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of British Dispensing Opticians

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DO Dispatches



ON WITH THE AGENDA

Welcome to the 'new look' *Dispensing Optics*, which I hope you will find both attractive and informative. Welcome also to my newly titled column.

We start the New Year in the same way as we ended 2014, with a long agenda of things to do and initiatives to follow up on.

Apart from the national CET plan, which ABDO members' support manager, Barry Duncan, with the CET team, has devised – and which will form the template of our complete CET service for years to come – we will be heavily engaged at 100% Optical in London next month (see our preview on page 36) and Optrafair from 18 to 20 April in Birmingham, delivering innovative and valuable sessions for our members.

Both of these major fairs will give more members the chance to gain much needed CET points whilst at the same time enjoying the usual range of activities and the chance to preview all the new products coming into practice.

The year ahead will also see further progress in the work of local optical committees (LOCs) and a greater roll out of locally commissioned services. As we pointed out in last month's issue of *Dispensing Optics*, there is a proper frontline role for DOs and clear evidence that in some areas, members are now taking a leading role in the work of their LOCs.

However, the picture is patchy, with some areas having little or no input from ABDO members. Clearly this is not a desirable state of affairs and it is up to members themselves to get involved rather than waiting to be asked.

If you would like to get involved or to just find out more then please let us know. Just drop an email in the first instance to kdocker@abdo.org.uk and we will support you in your ambitions.

Have a happy and prosperous 2015.

Sir Anthony Garrett

ABDO general secretary



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HAVE YOUR SAY

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COMMENDABLE ACTION BY PRESIDENT

On behalf of all in the ABDO, directly involved in contact lens practice or not, and the wider eyecare community, may I say thank you to Peter Black, for nipping in the bud the recent Groupon online offer of contact lenses without a prescription.

The action taken, which will set a precedent, not only stops this particular ridiculous event, it sends a wider message that contact lenses are medical devices and should only be available by prescription from a registered eyecare practitioner. Perhaps it's not too late to reverse the public misconception that equates wearing contact lenses to wearing a pair of shoes, or a piece of jewellery.

As someone who has seen, thankfully rare, consequences of microbial infection – long-term *acanthamoeba* infections and in a separate case the need for a full thickness keratoplasty following bacterial infection – in ophthalmology clinics, I know these life-changing adverse effects occur in contact lens wearers.

I am a great advocate of contact lens wear, whilst recognising that it should be done under the care of an eyecare practitioner. Peter Black should be commended, for not only guarding the patient's best interest, but also the interests of the contact lens industry and eyecare practitioners of all descriptions.

Andrew D. Price FBDO (Hons) CL, COA (USA)
Managing director
The ADP Consultancy

JOIN OUR CONTACT LENS GROUP

The ABDO Contact Lens Committee exists to support ABDO members in all matters relating to contact lenses, and meets two to four times per year, usually at ABDO's London offices.

We are currently keen to hear from ABDO members who would be interested in joining our group. Please email Jane Burnand at jburnand@abdolondon.org.uk, including details of your experience, plus a few words describing the specific contribution you feel you could make to the Contact Lens Committee.

Angela McNamee BSc(Hons), MCOptom, FBDO(Hons)CL, FBCLA, Cert Ed
Chairman
ABDO Contact Lens Committee

@philmullins13

Just arrived at Canterbury for ABDO graduation ceremony tonight. A great evening ahead, well done all the students.

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

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

Letters

AT JOURNEY'S END

Conlons Opticians was a founder member of the Guild of British Dispensing Opticians, out of which came ABDO, and was in optical dispensing for 132 years until the business was sold to Vision Express at the end of 2014.

Extremely well run by the managing director, John Welsby, and his board of directors, it was very much a 'people' company, focusing on our customers whom we thank for their business, and I have written privately to our all our staff and suppliers to express my gratitude for all they have done. I have also expressed my own personal sadness that the Conlons journey has come to an end. I am proud to have represented the fifth generation involved in this family business. And I am also very proud that Conlons had remained profitable and continued to trade well, despite very tough competition. However, for a number of reasons I believe that it was the right time to sell the business.

Conlons always believed very strongly in taking care of its staff and, like many companies of its age, had a generous final salary pension scheme with over 100 members. It was this pension scheme that tipped the balance in the decision making process. A surplus became a deficit, which mushroomed once actuaries discovered that people's life expectancy had increased dramatically from the predictions made when the scheme was first devised and especially since the 1990s. The sale of the company to Vision Express means that this pension scheme, which means so much to so many of our current and former employees, is now secure.

I would like to express my thanks to all who have worked so diligently for the company – for their professionalism, positive attitude, skills and competence. Their efforts allowed the company to punch well above its weight. I wish all past employees every success for the future and I am pleased that so many have wished to transfer to Vision Express. We are pleased to have sold to Vision Express, who we believe will look after our staff and customers very well, continuing the great work which has been the foundation of the Conlons brand.

Peter Barton
Liverpool

ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

I'd like to invite all golf enthusiasts within the membership to join us for the ABDO Golf Society Challenge Cup competition on 5 May at Farthingstone Hotel and Golf Course, Northants. Later on in the year, on 10 September, we will also be playing for the Stercks Martin Silver Salver at Harbourne Golf Club, Birmingham. This will be a joint meeting with the Optical Golf Society.

For details and/or to join the ABDO Golf Society please email me at m.stokes67@ntlworld.com

Mike Stokes FBDO
Chairman
ABDO Golf Society

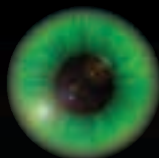
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**PETER BLACK**

Our monthly column from the ABDO president

The end of an era

In November, for the second time in my life, I found myself sat in a sparsely decorated room in Glasgow, alone, staring out of the window, with tears in my eyes, and a deep sense of foreboding in the pit of my stomach.

When in 1986 my Mum, Dad, Auntie and Uncle in two Ford Cortinas took me, my new fridge, a second hand 14" black and white portable TV, and all the other stuff I needed, to my 10' by 6' 4th floor tenement bedsit, I was excited when in the early evening I waved them off from the steps of my new home. Within a few minutes I realised that I didn't know a single soul. I sat on the end of the bed thinking: "What have I done?"

Twenty-eight years later, as part of the ABDO team providing paediatric CET at the Boots conference in Glasgow, I found myself in a similar position observing an uncharacteristically beautiful sunrise over the Clyde, grieving for times gone by.

After 26 years working for Britain's oldest established independent opticians, I had learned a few days earlier that after 132 years in business, the trading assets of Conlons Opticians were to be acquired by Vision Express and, understandably, the

company would not be requiring a second head office.

By nature I am optimistic, and I have chosen to view this as an opportunity – not just for me but for all my friends at Conlons. For the overwhelming majority who will move across to Vision Express, a bigger company will provide them with more security and bigger opportunities. And I know my head office colleagues will not be out of work for long – good people are always in demand. We have been heartened by the many suppliers and professional colleagues who have been in touch with words of support, offers of locum work and introductions to companies with vacancies. This does not mean it has not been difficult for me and my 170 colleagues at Conlons to deal with.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Perhaps most difficult for me personally was that two days after discovering my impending doom, and at that point unable to share the news with anyone, I was delivering a (hopefully) rousing speech to around 300 of ABDO's new graduates from the pulpit in Canterbury Cathedral and then welcoming them all to the profession with a ceremonial hand shake. I wish all our new dispensing opticians, and those qualifying in contact lenses and low vision, all the very best for the future.

Seeing so many eager graduates and their proud parents, partners and children inevitably caused me to reflect on the beginning of my career with Conlons. Back then optics was just the same as it is now: an exciting, competitive and ever changing environment. I had interviews with four national chains, none of which now exist, before settling on Conlons as the best company to work for, for no other reason than they were the nearest and I could have more time in bed in the morning!

My first boss and pre-reg supervisor was Paul Forsythe, who will be known to many suppliers as Conlons' hard bargaining operations director. Paul gave me the best

possible start in my career by instilling an eye for quality and high standards in dispensing and patient care. One particular dispense has stayed with me.

BEST POSSIBLE TRAINING

I was always afforded the opportunity during my training to see all the difficult patients that presented themselves, even if they had to be asked to wait, so that I could gain the experience (a practice I wish more supervisors would observe today).

One such patient was a young congenitally aphakic man – roughly +14.00 in each eye with the obligatory +3.00 add – and as usual the prescription from the medical eye centre down the road did not include a vertex distance. Racking up the prescription in the trial frame, we were able to check the refraction and determine for ourselves the vertex distance.

The recent change in the law had allowed this patient to take away his prescription for the first time and he came to us because he had never ever seen as clearly through his glasses as he did during his eye test (if he pushed his glasses really, really hard against his face he discovered he could see much more clearly) and he had also, from being a young child, always been prescribed two separate pairs.

The best fitting frame I could find was a Vienna Line, which like all Optyl frames, once it was adjusted properly stayed where it was put. Clearly the new Varilux Omega with UV 400 and hard MAR was the obvious choice rather than two pairs of lenticular bifocals for such a young man. The frame was fitted to perfection before we double and treble checked his measurements. Then we set to work calculating the lens powers while he went away to think about whether he could afford it.

I was excited and nervous. This was to be my first dispense over £100, and in the event was over £300 – around a month's salary at the time – but if I got it wrong I might be in big trouble. When he collected his glasses he was so pleased he hugged me –

By nature I am optimistic, and I have chosen to view this as an opportunity – not just for me but for all my friends at Conlons

something no man in the North of England ever did at that time – and he immediately ordered a second pair in a different colour. He didn't need to swap between glasses and, for the first time in his life, could appreciate cinema and TV, and most importantly learn to drive.

We improved this patient's VA from 6/60 to 6/6 with nothing more than a little dispensing skill – a well-fitting frame, a prescription compensated for back vertex distance, and a conviction that it is best to offer a range of suitable options, including the best option, and let the patient worry about the cost.

THANKS BOSS!

Once I qualified my second boss, for quarter of a century, until the very end with Conlons, has been John Welsby. John has helped, developed and supported me so many times during my career it is impossible to do him justice here. He is the person who encouraged me to get involved with ABDO, to attend Area meetings, get involved with the local Area committee, to become an examiner and, ultimately, to stand for the ABDO board. Without his support, my ABDO presidency would simply

not have been possible. John's greatest legacy to all who have worked with him is: "Work hard, play hard". It has been a blast.

Conlons Opticians was founded in 1882 by Bernard Conlon, whose son Bill then took over the business before World War One. Bill had three daughters, who all married, and hence although the Conlon name was not passed on, the company remained in the same family. Winifred Harbord ran the company from the Second World War until 1970 when her nephew Mike Barton became managing director. Mike is well known in optics, having held many positions within optical organisations, culminating a few years ago in Master of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers.

Mike is perhaps most responsible, indirectly, for my standing as ABDO president. It was Mike who dragged me as a young practice manager to a Wirral Rotary Club to watch him give a talk on eyes and eyecare. His next scheduled talk was to a ladies group at a Liverpool Conservative Club, and I was informed that on that occasion he would be watching and I would be doing the talk. Like everyone, I was terrified by the prospect of public speaking, but he coached me well and after a few

minutes I had the butterflies flying in formation. I discovered I knew more about my subject than my audience, and was well able to answer almost any of their questions about their eyes.

To this day I love communicating with public audiences, however, I am saddened that despite the internet, ophthalmic public health initiatives, and hundreds of millions of pounds spent on optical advertising, audiences still ask more or less the same questions, and have more or less the same concerns as they did 25 years ago. We still have a lot of work to do.

Those who know Mike will know that he is a gentleman, and the decision he has taken along with his son Pete – the fifth generation of the family in the business – to sell Conlons' trading assets cannot have been taken lightly. Although it is a sad end to an era, with my director's hat on I can see that it is the right decision for the company, its employees and its pensioners, present and future.

It only remains for me to wish the Conlon family, the Conlons family, and all of you in the wider family that is optics in the UK all the best for the future and a happy and prosperous 2015.

WORKFORCE RESEARCH GATHERS EVIDENCE

The cross-sector Optical Workforce Survey has invited 4,000 dispensing opticians and optometrists to provide their views and information about the profession.

The survey questionnaire, which ABDO contributed to the design of, is now with a randomised sample of ABDO and College of Optometrists members for completion, and covers factors from training and development opportunities to average appointment length, job satisfaction and remuneration.

As part of the project, an independent researcher is undertaking more than 30 in-depth interviews with stakeholders from across the sector, including large multiples, independent practice, academics and students, which will help to unpack the potential challenges even further. Michael Bowen, director of research at the College of Optometrists, said: "The real advantage of this project is that it draws on professionals' own experience. The more responses we get, the more reliable the final results will be."

ABDO president, Peter Black, who is a member of the project Advisory Group, commented: "The collaborative approach to the creation of the project questionnaire is echoed in our joint call for people to take up this opportunity to help shape the future of the profession. If we as a sector do not take the chance to document ourselves as we really are then others will decide for us. We will all benefit from the strength of this work."

The survey completion deadline is Monday 5 January, and the findings will be disseminated in the spring along with information about the specific workforces in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Further information is available at www.college-optometrists.org/research

OPTICAL SECTOR GRANTED USE OF NHS LOGO



Opticians, optometrists and optical businesses offering NHS services may now use the NHS logo with immediate effect. This development comes following discussion throughout 2014 between the Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC), NHS England and the Department of Health.

Community optics can now join with other primary care colleagues – including pharmacists, dentists and community audiologists – in being able to display the NHS logo on practice fronts and in certain communications. The Optical Confederation has worked with NHS England to develop guidance for practitioners about the correct use of the logo, available on NHS England's website.

Optical Confederation chair, Chris Hunt, said: "As the main providers of primary eyecare in the UK it is only right that community optical practices and practitioners are recognised for the work they do on the front line of NHS care. I am delighted that NHS England and the Department of Health have acknowledged this.

"More importantly, this move will help people who need eyecare to understand that community optical practices are part of the NHS. This is a great victory for joint working across optics and a good omen for our expanding role in delivering more NHS services in the community," Chris added.

Information about the use of the NHS logo and brand guidelines are available at www.nhsidentity.nhs.uk, including the new guidance for the optical sector.

Leading the way in 2015

We asked the leaders of the main UK professional bodies what their priorities would be for the year ahead. Here's what they said...



CONTINUED FOCUS ON REGULATION

"This year, we will continue to produce our annual ACLM Contact Lens Year Book for practitioners, and introduce an online version as part of a totally redesigned website. We will commission new research, and continue to produce annual manufacturer statistics of contact lenses produced and sold in the UK. We will work with Optical Confederation colleagues seeking to reduce the harm caused by illegal contact lens trading, whether on the internet or the High Street, and will continue to push for legislative change.

"Members of the ACLM will provide many hours of CET, carry out surveys, produce articles and literature, organise and take part in exhibitions, roadshows, workshops and other training methods to help practitioners improve their contact lens skills. We continue to work with European colleagues on technical and regulatory matters, as well as to ensure that plano contact lenses are properly regulated.

"Together, we will publicise a new toolkit which follows on from the London Business School model and which is designed to show how to increase patient loyalty. Dispensing opticians are a vital part of any successful practice, and the ACLM wishes all readers of *Dispensing Optics* a very Happy and Prosperous 2015."

Dr Cameron Hudson, chairman, Association of Contact Lens Manufacturers



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY PARTNERS

"If there is one word to describe 2015 for the AOP, it is 'change'. We're listening to our members' feedback and although this has been reassuringly positive to date, we are still looking to improve – building on our strengths but also working hard to be more supportive and more influential. We'll be focusing on our communication, ensuring members receive the information they want when they want and in the latter half of the year, we will be re-launching our website to provide members with a better, more personalised digital experience.

"In 2015 we're keen to build on our relationships with key partners, like ABDO, and we're very pleased to have ABDO on board with us as an education partner in 100% Optical. We're also delighted to have agreed a partnership approach to our CET courses from 2015, with ABDO members able to attend AOP courses at the member rate and visa versa.

"This joint approach will ensure that optometrists and DOs who work together in practice get access to the best training and education in the market. Of course our relationship with ABDO doesn't stop at CET; as founding members of the Optical Confederation, we work together to promote and protect the optical profession. Here's to a successful year."

Lyndon Taylor, chairman, Association of Optometrists



PUTTING MEMBERS IN THE DRIVING SEAT

"I would like to wish all ABDO members a very prosperous 2015 – and ask you to consider a couple of suggestions for your New Year resolutions. It is widely accepted within the profession that CLOs have excellent contact lens prescribing skills and, indeed, prescribe most of the lenses in the UK. The BCLA would very much like to support you in enhancing your already excellent skills to ensure that patients have a lifetime of healthy and comfortable contact lens wear.

"So here's resolution number 1: let the BCLA know what we can do to help you achieve this. Consider becoming a member. I plan to work with the BCLA Council and staff to overhaul the membership categories during 2015, so let us know what you want. A great way to see what we can do is to consider attending our new biennial clinical conference in 2015. We have a day dedicated to myopia management, so you can stay ahead in this next chapter in our industry.

"For resolution number 2: why not experience the BCLA's excellent education? Our clinical conference and exhibition in Liverpool, from 29-31 May, will endeavour to supply as many CET points in all the core competency areas needed by CLOs. You'll also be able to experience the BCLA at this year's ABDO conference in Manchester, as we'll be providing the contact lens track on 20 September. I really hope to meet you during 2015, and please let me know what the BCLA can do to support you in your career."

Susan Bowers, president, British Contact Lens Association

In England, we need to be setting out our ambitions for similar services commissioned on a greater scale

SHAPING BETTER PATIENT SERVICES

"2014 was a landmark year and 2015 should prove no less so. NHS England's 'Improving eye health and reducing sight loss, a Call to Action' was recognition that eyecare services are already under significant strain and in need of urgent reconfiguration if we are to meet the fast growing demand. The sector's considered and collective response, delivered through the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning, and coordinated by the College of Optometrists, demonstrates both the high level of unity in the sector as to what needs to happen and what can be achieved by working together.

"The Council's next step in taking this agenda forward early in 2015, is to deliver a proposal for a pathway approach that can deliver high quality and consistent services for patients across England. This will be further proof of our ability to come together to plan and shape services we can all be proud of and, above all, that the public deserves. This is not about reinventing the wheel, as we already have models of eyecare that deliver in Scotland and Wales. In England, we need to be setting out our ambitions for similar services commissioned on a greater scale."

David Parkins, president, College of Optometrists

EVOLVING IDEAS INTO TANGIBLE BENEFITS

"April's Optrafair is our major focus for working closely with the profession in 2015. We will have a terrific array of new technologies at the Birmingham show – most of it brought to market by our own FMO members. Frames, lenses, contact lens innovation, practice accessories for additional sales, plus diagnostic and cutting edge lab equipment will all be on display with many new launches. The profits from the three-day event are ploughed back into 'UK Optics plc' with benevolent support and training, so it is an event for everyone in the field.

"Our close working relationship with ABDO will see a broad spectrum of education provided at Optrafair, and we are currently finalising the details of the programme and lecturers. It is a free-to-attend event so we look forward to seeing dispensing opticians from all corners of the UK coming along to keep up to date. Our new chief executive, Kevin Gutsell, himself a qualified dispensing optician, knows exactly the kind of support that the profession needs and we look forward to 2015 being a year in which great ideas evolve into tangible benefits, which support the profession to deliver an unrivalled optical service."

Barry Dibble, chairman, Federation of Manufacturing Opticians

MOVING OUR VISION CLOSER

"FODO continues to champion community eye health providers. As part of the Optical Confederation and with LOCSU we look for ways to promote and expand our members' scope of practice. In 2014, our vision moved closer to a reality as policy makers reached consensus over community optics' role in delivering future NHS services as part of more integrated local health networks.

"But if we are to take on new responsibilities and achieve real change, we need proper IT links between optics and the rest of the NHS. The Optical Confederation, UK Vision Strategy and Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning responses to NHS England's Call to Action all called for government to support this much-needed modernisation.

"Along with the day-to-day business support and insurance services we provide to members, in 2015 we will continue to work with all partners to push for this expanded role for community optics. With new optical legislation in Ireland, the Call to Action response in the UK, new opportunities in Europe and a General Election to weather – all in the first half of the year – it will be a busy start to 2015."

David Hewlett, chief executive, Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians



We will continue to work with all partners to push for this expanded role for community optics



Vision Express CEO, Jonathan Lawson

VISION EXPRESS ACQUIRES CONLONS OPTICIANS

Vision Express has acquired Conlons Opticians, bringing the total number of Vision Express outlets in the UK and Ireland to 389.

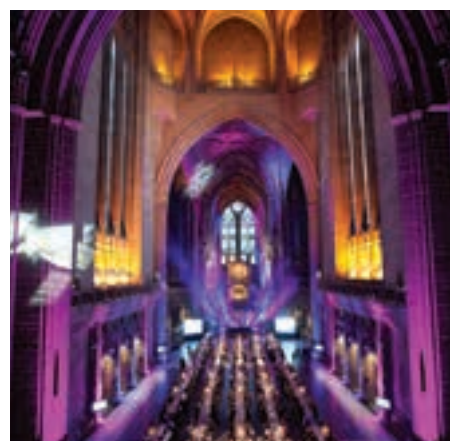
The acquisition incorporates the Conlons network of 19 stores situated in the North West of England and Scotland. Ten stores will trade from their current locations with their existing teams, as part of the Vision Express portfolio. The

remaining nine outlets will relocate to the nearest Vision Express stores. Vision Express said it would retain Conlons personnel wherever possible.

Vision Express CEO, Jonathan Lawson, commented: "I am delighted that we have been able to take this opportunity to expand the reach of the Vision Express brand and we look forward to welcoming our new customers and colleagues."

Peter Barton, chairman of Conlons Opticians, said: "I would like to thank the loyal team at Conlons Opticians and our suppliers who have delivered excellent service for many years. It has been a pleasure to work with such competent, committed and hard working people. I would also like to extend a big thank you to all our loyal customers who will continue to be well looked after by Vision Express, which also provides professional eyecare with excellent service, products and value. Vision Express is a successful company that is well run, forward looking and well positioned to succeed for a long time to come."

The announcement came last month following a sustained period of success for Vision Express, with 2013 trading results showing a third consecutive year of growth. Last year, Vision Express celebrated 25 years of trading, acquired stores from the Crown Eyeglass and Rayner & Keeler practices, and incorporated online retailer Lenstore.co.uk within the GrandVision business.



Liverpool Cathedral, the 2015 BCLA Gala Dinner venue

DELEGATE DISCOUNT OFFER FROM BCLA

ABDO members are being invited to claim a £50 discount on the price of a delegate package for the British Contact Lens Association's (BCLA) clinical conference and exhibition taking place at the ACC Liverpool from 29-31 May.

To claim the reward, simply download the new BCLA app from the Google Play or Apple App stores, and create a profile. A member of the BCLA team will then contact the user with a code to use when making a booking.

Taking place in the convenient location of Liverpool, the three-day conference is the first in the Association's new biennial schedule and is promising a host of CET lectures and workshops across all core competencies, a vibrant exhibition and full social programme. For the first time this year, the CET workshops will be free so early booking is advised. The conference kicks off on Friday 29 May with a day dedicated to myopia management, while the Beatles-themed Gala Dinner will be held in Liverpool's stunning Anglican Cathedral.

Register at www.bcla.org.uk

GOC COMMITS TO DUTY OF CANDOUR

The General Optical Council (GOC) has joined seven other healthcare regulators in pledging to put openness and honesty at the heart of healthcare.

A 'duty of candour' for optometrists and dispensing opticians will mean they must be open and honest with patients when something goes wrong with their treatment or care which causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress. The GOC will include the duty in its new standards of practice, set to be published this year after a full public consultation.

The joint statement is available at www.optical.org

BLOG AIMS TO WIDEN LENS CONVERSATION

PPG Industries has launched a new website to support the Trivex Lens Specialist (TLS) programme in the UK.

The TLS blog, at www.trivexspecialist.co.uk, features posts covering a wide variety of topics relevant to the optical industry with members of the optical monomers and coatings business writing articles, sharing comments and exchanging ideas. In addition, a team of eyecare

professional 'ambassadors' will post articles on topics relevant to their areas of expertise, such as sports vision, children's vision and social media.

"The mission of the blog is to encourage open conversations and information sharing among eyecare professionals in the UK," said Dora Plisic, PPG trade manager, optical monomers and coatings. "We look forward to engaging with the UK community of eyecare professionals through this exciting new digital platform."



Trivex Lens Specialist blog



OPTRAFAIR

18-20 APRIL 2015
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TO THE NEEDS OF THE OPTICAL PROFESSION
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Delivering digital ideas in Dubai

FLYING THE FLAG FOR INNOVATION

Optical business, the Hakim Group, placed the UK optical industry at the forefront of innovation and best practice at November's Vision-X event in Dubai, as the Middle East's most established optical and ophthalmic exhibition and conference celebrated its 15th anniversary.

The Hakim Group took part in the event's new Future in Focus feature, flying over speakers and exhibitors from the UK. Speaker sessions looked at the future of the profession and the impact of technology on the High Street, the best use of social media for practices, and how to best deliver a digital strategy.

Imran Hakim, CEO of the Hakim Group who spoke about how Google Glass and other wearable technology will impact the optical marketplace, said: "We are passionate about the use of technology within the optical sector, so we aim to champion the industry's drive to increased technology adoption. The Future in Focus feature at Vision-X provided a great platform to showcase some of these ideas to key MENA region players."

LOCSU SEEKS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

There's still time to apply for one of two vacancies on the LOCSU board to represent LOCs in the north of England and south of England regions, before the 12 January deadline.

Applicants must be an active member of their LOC and have excellent knowledge of the current challenges and



Jayne and Julie Abel collect one of their awards

FRAME COMPANY SCOOPS UP AWARDS

Just a year after it launched, Midlands-based frame company Eyespace has been recognised as Business Start-up and Entrepreneur of the Year at the Birmingham Post Business Awards, and as Product Business of the Year in the UK-wide Start-ups Awards.

Eyespace co-owners, Jayne and Julie

Abel, said they were "beyond proud" of the company's achievements. "To be recognised in our first year as both one of the Midlands' and the UK's fastest-growing and most promising companies is an incredible accomplishment for everyone at Eyespace. We are as proud to be contributing positively to the growth of the economy as we are of every product that our team has brought to independent optical practices."

LENS FITTING RESOURCES EXPANDED

SynergEyes has expanded its online resources with the release of eight video tutorials for Duette Progressive, its lens for astigmatic presbyopes available in the UK from No7 Contact Lenses.

The videos, each only a few minutes in length, are available through the Video Tutorials link on the SynergEyes homepage at www.synergeyes.com. Providing information to assist dispensing and optimise the fit of the Duette Progressive lens, the step-by-step tutorials cover: lens design, lens calculator, fitting guide, lens dispensing, optimising fit, optimising near vision, optimising distance vision and optimising patient compliance.

The videos address the vision optimisation made possible by the recent expansion of lens parameters to 0.1mm increments, which the company says facilitate even more precise alignment fitting, creating optimal centration and clear, stable vision at all distances for even more patients.

opportunities facing LOCs in their region and the sector nationally. LOCs in the north and south of England regions are invited to nominate candidates for the positions and LOC officers across both regions have been sent details of the recruitment process direct.

Alan Tinger, LOCSU executive chairman, said: "The roles will offer individuals the opportunity to use their skills and expertise at an exciting and challenging time for

LOCSU following the Call to Action consultation and the publication of the NHS Five Year Forward View.

"Candidates will be excellent strategic thinkers with a passion for improving opportunities and outcomes for community services. This is also an opportunity for LOCs to ensure that the board represents a diverse range of skills, interests and experiences." Apply at www.locsu.co.uk

EVERYTHING A CONFERENCE SHOULD BE

2015 ABDO Conference and Exhibition **SAVE THE DATES**



The ABDO Conference and Exhibition is the premiere event for dispensing opticians. The conference, which has successfully grown year-on-year since 2008, is also hailed as one of the most convivial and rewarding networking events in the UK optical calendar.

The 2015 ABDO Conference and Exhibition will be held at Manchester Central - an award winning venue located in the heart of city centre Manchester.

Further details will be released and online booking available in due course.

- A unique event in the 2015 optical calendar
- Interactive CET events to cover all GOC core competencies
- AOP education stream
- BCLA day
Sunday 20 September
- FREE exhibition entry to all members of the optical profession
- All optical professionals and students are welcome to attend



ABDO CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Sunday 20 and Monday 21
September 2015
Manchester Central

PRE-CONFERENCE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Saturday 19 September 2015

PRE-CONFERENCE WELCOME PARTY

Saturday 19 September 2015
Wolfson Reading Room,
Manchester Central Library

ABDO GALA DINNER

Sunday 20 September 2015
The Midland Hotel, Manchester

Association of British Dispensing Opticians



Major investment at contact lens plant



New route to optometry

BOOST FOR LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY

Bausch+ Lomb is investing €41m in manufacturing capacity at its Waterford facility in Ireland.

The investment, supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation through IDA Ireland, is expected to generate 50 jobs within the next 18 months. It will equip the Waterford facility with next generation contact lens manufacturing technology, high-speed packaging equipment, and an efficient energy generation system. Employee training for new automation is part of the investment.

Damian Finn, general manager of the plant, said: "The commitment here is welcome and will enable us to take advantage of the opportunities that are emerging in the contact lens and vision care sector. Our employees have implemented a substantial programme of change over the last six months and we are now in a position to gain from our increased competitiveness. I believe that we now have a more sustainable operation and I am looking forward to the coming years as a time of great opportunity and significant growth."

ONLINE SUPPORT FOR UK INDEPENDENTS

The National Eyecare Group (NEG) has launched a new website at www.nationaleyecare.co.uk, featuring a new Business Listing section for all independent practices; and improved Members' Area with news and information; and an enhanced Preferred Supplier search function for members.

"As well as making it easier for our members to search for Preferred Suppliers and their terms, and catch up with the latest news from the Group, the most exciting element of our new website is the ability for all UK independent opticians to advertise practices for sale and job vacancies – whether they are NEG members or not," said Phil Mullins, NEG business development director.

"This is a fantastic new – and affordable way – for independent practitioners to connect with each other across the UK. We'd like to invite all UK independent practitioners to visit and see what a difference the site – and the Group – can make to their business," Phil added.



Free jobs listing on NEG website

INSIGHT GIVEN INTO MENTORING ROLE

Supervisors of students on the Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing at Bradford College heard from ABDO director of professional examinations, Alicia Thompson, recently about the 'Route to registration and skills to keep you registered'.

The annual event is designed to provide support to supervisors who are new to this important and vital role in the training of dispensing opticians. "Some 20 supervisors attended the event, and feedback was extremely positive," said Julie Lees, Bradford College lecturer and curriculum team leader. "All of the supervisors said that the evening gave them a better insight into their role as mentors."

GREEN LIGHT GIVEN TO NEW MOPTOM PROGRAMME

A new four-year Master in Optometry programme (MOptom) at the University of Hertfordshire has received provisional approval from the General Optical Council (GOC).

This new programme, incorporating the College of Optometrists' Scheme for Registration, will enroll up to 50 students per year from September 2015. Successful completion of the programme will award students a Master of Optometry and provide eligibility to register with the GOC to become a practising optometrist. It is the first course to integrate the scheme into the academic assessment for the Masters. The programme provides extensive practice placement in hospital and community practice through years three and four of the course.

The integrated course is offered in collaboration with the College of Optometrists and has been developed in accordance with the standards established by the GOC. Delivered by Postgraduate Medicine in School of Life and Medical Sciences, the course will be based in newly designed and specialist-built optometry clinical rooms and laboratories, featuring state-of-the-art facilities and equipment.

Cheri Hunter, associate dean and head of postgraduate medicine, said: "We are delighted to launch this new programme, which will benefit from our strong links with practice, excellent faculty and innovative approach to delivering clinically based learning. I look forward to welcoming students."

Is having the right equipment important to you? Glasses are no different...



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From 1st January to 30th June 2015 order a pair of Xperio lenses and for an additional £1 per lens, receive a pair of clear lenses. You can upgrade the clear pair at a greatly reduced cost to match the design of the Xperio pair.

To benefit from this offer use the promotional code "2PAIR" when placing the order for the 2nd pair.

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DRIVING LENS GETS TRILOGY TRIVEX TREATMENT

Transitions Drivewear lenses, still the only polarised photochromic lenses that adapt behind the windshield, are now available from Norville in single vision Trilogy Trivex material.

Transitions Drivewear lenses are already available in CR39 hard resin (single vision, flat top 28 bifocals, Younger's Image progressive), as well as polycarbonate (single vision and Image progressive). Designed specifically to meet the unique visual demands of the driving task, Transitions Drivewear are the first and only polarised photochromic lenses to darken behind the windshield of a car, adapting to varying daylight conditions for a safer drive. They are also polarised to block blinding glare.

Younger Optics' Trilogy lenses are made from PPG's Trivex material, known for its thin and light characteristics as well as its impact and chemical resistance. According to Norville, its higher Abbe value makes it the preferred choice for those looking for a lens that is optically superior to polycarbonate. Visit www.drivewearlens.com/trilogy or Norville www.norville.co.uk for UK Rx supply.

YEAR OF COLLABORATION CELEBRATED

Ogi Eyewear, the American eyewear company launched in 1997, celebrates its one-year of collaboration with its UK and Ireland eyewear distributor, Carina Eyewear, this month.

Carmela Ariano from Carina Eyewear said: "2014 was an important year for us and we are very pleased with the work we have done in order to grow Ogi Eyewear's presence in the UK and Irish markets. Ogi Eyewear is a leader in affordable luxury eyewear and we are sure their Ogi, Innotech and Seraphin brands will continue to captivate many other UK and Irish opticians in the future."



Good year for Ogi Eyewear

FASHION BRANDS LEAD OPTRAFAIR CHARGE

In response to "unprecedented demand", the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) has increased the Optrafair Fashion Quarter by more than a third, and will provide style advice around a new feature catwalk to accommodate brands showcasing their eyewear.

Optrafair director, Malcolm Polley, said: "Companies recognise that Optrafair is the premium show to be seen at, where you will meet a dedicated and informed audience of eyecare professionals. Brands are lining up to be at this essential event, which alongside fashion offers up-to-the-minute developments in technology and practical advice on business, and the chance to earn valuable CET points."

Style experts will also be on hand at Optrafair 2015, from 18-20 April, to share the latest news on the next season's fashion trends and there will be a keynote presentation focused on fashion. www.optrafair.co.uk



Fashion Quarter expands for 2015



ULTRA POLARIZED

THE ULTIMATE VISION & PROTECTION



Whether your dispensing area was as bustling as a Black Friday bargain bun fight over the Christmas period, or you enjoyed a relaxing lull and the chance to catch up with yourself, now's the time to start planning your in-practice eyewear campaigns for 2015.

With a host of new styles and collections already launched for spring/summer 2015, there is a plethora of eyewear innovations to entice and inspire your patients in every age group. We take a look at just some of the latest launches designed to catch a passing eye...

New Year eyewear inspirations

GOING DUTCH

Dibble Optical has brought the youthful Dutch brand, Vingino Eyewear, to the UK with a collection of cool, quirky and fashionable styles for children designed to appeal to both the young wearer and their parents. Vingino has been a leading brand since 1997, having evolved into a designer clothing brand for children aged from seven years to 17. The eyewear line was first introduced in 2010 and has enjoyed strong growth in Europe, prompting Dibble Optical's decision to make it available to opticians here.



Jensen by Eyespace

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Shades of blue will take the menswear world by storm throughout spring/summer 2015, predicts award-winning frame company, Eyespace. Reflecting this trend in its recent men's releases, acetate JN8007 (C1) from the Jensen collection is a deep navy tortoiseshell combining accents of electric blue and featuring sleek temples that contrast with retro highlights, such as geometric pin detailing. With a 56 eyesize, this model provides an on-trend deeper eyeshape option formed from premium quality Italian acetate.



Mercedes-Benz style from Rodenstock

LUXURIOUS DOUBLE-ACTION

The new Mercedes-Benz style collection from Rodenstock features an innovative screw-free 'double-action-spring-hinge', which provides a spring effect on the one hand, and a snap effect on the other hand, which the company says will noticeably prevent wear over time. Full-rim frames and retro shapes distinguish the five models of sunglasses, as well as the new models of the correction spectacles collection. The new collection is inspired by the Mercedes-Benz design philosophy of "sensual purity" to create a range of luxurious eyewear.

BACK TO THE 60S

Marked with a forthright stamp of radical British history, Cutler and Gross' spring/summer 2015 collection is inspired by the cast of characters from the Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album cover by British artist, Peter Blake. Key creative figures from the 1960s album covers were the inspiration behind the metal and acetate collection, featuring geometric shapes, sharp brow and feline models in both optical and sunglass styles. Produced in Cutler and Gross 'Mid-Century Neon' acetate, model 1162 (*pictured*) is the company's showstopper piece.

RETRO ROOTS

Dunelm Optical has released seven new styles in its popular Retro collection, ideal for teens right through to 40-somethings. The unisex frames feature flattering wayfarer and high joint structures (Retro 310, 313), with minimal details to tie in with the growing 'normcore' trend for 2015. Bright and muted colour pops are introduced on the inner frame on Retro 311 to offer a more contemporary look, while Retro 312 (*pictured*) is a bold update of a vintage supra frame. Other details include keyhole bridges and flecked effects, reminiscent of a 1970s car dashboard (Retro 314).

ELEGANTLY CHIC

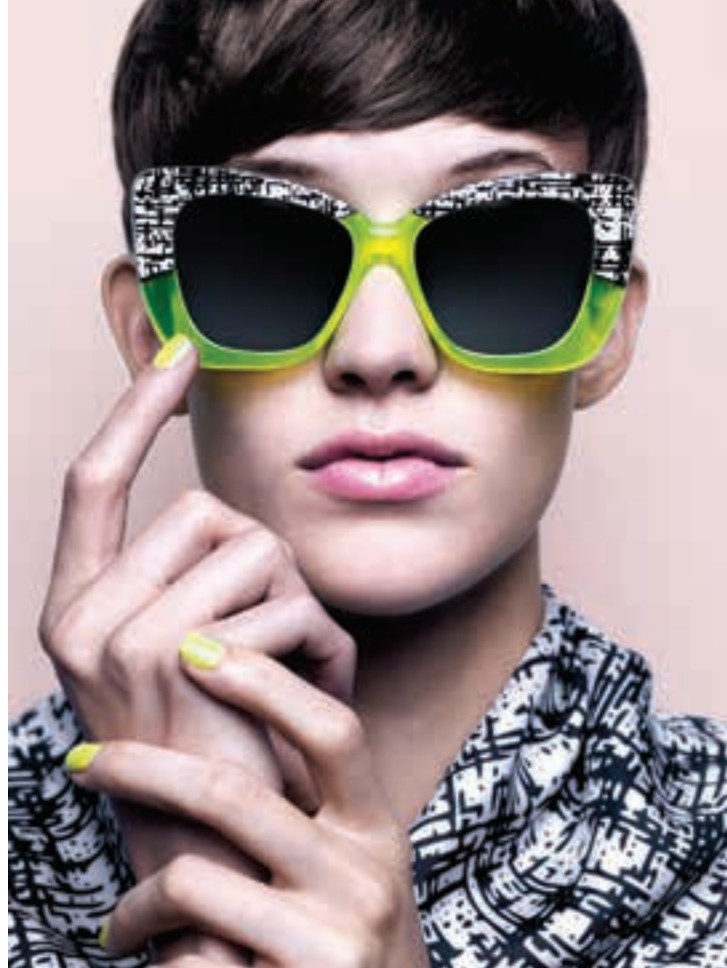
Orange Eyewear has extended its CC Eyewear range with an array of elegant styles with a modern twist, designed exclusively for independent opticians. Model CC45 Palladium (size: 51 x 17) (*pictured*) boasts a soft rectangular metal eye-shape, with a grey and black marble-effect design on the sides, complemented by diamante detailing on the corner-pieces to add a touch of sparkle. It is available in Palladium and Rose colourways.

RUGGED OUTDOOR LOOKS

Since Norville's third Barbour catalogue was launched last year, nine new frames have been released, all of which are conveniently available in two sizes and with spring-hinged sides. The new models illustrate the quality and durability that Barbour is known for, plus a quintessential look in a new dimension. If your patients are looking for sturdy, rugged eyewear but still with a comfortable bridge fit, generous pads and swan neck secure sides, then Barbour 046 (*pictured*) could be the model of choice. It's available in Gun and Brown.

EYEWEAR WITH BITE

The new Lacoste Leather Edition from Marchon consists of rich details, high-quality materials and distinguished style. A new round metal emblem featuring a tennis racket and '1933', the year the brand was founded, is positioned on the inner temple tips. The contemporary silhouette of model L160SL (*pictured*) combines a chic metal rim with an acetate bridge, while a metal hinge and crocodile logo embellish the leather inserts located on both temples. This frame is available in black, cream and burgundy.



Cutler and Gross spring/summer 2015



Retro by
Dunelm Optical



CC by Orange Eyewear



Barbour from Norville



Lacoste from Marchon



COMPETENCIES COVERED

Dispensing opticians: Optical Appliances, Paediatric Dispensing

Optometrists: Optical Appliances



Plastic fantastic

By Joanne Abbott BSc(Hons) FBDO SMC(Tech)

This article will explore a brief history of plastic frame materials, look at different plastic frame production methods, consider some new frame materials, explain how plastics play a part in children's eyewear, and just what makes plastic so fantastic.

Historically, plastic frames have been made from a variety of materials including cellulose acetate, cellulose propionate, nylon and its polymers, and cellulose nitrate. For those dispensing opticians too young to remember first hand, I recall a story from a former colleague about adjusting a cellulose nitrate frame as a trainee...

Feeling confident whilst his supervisor was out to lunch, he was called upon to adjust a new pair of spectacles for a young lady. He very quickly learnt that the softening point of cellulose nitrate, 65°C, is very close to its flash point of 70°C and returned to the patient with smouldering remnants of a frame – not to mention newly fashioned eyebrows. Thankfully, this material is now banned in the UK, but it is still used in frame production in the developing world¹, so as an optician you need to be able to differentiate it from other plastics.

Produced by machine routing and made from cotton linters and nitric acid with a camphor elasticiser, cellulose nitrate looks very similar to cellulose acetate with a high surface lustre. However, it does yellow with age and become brittle. Confirmation tests with a suspected new cellulose nitrate



Figure 1. NHS 525

frame are to look for pinned joints and a lack of CE mark if produced in the developing world. A discreet file at the hinge point of a new frame may give off a mothball or camphor smell.

The first commercially available plastic frames came into the optical market in the 1910s, becoming common by the 1930s². Post war, production levels rose with the advent of nylon – the name being construed from a combination of New York and London reflecting both the USA and UK involvement in its development. Nylon frames have a high resistance to breakage, which unfortunately makes them very hard to adjust. They often have metal sides because of this.

NHS plastic frames were, for many, their first venture into the realm of a plastic frame (Figure 1). They were produced in 1948 and then from 1951 until the mid-80s of cellulose acetate³, which is the material

of norm for plastic frames today. Made from cotton linters and possibly wood pulp, acetic acid and plasticiser, the recipe ingredients are first mixed together to form a homogenous paste. This paste is then filtered and extruded ready for colouring with mineral pigments or vegetable dyes.

Heated machine callipers then transform the coloured paste into sheets, which are then cut, stacked and pressed together to form endless effects and colour possibilities (Figure 2). The quality of the acetate is determined by the quality of its cotton linters and the filtration processes⁴. Italian Santino Mazzuchelli, and his son Pompeo, first produced cellulose acetate in sheet form in the late 1800s⁵. To this day, six generations later, Mazzuchelli continues and is revered to be one of the highest quality cellulose acetates available – now known by its trade name, Rhodoid.

This article has been approved for 1 CET point by the GOC. It is open to all FBDO members, and associate member optometrists. The multiple-choice questions (MCQs) for this month's CET are available **online only**, to comply with the GOC's Good Practice Guidance for this type of CET. Insert your answers to the six MCQs online at www.abdo.org.uk. After log-in, go to 'CET Online'. **Questions will be presented in random order.** Please ensure that your email address and GOC number are up-to-date. The pass mark is 60 per cent. The answers will appear in the May 2015 issue of Dispensing Optics. The closing date is 10 April 2015.



C-38892



Fig 2. Cellulose Acetate in sheet form - showing the colour and effect possibilities

Cellulose acetate frames are generally produced by routing from a block or sheet by a computer aided CNC machine. The acetate is cut into rectangular blocks and fed into the machine. The milling head may contain as many as eight to 10 different sizes and types of cutting head – all programmed to produce a shaped frame front and include a stage to produce the required bevel to hold the lens in place.

A high gloss finish is achieved by tumbling in a barrel with an abrasive such as woodchips or walnut shells for many hours – usually 24 hours per stage. This process can involve up to four stages utilising decreasing abrasive substances. A polishing paste can also be added at each stage. A paste with pumice can be used at the first stage, decreasing to something similar to car polish at the end stage to give the high gloss finish. A protective lacquer is then sometimes applied to provide a hard, long-life finish.

Acetate frames usually have 'shot' reinforced sides. In this process, the side is made out of a routed piece of acetate, placed in a metal mould, which heats the side up to its plasticity temperature. The side is then placed in a cold metal mould; the side cools from the outside inwards and as it does so, the heated metal core reinforcement is pushed into the soft plastic centre. This metal reinforcement is guided down the centre of the side by the hardened exterior. During this stage, designs can be moulded into the softened plastic of the side. Metal sides can also be embedded into the acetate with the use of ultrasound.

The adjustment temperature of cellulose acetate is 57°C; it is non-flammable but excessive heat will cause the material to distort and bubble. This occurs

when the centre of the plastic starts to boil and the resultant gas formed produces small vacuoles within the substance of the plastic.

As cellulose acetate frames age, the plasticiser can dry out making the material more brittle. This drying out requires a higher heat to be applied to soften the material and, therefore, more care should be taken when adjusting and re-glazing older frames. It's not uncommon to see a cellulose acetate frame surface lose its polish and appear chalky – especially with darker colours. Life can easily be breathed into these frames with a little TLC.

A wipe over with rubbing alcohol removes any surface lacquer and chalkiness, and then the frame can be re-polished with a little hard wax and a polishing mop. Interestingly, broken acetate frames can be repaired by soaking the broken parts in acetone for a few hours or so. The broken parts are then held together whilst the material sets (it's probably best not to advise your patients of this!

Spectacles made of cellulose propionate are hard to differentiate from those of cellulose acetate. They are harder and yet more flexible than cellulose acetate frames and have a slightly lower density, making them more transparent, and they often have the demarcation 'CP' somewhere on the side. The material is made from cellulose flakes, propionic acid, acetic acid and stabiliser by injection moulding. The adjustment temperature is 67°C, but excessive heat can cause shrinkage so care must be taken when glazing.

NYLON POLYMERS

Optyl is a trade name for an epoxy resin, which is a thermosetting plastic. This is a favourite material used by the Safilo Group and has a plastic memory, meaning it can be heated to a high heat and distorted, but once cooled and reheated will return to its

original moulded form. Care should be taken to heat sufficiently before undertaking adjustments, as the material is rather brittle below its softening point.

Optyl frames are compression moulded, surface dyed and lacquer coated. Its strength and rigidity meant that many original designs did not have full metal reinforced sides, although now most do have this feature.

Many different nylon polymers are now used in frame production, mostly from crude oil, and include the trade names of Grilamid manufactured by EMS Grivory and Ultam, which is almost exclusively used in South Korea. The first products made of the polymer Grilamid TR were transparent shirt buttons in the late 1970s, which could stand up to being machine washed. This resistance to hydrolysis was a novelty at the time. Due to its chemical and crush resistance, Grilamid TR is used for protective tubing for fibre optic cables. With polymer modification, the homopolyamide Grilamid TR90 came into existence with its high transparency and remarkably low density compared to other transparent polymers. It is the lightest engineering plastic in existence⁶.

Grilamid BTR green-line is an eco-friendly polyamide with a high biocontent of around 54 per cent. It has excellent transparency, low density but high toughness. It has good UV resistance. By using monomers obtained through chemical processes from the renewable raw material castor oil, the environmental impact of this material is significantly lower compared to crude-oil based polyamides. The total emission of climate-damaging gases during the whole manufacturing process of the polymer and its precursors can be reduced by up to 75 per cent³. Grilamid BTR is utilised in many models in the Charles Stone range, available from William Morris Eyewear (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3. Charles Stone Grilamid frame

A new nylon polymer being utilised by Safilo is XE4066. This particular polymer has a higher rigidity than TR90 and BTR and produces a semi-transparent material that can be dyed with mineral pigments. The frame design utilises a metal side along with Safilo's new Elasta 80 hinge mechanism, offering a very lightweight and durable style.

SPX is peculiar to Silhouette and is a super-polyamide, the X being Silhouette's X factor secret ingredient. The company's latest foray in frame materials is SPX+, which with up to eight composite polymers is even lighter and stronger – twice the strength of acetate. Therefore, it can produce the thinnest full-rim eyewear on the market weighing as little as 4.1grams⁷, as seen in Silhouette's Urban-Lite range (Figure 4). The rims are in-line glazing in style due to their thinness, so care must be taken when ordering, glazing and springing in the finished lenses.



Figure 4. SPX+Silhouette frame

All of these nylon polymers have a high dynamic strength, and due to the lack of plasticisers, are hypoallergenic. Spectacle frames are manufactured from these materials by injection moulding, and can be brilliant in colour, due to the materials' transparency before colouring. Care should be taken when cleaning and adjusting any Grilamid frame; some are easily damaged by solvents and all need to be cold glazed.

INJECTION MOULDING PROCESS

The injection moulding process is initially fairly costly. A mould is first made from chromium steel or sometimes aluminium by CNC machining of a mould base, a process which is accurate to within 1/100mm and can take up to 20 hours to complete. The mould itself is made in two halves with guide pins and bushings to aid alignment when setting the two halves together in readiness for production (Figure 5). The



Figure 5. Injection frame/mask mould (Courtesy of Stepper UK Limited)

mould surface is highly polished to give a smooth frame surface, or can incorporate texture and intricate design if desired. The injection machine process comprises of the following four stages (Figure 6).

Stage 1: The two halves of the mould are clamped together, utilising the guide pins and bushings to aid alignment. Polymer beads or granules are fed through a hopper into the chamber containing a screw. The screw 'drag flows' the polymer along the chamber in three zones: the first rids the polymer of air; the second, known as the 'melt zone', reduces the polymer's volume by compacting the material; the third zone is known as the 'measuring zone' and acts as a pump to the screw head. Whilst traversing these three zones, the polymer beads or pellets turn to molten plastic at high pressure though heat, friction and force. Plastic temperatures can vary from 160-320°C at this point, depending on the polymer.

Stage 2: Once the plastic reaches its necessary viscosity, the screw is then forced forwards by a hydraulic ram, and the plastic is forced under pressure of 20-

30,000 PSI through a one-way valve at the screw head into the mould. Moulds may have multiple injection points. It's worth noting here that the designer has to pay attention to the placement of injection points, avoiding weak points on the frame such as the bridge or thinner frame rims, which will affect the longevity of the finished article.

Stage 3: Cooling. This is either just a waiting game or can be accelerated by cooling the mould with water.

Stage 4: The mould is then opened and the frame parts ejected – either by air blast, ejection plate or rods.

PLASTIC FRAME PRODUCTION – THE FUTURE?

The latest addition to the plastic frame market is 3D printed spectacles. These are created using specialist computer aided design programmes, and produced by printing with a nylon polyamide powder with selective laser sintering (SLS) technology. This is an exciting new avenue, and obviously the possibilities are endless with improved production afoot.

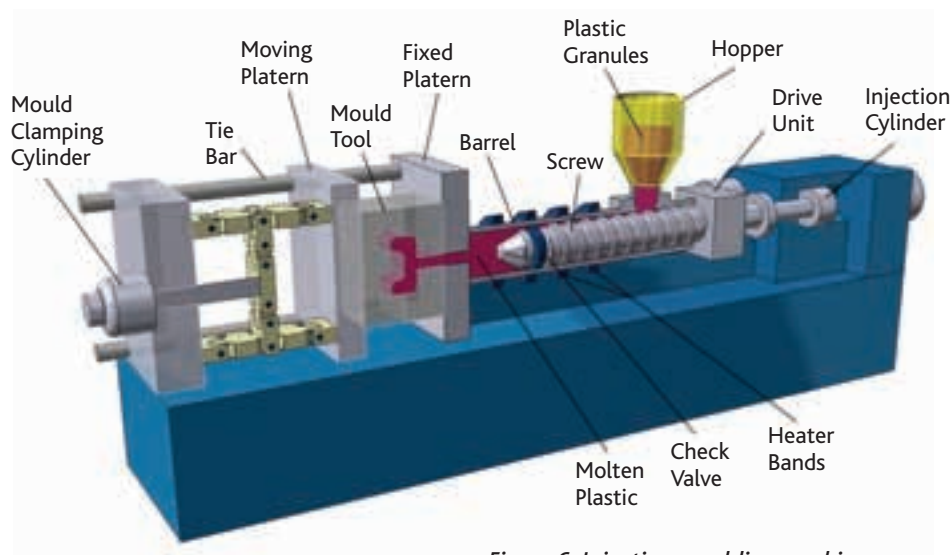


Figure 6. Injection moulding machine

USE OF PLASTICS IN PAEDIATRIC SPECTACLE DESIGN

Upon the demise of the NHS children's frames, the trend for paediatric spectacle frames swung towards metal frames. With current fashion trends for plastic adults' frames, the material de rigueur is now swinging back to plastic. Children's spectacle frames need to address the child's developing facial features, which obviously differ somewhat from an adult. A child's frame cannot simply be a scaled down version of a popular adult's frame, and paediatric frame designers need to consider the following when developing a suitable frame:

- Crest height
- Bridge projection
- Splay angle
- Frontal angle
- Head and temple width
- Length to bend/length of side
- Length of drop and angle of drop if fitting a hockey-end side

The main concerns to be addressed when selecting a child's frame must be fit and safety. Due to the unpredictable habits of children, the frames chosen should be able to withstand the abuse and forgetfulness that is to be expected of children. It is important to choose a frame style and material that will stand up to



Figure 7. Miraflex paediatric range, addressing the differing fitting characteristics of paediatric eyewear

vigorous use and abuse. Keeping in mind that children play hard, frames chosen for them should be robust.

An ideal child's frame should be lightweight, robust and comfortable in design. The Miraflex range available from Dibble Optical (**Figure 7**) is made from a specialist polymer, which is a lightweight, flexible and hypoallergenic material. The range is designed in Columbia by an orthoptist, taking into consideration

anthropometrical data collected from many local children, and manufactured by an Italian company owned by her sister-in-law. Its design is simple: there are no screws or metal parts so the frames will not fall to pieces and are virtually indestructible.

Centrostyle offers a good range of children's frames too, many made from cellulose acetate or Grilamid and some also incorporate a moulded silicone fixed bridge design to aid comfort and grip on the nose.

Material	Typical density	Softening point	Production method	Additional information
Cellulose acetate	1.27	57°C	Routed	Easily warps with heat
Cellulose propionate	1.21	67°C	Moulded	Will shrink if overheated
Cellulose nitrate	1.24	65°C	Routed	Flash point is 70°C – take care
SPX+	1.00	70°C	Injection moulded	Will shrink if overheated
Grilamid TR90	1.00	85°C	Injection moulded	Cold glaze Side reinforcement not necessary
Grilamid BTR	1.05	85°C	Injection moulded	Cold glaze Side reinforcement not necessary
Optyl epoxy resin	1.16	80-120°C	Compression moulded	Cold glaze Memory plastic May have short side reinforcement Does not shrink
XE6044	1.05	> 110°C	Injection moulded	Cold glaze

Table 1⁸

CONCLUSION: SO IS PLASTIC FANTASTIC?

It's important for the optician to be able to make an informed recommendation to the purchasing patient. **Table 1** lists the common plastic materials and their properties to help the practitioner make the right recommendation, and shows how each material must be handled when glazing and adjusting. With these new developments in plastic frame materials and manufacture, spectacle designers are able to offer much lighter, stronger and robust designs in a plethora of colours, effects and finishes offering the wearer the best possible balance of comfort, function and fashion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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JOANNE ABBOTT is an experienced dispensing optician, workshop and peer discussion facilitator, and ABDO CET assistant. She has created a number of CET-approved modules, works in many different practice settings and has a sound up-to-date and unbiased knowledge base.

CELEBRATIONS AND OVATIONS AT FMO LUNCHEON

Celebrations of excellence, dedicated service and commitment to bringing the best to 'UK Optics plc' were all part of the good cheer of the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) annual luncheon held last month at the Hilton Hotel, Paddington, attended by some 120 FMO members, optical leaders and guests.

"Our annual luncheon extends each year to draw more from the world of optics," said FMO chairman, Barry Dibble. "It is a unique event where good spirits

abound and companies which have competed for business throughout the year come together to celebrate unity. We are very proud to host such a celebration."

Particular celebrations marked the retirement from the FMO, after 65 years in optics, of former industry stalwart and FMO chief executive, Malcolm Polley. A presentation of Malcolm's progression through optics drew a standing ovation for a career, which has embraced frame manufacturing, lens promotion, optical marketing and team leadership. Alongside this, FMO Honorary Life Membership was presented to FMO administrator Sandie Fisher and Optical Confederation leader, Chris Hunt.



Sandie Fisher receives FMO Honorary Life Membership from chairman, Barry Dibble

UK SUPPLY FOR "WORLD'S THINNEST LENS"

Tokai's 1.76 index, described as "the world's thinnest lens", is now available to UK independents through new official UK supplier, Tokai Optical UK.

Leigh Smith, managing director of Tokai Optical UK, said: "We are thrilled to be bringing this bespoke lenswear brand to the UK independent market. We hope to help put modern, forward-thinking practices ahead of their competition with the ability to provide a unique product, which is the absolute pinnacle in high-end spectacle lens design and surfacing."

Telephone 0845 388 1542, visit www.tokaioptical.co.uk, or email info@tokaioptical.co.uk

'WEARABLE ART' EVOKES HAWAIIAN LIFESTYLE

Maui Jim has introduced its first ultra-luxury sunglasses collection, titled You Move Me, featuring colourful interpretations of Hawaiian flora and fauna by Hawaiian artist, Charlie Lyon.

Artwork for the printed acetate collection is based on a vivid painting by Lyon that is evocative of the Maui Jim lifestyle. The artwork is combined with

Maui Jim's PolarizedPlus2 lenses in two frame shapes – a rounded oversized frame (*pictured*) and a squared-off, slightly retro frame. Richard Walker, Maui Jim's director of product development, said: "This collection harnesses the beauty of Hawaii in a collectible piece of wearable art that captures the spirit of the islands."



You Move Me collection

Multiple choice answers:

Heads you win, tails you lose by Andrew Keirl

1. Which statement is correct?

- a. The back vertex power of a contact lens for a particular patient will always be equal to the patient's ocular refraction
- b. RGP contact lenses are optically useful when fitting patients with irregular corneas
- c. When fitting a patient with an RGP contact lens, a positive tear lens will be produced if the back surface of the contact lens and the front surface of the cornea have the same radius of curvature
- d. When fitting a myopic patient with a hydrogel contact lens, the back vertex power of the contact lens will be greater than the patient's spectacle refraction

b is the correct answer. RGP contact lenses are better for correcting astigmatism induced by irregular corneas than other forms of optical correction. Irregular corneas can occur in patients with keratoconus, keratoplasty and in patients who have undergone refractive surgery. When fitted with a RGP contact lens, the tear lens that is formed between the back surface of the contact lens and the front surface of the cornea 'fills in' the irregularities of the corneal surface producing a more regular refracting surface.

2. An over-refraction is performed following the fitting of a patient with an RGP trial contact lens. The result of the over-refraction is -0.50DS more than the expected value. Which statement is correct?

- a. The over-refraction indicates that the lens is too steep and a lens with a BOZR 0.10mm flatter than the trial lens should be considered
- b. The over-refraction indicates that the lens is too flat and a lens with a BOZR 0.10mm steeper than the trial lens should be considered
- c. The over-refraction indicates that the lens is too steep and a lens with a BOZR 0.20mm flatter than the trial lens should be considered
- d. Based on the over-refraction result alone, the result indicates that the fit of the contact lens is correct

a is the correct answer. The negative over-refraction indicates that a positive tear lens has been formed by the trial contact lens and using the rule of thumb that associates 0.25D of tear lens power with a radius of 0.05 the BOZR of the RGP trial contact lens is 0.10mm steeper than the cornea. A lens with a BOZR 0.10mm flatter than the trial contact lens should therefore be considered.

3. Which statement is correct?

- a. The size of the retinal image formed in an eye corrected by a contact lens will always be the same as the size of the retinal image formed in the same uncorrected eye
- b. Spectacle magnification is the ratio of the retinal image size in the corrected ametropic eye compared with the retinal image size in the standard emmetropic eye when for a given distant object
- c. The tear lens formed when an RGP contact lens is placed on an eye can affect spectacle magnification produced
- d. The power factor is of no consequence when calculating the spectacle magnification produced by contact lens/tear lens system

c is the correct answer. Even though the thicknesses of both the RGP contact lens and the tear lens are small compared to the thickness of the spectacle lens, the steep curves involved mean that the spectacle magnification produced is significant.

4. Which statement is correct?

- a. The term 'real field of view' relates to the field of view produced by an empty spectacle frame
- b. Hypermetropic subjects benefit from an increase in field of view compared to myopes, and there will be an area around the edge of a lens from which no light can enter the eye
- c. Myopic subjects suffer from a decrease in field of view compared to hypermetropes, but there will be annular area around the lens periphery where objects will be seen in diplopia
- d. A contact lens with a small overall diameter, or small diameter optic zone, can potentially affect the field of view experienced by a contact lens wearer

d is the correct answer. A contact lens with a small overall diameter or small diameter optic zone can potentially affect the field of view experienced by a contact lens wearer.

5. Which statement is correct?

- a. Compared to correction with spectacles, myopic subjects will require more accommodation and convergence when corrected with contact lenses
- b. A positive spectacle and/or contact lens correction can be helpful in cases of a near exophoria
- c. A negative spectacle and/or contact lens correction can be helpful in cases of a near esotropia
- d. Prismatic correction cannot be incorporated into contact lenses

a is the correct answer. Compared to correction with spectacles, myopic subjects will require more accommodation and convergence when corrected with contact lenses.

6. Which statement is correct?

- a. In cases of anisometropia, contact lenses reduce aniseikonia only if the anisometropia is axial in origin
- b. In cases of anisometropia, contact lenses reduce aniseikonia only if the anisometropia is refractive in origin
- c. Contact lenses reduce aniseikonia in all forms of anisometropia
- d. Refractive anisometropes are not likely to achieve their best binocular visual acuity and stereoacuity when wearing contact lenses as opposed to spectacles

c is the correct answer. In axial ametropia, spectacles are theoretically better if the anisometropia is axial as aniseikonia will be less and binocular vision will be more comfortable. The opposite is true if the anisometropia is refractive as correction with contact lenses will result in the right and left retinal images being the same size. However, this theoretical prediction was disproved by research that revealed that contact lenses reduce aniseikonia in all forms of anisometropia.

To download, print or save your CET result letter, go to www.abdo.org.uk. Log-in and go to 'View your CET record'.



Antonia Chitty explores how ABDO is successfully promoting the profession on a national level

Promoting the profession

Last year saw significant changes in the way ABDO communicates about the profession. Big leaps forward were made with collaborations with organisations like ITN and the launch of ABDO's social media campaign, EyecareFAQ. In this feature, we hear from key players driving the profession forwards as they share their views on promoting the profession.

GAINING RECOGNITION FOR SKILLS

Peter Black, president of ABDO, says: "We are working very hard to promote the profession both within the eyecare sector, to government and politicians, and to the general public. Our highest priorities remain the protection and furtherance of our regulated functions, namely ophthalmic dispensing of regulated patients – children and the registered sight impaired, and the fitting and supply of contact lenses.

"In terms of paediatric dispensing, following a raft of serious fitness to practise cases, there has been a growing appetite to supervise this regulated function properly. The ABDO CET team has worked hard to develop interesting paediatric CET workshops, which so far we have presented to the staff of the General Optical Council



Peter Black presents a paediatric workshop at the 2014 AIO conference

and to some 3,000 registrants across the length and breadth of the country via ABDO Area events, local optometric/optical events, and via the regular conferences of the large employers.

"This focus on supervision of regulated dispensing has, in itself, raised the profile of dispensing opticians within the sector such that optometrists and employers can now really see the value of working with dispensing opticians – and this is reflected in better rates of pay and record numbers of employer funded students in training.

"After 25 years of most of the sector largely ignoring most of the rules on paediatric dispensing, we now have a legal definition of a dispense, which starts at the handover of the prescription and includes not only the final collection but also subsequent adjustments and repairs, and supervision. I believe it is incumbent upon all employers and individual registrants who supervise unregistered staff carrying out regulated functions to now get their houses in order.

"ABDO is very happy to advise and provide initial CET training at the Association's expense to any employer, large or small, and any LOC or optical society who wants our help. Having provided CET for around one in six UK

registrants, it is clear that there is significant room for improvement and we look forward to rolling this programme out further in 2015.

"Going forward, I see low vision as the next area where the sector could do a better job of assisting patients. LV is truly a postcode lottery and the 6,000 of us DOs for whom LV is a core competence are a largely ignored and certainly underutilised resource when it comes to helping the two million people living with sight loss in this country. It is our aim to increase the availability of service and, with the help of others such as LOCSU and the charity sector, develop pathways that are economic for DOs to deliver in mainstream practice.

"Contact lenses, particularly illegal supply by online and other unregistered sellers, remains a difficult issue, however, we have had a few successes recently and hope to build on this going forward and assist the GOC in cleaning up contact lens supply to ensure patient safety is safeguarded.

"Finally, we will continue to work with our Optical Confederation partners to address the inequalities and inefficiencies in eyecare delivery in the UK. Every day people are going unnecessarily blind because the NHS is not very well connected

Optometrists and employers can now really see the value of working with dispensing opticians



Working with ITN Productions on the EYE TV News

and doctors and nurses do not think about eyes. For example a patient of mine, the father of a friend, went blind while recovering from a stroke in hospital, not because of the stroke but because nobody realised he needed glaucoma drops every day."

Michael Potter is ABDO head of marketing and communications. He says: "At ABDO we are building a cohesive communications strategy to develop and strengthen the profession. We've seen some exciting developments throughout 2014, and there is more to come in 2015."

MAKING HEADLINE NEWS

2014 saw the launch of EYE TV News, a series from ITN Productions and ABDO focused on the latest issues facing a vital part of the primary care landscape and how dispensing opticians are involved. ABDO and ITN joined forces, allowing ITN unique access behind the scenes across the sector. The result is EYE TV News, telling the story of the professionals striving to improve eyecare for all.

Michael Potter says: "This has been a big step forward for the profession and benefitted the sector as a whole because of the wide ranging issues addressed in the films; more than 20 topics give a good snapshot of topical issues in eyecare and eyewear. EYE TV has been well received by members and the profession, and we are very excited about taking it forward to the next level in 2015 with a completely new programme.

"Right now I'm working with ITN on the digital marketing programme, addressing topical news in broadcast programmes. We're hoping to launch a preview at 100% Optical in London next month, leading up to a film launch at Optrafair in Birmingham in April, and revealing the programme in full at the ABDO Conference in Manchester in September."

There is lots more going on in the realm of media and public relations, as Michael explains: "We have a diverse programme driving the profession forwards. As one example, the ABDO Children's Eye Protection in Football publication has been followed up with one on Cricket, and plans are in development for guidance on eye protection in Rugby for 2015. These have provided us with an opportunity to liaise with the sports professional bodies, and tie in well with the EyecareFAQ social media campaigns that have focused on children's eyecare and sports eye protection and eyewear in 2014."

ABDO has also developed campaigns to spread the word about looking after your eyes in collaboration with Fun Kids Radio, resulting in a permanent resource explaining eyes and how they work for children, all linking back to ABDO. Beyond that, working together with ABDO president, Peter Black, Michael Potter has also addressed policy makers via a number of articles highlighting key issues in eyecare in *Politics First* magazine.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

ABDO College was set up in 2001, and experienced a successful first 10 years developing the Foundation BSc (Hons), and top-up degree courses with Canterbury Christ Church University. Last year saw the highest ever student intake, with exciting plans in progress for further courses, including a Masters course.

Michael Potter says: "We can see continued healthy growth in the number of registered and qualified dispensing opticians in the UK, with almost a quarter of all DOs currently registered having qualified through ABDO College blended learning. The establishment of the degree courses has led those on the BSc Honours track to get involved with research. Every student has to do an evidence-based research project, creating a new generation of practitioners who are prepared to tread new ground, benefitting practice and patients alike and leading to a research-led profession."

Beyond the College, ABDO is investing in more CET across every region, with more



Promoting children's eyecare with Fun Kids Radio

funding for events, a coherent nationwide programme that is relevant to attendees, both dispensing opticians and optometrists, and provides excellent value for attendees and sponsors.

SHOWS AND EVENTS

ABDO has always enjoyed great support from its members, as Michael explains: "We have a lot of loyalty, and hope that over the last five to six years we have built greater affinity amongst members, but we want to strengthen the Association even more. That's why we are having an exciting part to play in a number of high profile events this year.

"Working in partnership with the Association of Optometrists, we will be offering exciting CET at 100% Optical, in the form of an interactive frame workshop covering facial measurements, repairs, and bespoke frames. We will also have manufacturing facilities there, with the new technology of 3D printing, as well as more traditional plastics manufacturing equipment from Algha.

"We know that members want to really understand the frame manufacturing process, even if it is outside their day-to-day practice. An in-depth understanding really assists at retail level. And beyond gaining CET points, this will spur attendees on to go and find out more. At 100% Optical, ABDO will be in an innovative area, purpose-designed for workshops, and used at the 100% Design exhibition, focusing on rimless skills, tips, tricks and tools of the trade and the ABDO heads. And, alongside the educational aspect, ABDO is creating a 50sq meter 'pub' at the event, the 'ABDO Arms'."

Optrafair is the next big event on the optical calendar. "Plans for this event are looking exciting," continues Michael. "ABDO is holding a major CET event, with five international speakers covering topics surrounding frames and ophthalmic lenses. There are surprise speakers and big names to be announced, on Saturday and Sunday, covering the R&D aspects of topics including Google Glass, plastic photochromics, frame manufacture, frame materials and lenses. Sunday evening will round up with a joint social event with the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians, and hopefully a premiere of one of our EYE TV films."

The buzz around ABDO's Conference in spring 2014 was amazing. There was a comprehensive CET programme available, which answered delegates' desire to learn in a convivial setting. Networking and sharing experiences is a big part of the success of the annual conference. Elaine Grisdale,



A continued presence at the major UK trade shows

ABDO head of professional services and international development, says: "Building on the success of 2014, we are developing an even more interesting programme for 2015. First of all the setting, in Manchester Central, is amazing and conducive to a successful learning experience.

"The programme will cover all the competencies and learning modalities, with new workshops and a student and supervisor zone with educational benches for FQE revision. There will be an array of critically acclaimed speakers from all over the UK to make this the must-attend event of 2015. We are also delighted to welcome the British Contact Lens Association who will be hosting a CET track on the Sunday and the AOP who will be running two days of activities. This broadening of professional interest groups will make the discussion workshops and peer review sessions even richer." The ABDO Conference is on 20 and 21 September.

Michael Potter says: "With major events in the Midlands, London, Manchester, all different, combined with a new ABDO regional events programme, all giving members the chance to attain CET, and to engage more with the Association and colleagues, 2015 is going to be a great year. I'm hoping that every member can get to at least one ABDO event, if not all of the national events, to really understand how optics is developing nationally and beyond.

"Patients have changing needs, society is changing, as is the optical market. The strategy from ABDO is to provide platforms for its members to meet with the major players and innovators in optics and to network with fellow colleagues on a regular

basis, thereby enabling them to keep up-to-date with what's going on, find out what works and what doesn't, not least by sharing their personal experiences," concludes Michael.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Promoting the profession is always going to be a work in progress, and it has to be a partnership between the professional body and the members. Here are five straightforward things that you can do to contribute.

1. Make your patients aware of your qualifications, and that of your staff. Ensure that certificates are on display and name badges show qualifications.

2. Talk about what a registered DO can do. Every time you fit a child's frame or talk to someone about low vision aids, explain how, as a registered DO, you have the skills to help.

3. Network. Spreading the word works best through word of mouth. Speak to local parents' groups and schools, join business networking events, and highlight what the registered DO can do. Use the PowerPoint presentations, downloadable from the ABDO website, to assist you.

4. Be media friendly. Make contact with your local newspapers, TV and radio stations. Let them know you are available to comment on news about eyecare and eyewear.

5. Join @EyecareFAQ on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Google Plus. Like, follow and regularly share posts that you feel offer useful information about the profession, for the public. Use the ABDO infographics resource to assist you.

With starring roles for the graduates, the 2014 ABDO Graduation and Prize Giving Ceremony was held at a beautifully stage-lit Canterbury Cathedral on the evening of Wednesday 26 November

Magical evening for young stars

Described by Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers (WCSM) Deputy Master, Chris Hunt, as a "magical evening" conjuring up images of a Hogwarts gathering of "young magicians about to graduate", this year's ceremony saw ABDO president, Peter Black, present Diplomas in Ophthalmic Dispensing, along with Diplomas in Ophthalmic Dispensing Overseas, Certificates in Contact lens Practice and Diplomas in the Assessment and Management of Low Vision and Spectacle Lens Design.

Addressing the gathering, Peter said: "For almost all graduands, whichever qualification you gain today you will look on this occasion as the culmination of the most sustained period of hard work in your life thus far. A period of study that for most of you has been combined with full-time work, and for many of you substantial family commitments too."



Peter reminded the graduands that "promoting the profession as the guardians of top quality ophthalmic dispensing, contact lens and low vision practice was dear to the heart of every member of the board of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians and I am sure dear to the hearts of all our members.

"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can all make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee. Stand proud as dispensing opticians, get involved with your profession not just your work, and don't forget that the support you have received in order to enter this profession, one day you must give back," the president added.

Taking to the podium to say a few words on behalf of the WCSM, Chris Hunt urged the "young magicians" to keep up-to-date with developments in visual science, to be open-minded in their thinking and approaches to practice, and to be proactive and brave in taking opportunities where they arise. He reminded the newly qualified that patients often feel vulnerable and anxious and so it was important to master the art of 'people skills'.

"Your qualification is not the end, but it is the beginning," Chris said, "and it gives you entry to the biggest university of all – the university of life. Make an effort to mix with your peers, and keep eyecare high on the national agenda. Don't just sell spectacles, but sell 'eyecare'. We need all the ambassadors we can get and it's fantastic to see so many of you here tonight willing to take up these challenges. Be passionate about your patients and you will be successful and happy," Chris concluded.

DIPLOMAS AND PRIZES

As the conferral of awards and prizes



commenced, the graduands lined up to accept their diplomas from the president, and receive the ceremonial handshake to leave as graduates. Mark Chandler, ABDO's head of examinations and registration, called the names of graduands present who stepped forward to the president in turn. The awards were conferred by ceremonial handshake. The awarding of prizes then followed.

- FBDO – Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing (223)
- FBDO OS – Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing Overseas – India (4)
- FBDO OS – Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing Overseas – Ireland (2)
- FBDO OS – Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing Overseas – Malaysia (79)
- FBDO CL – Certificate in Contact Lens Practice (27)
- FBDO (Hons) LVA – Diploma in the Assessment and Management of Low Vision (2)
- FBDO (Hons) SLD – Diploma in Spectacle lens Design (1)

ESSILOR PRIZE

Awarded to Victoria Brydon for the highest mark in the combined Preliminary Qualifying Examination

STEPPER PRIZE

Awarded to Joseph Smith for the highest mark in the Preliminary Qualifying Practical Examination

JW GRIEVE PRIZE

Awarded to Simon Butterfield for the highest mark in section C of the Final Qualifying Practical Examination

TONY GRIFFITHS PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE

Awarded to Nathan Smith for the highest mark in section B of the Final Practical Examination

NATIONAL EYECARE GROUP OPTINET PRIZE

Awarded to Amanda Nuckley for the best presented Pre-Qualification Portfolio in the Final Qualifying Examination

CARL ZEISS VISION PRIZE

Awarded to Thomas Webster for the top distance learning course student

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF SPECTACLE MAKERS PRIZE

Awarded to Simon Butterfield for the highest mark in the Final Qualifying Practical Examination

FMO DEREK MCLAREN MEMORIAL PRIZE

Awarded to Samantha Devereux for the highest UK student mark in the Final Qualifying Examination

SUE SOUTHGATE PRIZE

Awarded to Aimee Brown for the highest mark in section E of the Final Qualifying Practical Examination

ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS PRIZE

Awarded to Karen McGuiren for the highest mark in section A of the Final Qualifying Practical Examination

RODENSTOCK PRIZE

Awarded to Carolyn Bainbridge for the highest mark in section D of the Final Qualifying Practical Examination

FEDERATION OF (OPHTHALMIC AND DISPENSING) OPTICIANS PRIZE

Awarded to Samuel Pearce for the top day release course student

MAPO MALAYSIAN PRIZE

Awarded to Melissa Gan Puay Xian for the highest international student mark in the Final Qualifying Examination

ASSOCIATION OF CONTACT LENS MANUFACTURERS PRIZE

Awarded to Hayley Butler for the highest mark in sections 2, 3 & 4 in the Practical Examination, Certificate in Contact Lens Practice

BRITISH CONTACT LENS ASSOCIATION PRIZE

Awarded to Gary Riggs for the highest mark in the Aftercare section of the Practical Examination, Certificate in Contact Lens Practice

ALCON PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE

Awarded to Hayley Butler for the highest mark in the Practical Examination, Certificate in Contact Lens Practice

BAILEY PRIZE

Awarded to Hayley Butler for the highest full pass, at the first attempt, in the combined Theory and Practical Examinations, Certificate in Contact Lens Practice

JOHNSON & JOHNSON VISION CARE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Awarded to Marija Wilkinson for the highest aggregate mark in the Theory Examination, Certificate in Contact Lens Practice

TED WATTS MEMORIAL PRIZE

Awarded to Alison Nicholls for the highest mark in the LVA Examination

ELVIN MONTLAKE PRIZE

Awarded to Christos Xenos-Karoumbas for the highest combined mark in the LV Honours Theory Examination

TA DOYLE MEMORIAL PRIZE

Awarded to Alison Nicholls for the highest mark in an honours paper

CONTAMAC PRIZE

Awarded to Katherine Brown as the best student on the contact lens distance learning course

View the 2014 ceremony handbook on the ABDO website, www.abdo.org.uk. The 2015 Graduation and Prize Giving Ceremony will be held on Wednesday 25 November.





PRESIDENT'S DAY REPORT

Regulated dispensing and paediatrics remain ABDO's key priorities, said ABDO president, Peter Black, at his recent consultation day with members

Keeping focused on priorities

Held most recently at Aston Business School in Birmingham on 19 November, the bi-annual President's Consultation Day is the chance for members to hear the latest updates on Association activities – from CET and membership services to social media strategies and the annual conference. It also provides the Areas the chance to report back on their activities and events and plans for the six months ahead, with all members welcome to attend.

During his opening address, ABDO president, Peter Black, reported that at a recent meeting of the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO), ABDO's priority in ECOO discussions remained the development of a European qualification in optics, to supplement the existing ECOO optometry qualification. Although there had been strong disagreement at the first meeting, ECOO had agreed at the second meeting to take forward ABDO's proposals for a qualification in optics.

A separate EU consultation was currently taking place on cross-border movement of professionals, which was a matter of concern since the EU was

generally in favour of deregulation, said Peter. A pan-European qualification in optics would help to counter any risk that the profession might be deregulated.

At meetings with the General Optical Council (GOC), the president and general secretary had continued to raise the priority areas for the profession, ie. regulated functions, low vision and contact lens practice. He highlighted the evident need for paediatric CET and the necessity of reinforcing with the other optical bodies the role of the profession in children's dispensing.

The president reported on his involvement in the College of Optometrists' optical workforce survey and urged members to complete the survey form if they received it. Mention was also made of the GOC's standards review consultation. Peter encouraged members to respond individually to GOC consultations, to augment the responses from ABDO as an organisation.

AREA EVENTS PLANNING

Updating members on Area CET events for 2015, members support manager, Barry Duncan, confirmed that the CET programme listing events for 2015 in every Area was now complete (a brochure listing all Area

CET events for 2015 is circulated with this issue of *Dispensing Optics*). He also confirmed the board's intention that all ABDO CET would be provided free of charge to members in 2015. Barry stressed that the main aim of the new arrangements was to reduce the workload for Area committees by undertaking much of the events organisation centrally – but that Areas would continue to receive their annual grant.

Areas would continue to book the venues as they had the necessary local knowledge, and to organise the event on the day, reported Barry, and all events bookings would be done online. Areas would retain the opportunity to engage with local sponsors; it was not the intention to remove local contacts from Areas. Barry said that any initial problems with the changes would be dealt with as they arose.

CET UPDATE

Paula Stevens, ABDO CET coordinator, outlined current CET provision, noting that there were currently 190 approved CET elements in 10 learning modalities. Paula said she was currently piloting online interactive CET (two points) but in view of the time required to monitor this modality, it would only be offered as an extra item to delegates at Area meetings or at the conference, and would not be made generally available.

Paula also mentioned the introduction of bar code scanning for registration at large events. ABDO provided the scanners for Areas' use; they were then returned to the CET department, where the data was scanned. Although still at the pilot stage, use of the scanners had already saved a whole day of staff time. Paula suggested that Areas using the scanner for the first time should also provide a paper attendance sheet in case of technical difficulties.

EVENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

During the meeting, Elaine Grisdale, ABDO head of professional services, confirmed that ABDO's 2015 Conference would take place on 20 and 21 September at the Manchester Central Convention Centre. She



Catching up with members at one of last year's consultation days



Manchester Central – venue for this year's ABDO Conference

assured attendees that the programme would provide interesting content, high calibre speakers, and cover all competencies and modalities. She noted that the British Contact Lens Association would be in attendance at the conference on one day and the Association of Optometrists on two days. This would be beneficial to exhibitors,

as the conference would attract optometrists as well as dispensing opticians, she said.

Substantial discounts had been secured on the spaces offered and no charge would be made for the student area. Delegates would be required to walk through the exhibition area to reach lectures, which would be 'silent', ie. delegates would wear earphones to avoid external noise disturbance. Lectures and workshops would take place at different times, with no overlap, and Events Exchange would again be organising the conference. Elaine also confirmed that ABDO would be involved at both 100% Optical in February and Optrafair in April.

During a discussion on the Association's social media activities, Antonia Chitty urged members to re-tweet something every day from the 'Eyecare FAQ' Twitter account to spread the messages, and to 'like' and share Facebook messages, since the more people

who shared, the more effective the network would become. Antonia emphasised that these social media tools were to be used to improve eyesight and eyecare.

In closing the meeting Peter Black highlighted the new CET programme and arrangements, and reiterated the aim of reducing the administrative burden for Areas. He expressed his gratitude to Areas for all their work and stressed the importance of their role; their local knowledge and involvement were invaluable. Regulated dispensing and paediatrics would remain ABDO's priorities, said the president, adding that it was encouraging that some Areas were already involved in local optical committees.

The minutes of the President's Consultation Day, including reports from the Areas, can be downloaded from the members' area of the ABDO website, www.abdo.org.uk

Polycarbonate and Trivex materials are safer and stronger than regular plastic lenses

MAKING EYECARE CLEARER

Members urged to support ABDO's social media activities

GLAUCOMA GENE HUNT INITIATED

Researchers at the University of Liverpool are starting a large-scale hunt for some of the genes behind glaucoma.

A research grant co-funded by Fight for Sight and the International Glaucoma Association (IGA) has been awarded to Professor Colin Willoughby and co-investigator Dr Carl Sheridan, who will aim to uncover what role microRNAs play in regulating the eye's drainage system.

"We plan to assess the microRNA genes in tissue from patients undergoing surgery for glaucoma and compare this with normal trabecular meshwork tissue," explained Willoughby, Professor of Ophthalmology and Honorary Consultant Ophthalmologist at the University of Liverpool. "We will use the latest microarray technologies to assess over 2,000 microRNAs in a global fashion to understand which microRNAs are linked with glaucoma. From this list we will validate the best candidates and use computer models to identify the genes and proteins they control."

Russell Young, IGA CEO, added: "It is exactly this type of research that can 'open doors' and ultimately help improve the future management of glaucoma patients or potentially lead to a cure."

Results from the project should give significant insight into some of the key molecules involved in glaucoma. They could also help advance the emerging field of microRNA therapeutics, in which microRNA mimics or blockers against specific targets could be developed to lower eye pressure as new treatments for glaucoma.



Taking place at London's ExCel on 7-9 February, the second 100% Optical trade event will see ABDO working closely with the organisers, Media 10, and the Association of Optometrists to provide added value events for dispensing opticians – including a look at the 'lost art' of frame making and adjustments.

The ABDO Frame Workshop will run throughout the three days, featuring a 'Tricks and tools of the trade' with Wally Berwick from Algha Works looking into techniques such as adjustments/frame fitting, shortening and lengthening sides, bumping bridges and re-pinning to name just a few. Algha Works, famous for producing eyewear to the stars, including Johnny Depp, Eric Clapton and Rihanna, and the UK's longest running frame maker, will guide visitors through long lost skills and techniques.

Giving it 100%

ABDO members will find more in store at 100% Optical this year – with workshops, seminars and the open-all-hours 'ABDO Arms'



A chance to catch up with colleagues

Using a 3D printer, visitors will also be able to watch the designing and printing of frames to see just how this technology has evolved and how it may be used in practice in the future. 100% Optical will be working with London based designers Mette, who have created a 'Maker Carousel' concept, a space that can allow several groups to be engaged in making frames with different materials on the show floor, in an open environment.

ABDO will also be providing a 'Paediatric spectacle fitting skills' workshop (worth three CET points) with ABDO members' support manager, Barry Duncan, and Paula Stevens and Joanne Abbott from ABDO's CET department. This session will feature ABDO's anatomically correct models of children's heads, based on a one-year old, a three-year old, a five-year-old with Down's syndrome characteristics and an eight/nine-year old child. Time will be spent considering facial dimensions, spectacle prescription, fitting triangle and how each impacts on decision making by the practitioner. ABDO president, Peter Black, will be hosting a Silhouette workshop looking at rimless aesthetics and design.

"We have a truly inspiring line-up of events for members at 100% Optical this year," said Elaine Grisdale, ABDO head of professional services and international development. "And if not propping up the bar at the ABDO Arms in between the workshops, visitors will be able to come along and speak to the experts for advice on practical dispensing issues. Personally, I'm particularly excited to hear from Dave Cox, who makes the frames for Dame Edna, talking about 'Frames for films' on the Monday at 1pm." Elaine will also be giving a talk, entitled 'Dare to be different: creating opportunities with bespoke eyewear' on Sunday 8 February (worth one CET point).

HUBS OF INTEREST AND ACTIVITY

The entire seminar programme this year will offer more than 100 CET points. A key draw for CLOs will be Australian Associate Professor Eric Papas, a renowned expert on contact lenses, and executive director at the Brien Holden Vision Institute and Vision Co-operative Research Centre. In addition to being one of the inventors of silicone hydrogels and the discoverer of the link between limbal hyperaemia and oxygen, Professor Papas has worked with all major companies in the contact lens field and made significant contributions to the development of several contact lens



Get an insight into 3D frame printing

visual discomfort; Sanjay G. Asrani from the USA on glaucoma; and Peter Karvik from Sweden on dry eye.

In addition to the main stage, specialised seminars will also take place in each area of the event. A highlight of the Business Hub will be a presentation by Nick Atkins entitled, 'Patient loyalty's not good enough: creating patient ambassadors'. Nick will explore how to retain patients in order to generate a return on that initial investment, with initiatives to start generating referrals on purpose and moving patients from simply being loyal to becoming 'card carrying' ambassadors.

British eyewear designer, Jason Kirk, will be in the Fashion Hub with his presentation, 'Made in England: British optical manufacture: past, present and future'. Jason will cover the production and availability of British made frames from the 1920s to the present day, looking at how the British spectacle manufacturing industry has changed over a century and how this has impacted choice and

availability for dispensing in practice today. "This is relevant to practitioners today who need to source specialist frames for individual patients or who may want to offer a wider choice to patients when dispensing to certain groups and demographics," Jason said.

In the Lens Hub, dispensing optician Cilla Hubbard will present, 'Big, bright and bold' a low vision discussion workshop. This round table discussion will evaluate the use, and consider the prescribing, of a broad selection of simple low vision equipment, including hand magnifiers, stand magnifiers and simple spectacle mounted solutions. Participants will have the opportunity to try each product in turn and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each and discover methods of training patients on how to get the best use from their device.

There will be plenty of other workshops and lectures of interest including ones on children's sight tests, smart glasses, prescription lenses in wrap frames plus a host of marketing and business lectures on topics such as how to reduce your tax bill and social media communications. With spaces filling up fast on the educational programme, members are urged to book their places online at the earliest opportunity, at www.100percentoptical.com

A CALL TO THE ARMS

The all-new ABDO Arms will be a 50sq metre 'pub' area where ABDO members will be able to network and socialise and enjoy special discounts – and sample award-winning beer from the Meantime Brewing Company. ABDO College and ABDO College



Artist's impression of the Mette Maker Carousel

Bookshop will also be exhibiting at stand L72; Jill Kemp and her College team will be on hand to discuss courses, and all the latest bookshop texts and tomes will be available to buy.

Michael Potter, ABDO's head of marketing and communications, said: "We have every confidence that our partnership with 100% Optical will provide members with an opportunity to refresh and enhance their skills, find out what's new in the exhibition, network with their fellow professionals, have fun, and gain a few CET points while they are there.

"Our activity at 100% is just one part of a number of exciting initiatives that ABDO has planned for 2015 with a view to attaining greater engagement with members. It will also provide a new platform for ABDO to voice its aims and to outline the vital role it plays within the optical sector," Michael added.

Nathan Garnett, event director for 100% Optical, commented: "We are delighted to be working with ABDO as we want to deliver an event that is designed specifically for the professional, by the profession. It is really exciting to be working with ABDO on a feature like the Frame Workshop, as we are keen to deliver something unique and of real value to ABDO members. We are also looking forward to seeing as many ABDO members as possible in the ABDO Arms for drink!"



How the ABDO Arms will look

Register and book at
www.100percentoptical.com

Nick Howard reports on the inaugural BCLA Pioneers & Visionaries Conference in London

Challenges on the frontline

A warmish November morning, a week after Remembrance Sunday, and I found myself reflecting on the centenary of the start of the First World War. Slightly disappointed that the inspiring sight of the ocean of poppies at the Tower of London had been removed, resulting in a 'sea of mud' resembling a Flanders battlefield, my destination was the inaugural British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) Pioneers & Visionaries Conference – a natural evolution from the annual Pioneers Conference – for the chance to hear about some new and emerging 'frontline' battles.

The Royal Society of Physicians proved a splendid venue and was relatively easy to find off Marylebone Road (although I still managed to take the wrong turn out of Baker Street tube station). Our BCLA commander in chief, Cheryl Donnelly, led admirably from the front, with historian and author Tim Bowden following closely behind paying thoughtful respects to those who had given so much to the industry, but who had sadly passed away in the intervening year. This year's roll call included past BCLA presidents, Keith Edwards and Dr Bill Sammons, Bill Twemlow, Alan Simons, Daniel Klaff, John Clenton, and Brian Mulcahy.

BATTLE PLANS ARE DRAWN

Our first major rearguard and defensive



Networking and exhibition at the Royal College of Physicians

action came from Alistair Bridge of the General Optical Council (GOC) who declared that tackling illegal contact lens practice and supply was for the most part unsustainable as UK companies tended to desert to European destinations (generally unspecified) as soon as the GOC fired an early warning shot. "We can always open up a friendly approach though...and talk things through" suggested Bridge, as ABDO president, Peter Black, had recently succeeded in doing with online deals merchant, Groupon, when they inadvertently (and illegally) advertised contact lenses for sale.

If Bridge has the political skills to build bridges between the leaders of our various professional bodies and secure a foothold in this messy, muddy legal arena, then the troops on the modern day frontiers, who are fighting day upon day with an elusive, unseen and often hostile internet enemy, perhaps stand a chance to compete and bare their teeth on a level playing field.

Regrouping and fighting back, war was well and truly declared against myopia and its ravaging effects right across the world. The new 'battle plans' are being well and truly established and this is one skirmish, which we are absolutely going to win. Myopia is a quiet, insidious invader but the world has truly woken up to the concept of its containment and management.

In the UK, we have the weapons, the armoury, the infantry (ourselves) and, ultimately, we shall have the quality leadership of experts such as Dr Nicola Logan from Aston University, who collaborates with our many friends and allies on a truly global scale. For those who have not yet woken up to the new dawn of effective myopia management, now is possibly the time to rub the sleep from the eyes and take great awareness of the global alliances being formed and plan new, realistic strategies.

As Dr Logan expounded, this year will see the introduction of commercial lenses for myopia control. Dr Logan said there were promising interventions but that the



Troops assembled for the BCLA Pioneers & Visionaries Conference

potential 'rebound effect' of accelerating axial growth, and knowing when to stop treatment, remained two key challenges. We were all duly invited to attend the 2015 BCLA Myopia Day on 29 May at the ACC Liverpool to hear more about the latest research and in-practice strategies for myopia control and management.

OLD ENEMIES, NEW STRATEGIES

Whilst on the theme of a counter attack, the very youthful captain Matthew Carter of Moorfields Eye Hospital was promptly able to give a summary of action already in the field against the old enemy, keratoconus. This unpleasant and cruel bandit, which may have a devastating effect on young lives, has had a shock for which it was largely unprepared.

Halted in its rampaging tracks, the corneal disease has come across some hefty defensive action whereby 90 per cent of patients have proven stable within 12 months of collagen cross-linking treatment. This procedure is being carried out not only at the famous London hospital, but at other centres of NHS excellence including Liverpool and Leeds. Surely it's only a matter of time before additional fortresses and bastions of strength are built across this nation.

The equally youthful Mrs Carter, Sophie Taylor-West, then quizzically asked the audience: "And how many of you are under 30 years old?" This was a timely reminder that pioneers and visionaries who push back boundaries and frontiers do not necessarily



Matthew Carter of Moorfields Eye Hospital



Sophie Taylor-West dispels some myths



Doodlebug buster, Sarah Farrant

need to be shading the grey side of 50. Indeed, Portuguese ophthalmologist Antonio Placido invented the corneal topographer at the age of 32, and the illustrious German Adolf Fick himself was a youthful 36 years old when he first called, "Halt who goes there?" to a keratoconic eye with the feeble defence of a blown glass shell.

Dispelling the myth that specialist contact lens fitting is a 'dying art' only to be carried out in a hospital, Ms West also challenged the ugly, vulgar concept of money, pushing aside the suggestion that patients would not pay for specialist services. "They will", she declared. Although slightly concerned about the number of young recruits amongst the ranks, there was certainly recognition of the tremendous opportunities ahead for those prepared to join the regiment.

MARCH OF THE MITES AND BUGS

Next was an assault on the 'mighty mites' as Sarah Farrant displayed and discussed this belligerent doodlebug in all its blephary gore. But thankfully this self-confessed 'bug buster' has the better of the 'fat worm', which has met its match in the unlikely form of alcohol or tea tree oil. The infected and affected eyelid certainly was another sea of mud under 40x mag on the slit lamp, but Sarah's accurate aim, steady hand and able sniping abilities were admirable at close range at the exploding aggressor. It may not have a backside to kick but it certainly has teeth – and is apparently vigorously and cheekily chomping away at sebum and meibum, then partying on my

follicles whilst I'm asleep.

With 20 per cent of 20-year-olds and 100 per cent of 70-year-olds hosting the mite, I guessed my own involuntary odds of supporting this creature were around the 50 per cent mark. We do, however, have a somewhat aggressive weapon for demolishing their trenches and habitat, so our problem now may be in how to dispose of the creatures once captured. "Deep fried in batter" was a useful suggestion from the BCLA president elect.

Just when we were beginning to rest a little easier in our beds along came Dr Nicole Carnt on a brief retreat telling us that we couldn't be complacent with another conniving doodlebug called Acanthamoeba, which drops in unexpectedly and without warning, with the alarming ally of tap water (avoiding tap water would reduce Acanthameoba keratitis incidence by 90 per cent declared Dr Carnt).

She reminded us that no matter how clever we think we are at educating our patient base, we can't assume anything. Certainly the handbag contents of 'contact lens patient Shona', who joined Dr Carnt on stage for some amusing role play, displayed a worrying arsenal of evil weaponry to assist the mutating, sadistic amoeba on its potential path of destruction. A three-pronged attack of compliance, education and communication may prove our only defence.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE TRENCH

Some refreshment, food and fabulous discussions in the exhibition hall packed with sponsors, many of whom had their five minute moments of glory in the

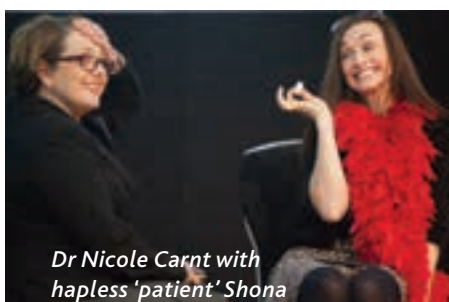
amphitheatre, was followed by Professor Harminder Dua delivering in true Churchillian fashion the 2014 Pioneers Lecture, 'The novel pre-Descemet's layer (Dua's layer): its discovery, characterisation, clinical implications and surgical applications'. Professor Dua is testimony to the fact that whatever the enemy throws at us, we keep finding new, inventive and ingenious ways of getting our sick and wounded back out there to fight another day.

The consummate ease with which the talented and experienced surgeon spoke and demonstrated new techniques and advancements in corneal surgery may not have been for the faint hearted, but was nonetheless a superb example of a pioneer, a visionary, prepared to think and work 'outside the box'. Professor Dua has been able to break out of long entrenched practices and create new, more effective and ultimately, more successful and comfortable procedures. "The anatomy of the human cornea has been redefined," he told us, and patients undergoing corneal grafts and transplants could look forward to a brighter future.

Demobbing and fond farewells to a battalion, which was a 'who's who' of contact lenses, following BCLA president Susan Bowers' closing address and award presentation to the fabulous Professor Dua, it was time to plough my way through the darkness of the underground to Euston station. I decided, however, against the subterranean route in order to taste the freedom of fresh air and the lively, vibrant street. I had a long way to go and the sun had already gone down, but in the morning I would certainly remember this day and, of course, my pals.

NICK HOWARD FBDO Hons CL, FBCLA, is a speciality contact lens practitioner at Benjamin Opticians, Skipton.

Photographs from the event can be viewed on the BCLA Facebook page. For the latest information about BCLA events, visit www.bcla.org.uk



Dr Nicole Carnt with hapless 'patient' Shona



2014 BCLA Pioneers Lecturer, Professor Harminder Dua



CHERYL DONNELLY

writes about what a great profession we are working within

Notes on a DO's journey

Sitting in Canterbury Cathedral, having the privilege of attending the 2014 ABDO Graduation and Prize Giving Ceremony and presenting the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) Prize to Gary Riggs for achieving the highest mark in the Aftercare Section of the Practical Examination, Certificate in Contact Lens Practice, I felt very proud to be part of our profession. More specifically, to be part of our community of opticians, whether they choose the contact lens, LVA or commercial route.

It's so heartening to see so many opportunities for dispensing opticians these days, not just in practice but in the wider optical arena and even nationally as we become more influential alongside our professional colleagues. By coincidence, the Deputy Master of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers, Chris Hunt, pointed out this exact same sentiment to the graduands present as they prepared to embark on their careers. He stressed the great choice they had made, and I am quite jealous of the opportunities that lie ahead of them. Grab them with both hands, I say.

Watching the graduands come forward for their official handshakes with the ABDO president, I found myself reflecting on my career and wondering if I would have done anything differently. I came to conclusion that I wouldn't have. I did have a place to study optometry at Aston University (admittedly many years ago), but I chose to continue as a DO as I saw many more opportunities for me at that time. Those opportunities did come to fruition and I have been very fortunate with the path that my career has taken me down so far.

I believe that when it comes to career choices, having the passion to do the best we can for our patients can only lead to success. Of course, the support of the professional bodies and industry, whether it's with practical training, continuing education or simply by providing the best products for the patient and tools for the practice, is paramount. We all have the same values after all.

Looking back, my career began in the second ever Boots Opticians to open. I started out as a receptionist and was introduced to a brand new world – having spent a couple of years beforehand as a Saturday girl selling pens, scientific calculators and ZX 81 Spectrum computers and Dragons (those aged under 40 will probably have no idea what I'm talking about!) As I entered the world of optics, I quickly realised that I wanted to be a DO – encouraged by both the optometrist and the two DOs I worked with. And so it began...

STRIVING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Completing my training within a small group, I learnt quickly and soon found out that contact lenses were 'my thing', so I embarked on the contact lens course and loved it. I wanted to make a difference to patients' vision correction options and I loved the clinical element. Armed with both my dispensing and contact lens qualifications, I had a fabulous time doing all the things I wanted to do: teaching and training and with a great interest in the detail of the products.

I was able to work at Aston University as a clinical demonstrator in the dispensing clinics, and then a few years later in the final year contact lens clinics, which I thoroughly enjoyed and still miss now.

I embarked on the distance learning course to ensure that I could be a distance learning tutor for the contact lens course, which led me to working at Anglia Ruskin University running the contact lens module.

This was all done whilst working for a multiple as their contact lens product and training manager, where all my ambitions were rolled into one perfect job. I was involved with training pre-regs and trainee CLOs and responsible for the contact lens product prescribed by the eyecare practitioners (ECPs). After several years, industry called, and I spent the next 13 years within Bausch + Lomb, finally as clinical affairs director for Europe, Middle East and Africa.

It was a great place to learn so many skills and be part of the next innovation to make our patients' lives easier in all aspects of vision care. The company's aim was to ultimately enable contact lens wearers to have a longer, more healthy, more comfortable wearing experience and to grow the market by introducing products to make a new wearer realise that this vision correction option is a possibility for them.

ON A NEW MISSION

As I continue on my journey through optics, I feel that the challenge remains to encourage ECPs to discuss all vision correction options during their eye examination, or during the handover to the DO, including contact lenses. This may be a contentious point but surely it should be a given. Sadly, it is not, and I feel this is now my new mission.

There have been many studies done, both amongst ECPs and consumers, and the results generally reveal the same dichotomy: the patient wants the ECP to discuss contact lenses and when they don't, assume that they are not

suitable; the ECP says they did mention lenses, so assume the patient doesn't want them. The answer is surely to simply mention the option to try contact lenses to every patient with an appropriate prescription. And perhaps instead of saying 'spectacle prescription' after the eye examination, how about just saying 'prescription'?

I am hoping that in my position as CEO of the BCCLA, all of the career choices I have made will enable me to take the Association to the next stage in its history. Creating an environment to promote this life-enhancing vision correction, supporting ECPs in delivering the best possible care to their contact lens patients, and providing a forum for the industry to showcase all of their fabulous innovations – all driving towards one goal: an enhanced, healthy, comfortable contact lens wearing experience.

2015 will see the 39th clinical conference and exhibition in Liverpool, where meeting these challenges will be my aim. The BCCLA should be *the* place to go for all contact lens and anterior eye education and practice support. We still have a way to go to hold that accolade,

but the journey begins now. If you have not tried the BCCLA clinical conference before, this year *must* be the year you do. We'll be holding a dedicated myopia management day on the opening Friday – just one of the new additions to the programme to ensure delegates are at the leading edge of all that's new.

As a DO, I am ensuring the conference programme is interesting to you all. Just try it – I know you will have a fabulous time. Indeed, we have a special offer for ABDO members: if you download the new BCCLA app from the App Store or Google Play, you can claim £50 off the full delegate package [see news page 12 for details].

Thank you for sticking with my reflections on my career. What a great profession we are working within. I am very proud to be a dispensing optician and contact lens optician, and have made many friends and colleagues along the way. I hope to make many more as I continue on my journey.

Cheryl Donnelly FBDO (CL) is chief executive of the British Contact Lens Association.

Frequently asked questions

answered by Kim Devlin FBDO (Hons) CL

WHEN IS A READY READER NOT A READY READER?

This isn't a riddle from a leftover Christmas cracker but a genuine query that got me thinking...

The member had asked if he might supply a patient with 'ready readers' he'd glazed himself. The background was that he had in stock a supply of good quality ready readers but not the required power. The patient had requested +2 but he had run out of that power, having only +1.50 or +2.50 in the chosen design. He had in-house glazing and a supply of +2 blanks; could he re-glaze a pair of ready readers with the requested power?

At first I thought, "Why would you want to?", but our member went on to explain that this patient was a local businessman whom he wished to impress with the service on offer in his practice. To make him wait even a few days for more stock to arrive wouldn't look good, but making up a pair there and then would be a gesture he'd remember.

Now, anyone may supply ready readers, registered optician or not, as long as certain rules are obeyed. The spectacles must be single vision, of equal positive power, and no more than 5D. They must also be solely for the correction of presbyopia. We agreed that this situation ticked all the boxes: the patient was already wearing +2 reading spectacles so there was no question of a sight test being

conducted; he'd had a recent eye examination and was more than happy to wait a little while for a bespoke service.

The frames were of sufficient quality to withstand re-glazing (not all are that well-made). I agreed that he was behaving in a professional way – putting the welfare of the patient before all other considerations. It would be nice to think that such effort was rewarded, and I guess time will tell.

There was another query on a similar subject soon after this one. On this occasion, I was asked if a registered DO may sell surplus stock of ready readers online. Again I asked myself, "Why would you want to?" The background to this story was that our member had made the decision that stocking ready readers in his practice was more trouble than it was worth, and he wished to dispose of a dozen or so pairs but had concerns that such a sale would be unprofessional.

We discussed the pros and cons for a little while before coming to the conclusion that the amount of money at stake wasn't worth the worry that someone might be offended or, indeed, endangered by such a sale. At my suggestion, the surplus stock could be donated to Vision Aid Overseas where it would be very gratefully received and no-one could accuse anyone of unprofessional conduct.

These examples, I believe, show the genuine concerns of ABDO members to do the right thing in a complex and demanding marketplace.

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

ABDO CET Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR REQUIRED FOR ABDO CET DEPARTMENT

Based in the Colchester office, the position would be for Tuesday to Friday mornings (hours by arrangement)

The applicant must be competent with Microsoft Office software and Adobe Acrobat, and must be familiar with working with databases

Please send a CV with covering letter **by post** to Paula Stevens, ABDO CET
5 Kingsford Business Centre, Layer Road
Kingsford, Colchester CO2 0HT

For further details telephone
01206 734155

abdo|CET

Optician Index - October 2014 summary

- Total practice turnover one per cent lower than last October at 165 Index points
- Total number of eye examinations three per cent higher than last month at 100 Index points, which is the same figure as October 2013
- Practices in the lower turnover group have a higher average dispensing rate than those with higher revenue during October
- Sample average total dispensing one per cent higher than last month at 90 Index points but annual growth is marginally negative
- Sales volume of single vision lenses fell by four per cent from last month to 60 Index points
- Value of solutions sold 14 per cent higher than October last year at 87 Index points

The full August 2014 Optician Index was published in the 28 November issue of *Optician*

Optician BUSINESS BENCHMARKS

SUMMER EXAM REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 31 JANUARY

Those planning to sit the summer 2015 practical examinations for the Certificate in Contact Lens Practice should note that the closing date for registering supervisors and practices for provisional approval is 31 January.

Candidates wishing to sit the contact lens practical examination this summer must have, at the time of their examination application and throughout the period up to and including their practical examination, a supervisor and practical experience practice on the current ABDO approved register – or have been given provisional approval following completion of a supervisor/practice registration application form.

Completed registration application forms relevant to the summer 2015 sitting must reach the ABDO offices in Kent by 31 January. Registration documents are available upon request from the Examinations and Registration Department on 01227 732921/732924 or email examinations@abdo.org.uk

WHAT'S NEW IN EYECARE FAQ

Get involved with EyecareFAQ, ABDO's campaign to help consumers learn more about looking after their eyes, and the role of the registered dispensing optician.

You can find eyecare FAQ at:

- www.facebook.com/eyecarefaq
- www.twitter.com/eyecarefaq
- plus.google.com/+eyecarefaq
- Or visit the website, www.abdo.org.uk/information-for-the-public/eyecarefaq/

New this month on Eyecare FAQ, you'll find an infographic to share on protective eyewear. On the Facebook page, check out our range of postcard sized images to share, with tips all about sport and eyewear. Do use any of the FAQ answers and images on your own blog or website and share via social media.

Please follow, like and share these useful resources on your own social media channels, to help the public learn about eyecare and promote the role of the registered dispensing optician.



A unique career opportunity in dispensing optics

Working in partnership, ABDO College and Canterbury Christ Church University are proud to offer a comprehensive blended learning course for prospective dispensing opticians:

- The only blended learning degree course in ophthalmic dispensing available in the UK
- Leads to a BSc (Hons) degree and the registerable FBDO qualification
- A successful partnership committed to the furtherance of dispensing optics
- Equips students with the ability to problem-solve within the practice, benefiting both students and their employers
- A proven track record of success through consistently high theory and practical examination results
- Establishes a platform to build further career advancement

Foundation Degree/BSc (Hons) in Ophthalmic Dispensing

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

Course features

- Combines academic and work-based learning
- 32 weekly distance learning units in each academic year
- Four weeks block release at Godmersham in each academic year
- Access to supplementary web-based interactive tutorial presentations
- Block release accommodation can be provided
- Year 1 courses will commence in September 2015

Entry requirements

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



KEEPING EXCELLENCE IN YOUR SIGHTS

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