Sally Bates on 020 8504 0967 or email sal_bates@hotmail.com

27 May to 2 June

ABDO College - Summer Revision Courses, ABDO College

28 May

Area 9 (South East) - CET evening, 6.30pm, the Hickstead Hotel, Hickstead, W. Sussex

1 June

Area 1 (North) - One-day CET conference and exhibition, Novotel Newcastle Airport.

Email leadbittercl@yahoo.co.uk

6-9 June

BCLA - 38th BCLA Clinical Conference & Exhibition, ICC, Birmingham. Visit www.bcla.org.uk

9-11 June

Introduction to Ophthalmic Public Health Course, ABDO College, Godmersham - For further information or to book a place call 01227 738 829 (Option 1), or email info@abdocollege.org.uk

10 June

Area 4 (East Anglia) - CET evening, 6.30pm, Holiday Inn, Ipswich

12 June

Vision UK 2014 - Eye health and sight loss sector conference, the Queen Elizabeth II

Conference Centre, London. To register email ukvisionstrategy@rnib.org.uk

15 June

Low Vision CET day, ABDO College, Godmersham - 18 interactive CET points. Comprehensive training day on principles and practice of low vision assessment and dispensing

24 & 25 June

J&J Vision Care - 'Practice made perfect - bringing it all together', two-day course at the Vision Care Institute, Wokingham. For details visit www.thevisioncareinstitute.co.uk/tvci-courses

26 June

Area 7 (West Country) - CET evening, 6pm, Padbrook Park, Cullompton, Exeter

28 June

Nystagmus Network Open Day, Mercure Leicester - Contact John Sanders on 029 2045 4242 or email john.sanders@nystagmusnet.org

6 & 7 July

Independents Day - i-Day and i-Night, Hilton Metropole, Birmingham. For details visit www.independentsday.co.uk

8 July

ABDO Golf Society - Challenge Cup competition, Moseley Golf Club, Birmingham. To play or join the society email Mike Stokes at m.stokes67@ntlworld.com

10 July

Area 10 (Kent) - CET and Bat & Trap, 6.30pm, Chequers Inn, Heaverham, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Email julian@spectrumeyecare.co.uk

27 July

Low Vision CET day, ABDO College, Godmersham - 118 interactive CET points. Comprehensive training day on principles and practice of low vision assessment and dispensing

27-31 August

ABDO College - Revision Courses, ABDO College, Godmersham

16 September

ABDO Golf Society - Stercks Martin Salver competition, Horsley Lodge Golf Club and Hotel, Derbyshire. For details or to join the ABDO Golf Society contact Mike Stokes at m.stokes67@ntlworld.com

22 September

Area 10 (Kent) - CET evening, 6.30pm, the Queen's Inn, Hawkhurst, Kent. Email julian@spectrumeyecare.co.uk

22-28 September

National Eye Health Week - Visit www.visionmatters.org.uk

26-29 September

Silmo 2014, Paris - Visit www.silmo.fr

29 September

Area 5 (Midlands) - CET day, Manor Hotel, Meridan, Solihull. For details and booking email ianh.abdoarea5@gmail.com

2 October

Area 7 (West Country) - CET day, details to follow. ■

dispensingoptics

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