

# ABDO College newsletter

Keeping excellence in your sights

April 2009 | Issue 1

## An introduction from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Welcome to this first issue of the ABDO College newsletter. We hope this new publication will keep you regularly informed of our hopes, aspirations and activities. It will also contain features on the people and events that contribute towards the College's continued growth and success.

As I am sure you may already know, last year saw ABDO College introduce the Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing course, this being the first of its kind. It is a milestone that we are extremely proud of and we are now working hard towards the next step in achieving final validation for the full BSc (Hons) degree.

ABDO College is unique in that it is the only college that specialises in ophthalmic dispensing. It is also one of its kind, in respect to its ophthalmic dispensing courses, in only dealing with distance learning students. The original motivation behind setting up ABDO College was to ensure that students received the best possible education and support to produce top quality dispensing opticians. The reputation of ABDO was suffering towards the end of the last century because the existing colleges were, at that time, tending to treat distance learning students as the poor relations. There was no consistency of lecturers; if a staff member was absent, say for illness, it was the distance learning block release students who went

without. The Association was getting so many complaints from employers who could clearly see their

employees were not getting the best of attention, hence a new alternative was essential.

So it was that ABDO College was born, a huge step for ABDO and one which cost a great deal of professional dedication, time, money and much heartache!

### Has it been worth it?

There have been some, albeit only a few, who have criticised the cost to ABDO members; there are also some who feel the site of the College is not ideal (a perception that a visit to the Godmersham location normally immediately dispels); however there is no escaping the outstanding results. Our students performance is second



to none! The graduates of the College have a enormous affection and regard for the College, its staff and what it represents – indeed I am delighted that we now have two graduates of the College to sit with us on the Board of Trustees. Employers are now consistently pleased with the quality of the education of their employees, the end result of all our efforts!

Financially the College (which is a separate registered charity) is now effectively self-sufficient and is starting to get into the black, no longer looking for the support of ABDO we hope, in the near future, to commence paying back the monies that were originally invested.

I firmly believe that investment was essential to ensure the long term future of the dispensing profession was secure, something we can all celebrate in these uncertain times. We've come a long way since the first ABDO College courses commenced back in September 2001, so yes it has been well worth it.

**Colin Lee** FBDO  
Chairman  
ABDO College Board of Trustees

## Official ABDO College Sponsors

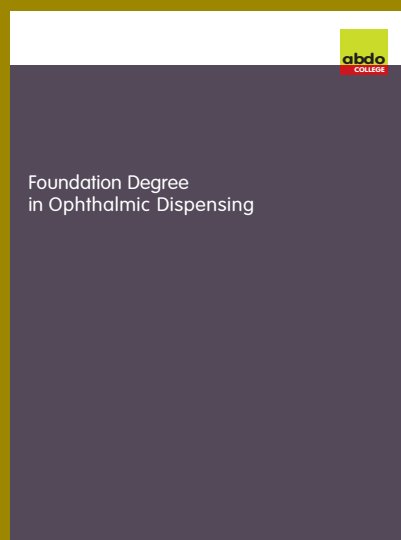
The ABDO Board of Trustees and staff would like to thank its official sponsors for their generous and continued support:

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Transitions Optical  
The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers

For further information on ABDO College sponsorship opportunities contact Michael R Potter FBDO on 01227 738 829 or email: [mpotter@abdo.org.uk](mailto:mpotter@abdo.org.uk)

## New Information Pack

# Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing



One of the major achievements of ABDO College last year was the successful establishment of the Foundation Degree course in Ophthalmic Dispensing. Applications are now being taken for the next first year intake for the course that will commence in September 2009.

To outline the details of the course a new information pack has been produced and is now available upon request. The pack contains everything that potential students and their employers need to know, with clear and easy to follow information regarding the training progression options and application procedure. An additional guideline checklist, the Foundation Degree course application form, as well as the required ABDO membership application and GOC registration forms are also included.

As all places on last year's course were fully taken within a few weeks, we strongly recommend that applications are made as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment. To obtain the information pack and for further assistance please call the ABDO College Distance Learning Institute (DLI) at ABDO College on 01227 733 901 or email [dli@abdo.org.uk](mailto:dli@abdo.org.uk).

# A warm welcome from the Principal's desk at Godmersham

As I compose this article for the first ever issue of the ABDO College newsletter and gaze across the parkland outside my office window, the outlook is now clear of snow and the first signs of spring are showing through; snowdrops are a white carpet over areas of the grounds and daffodils are just beginning to poke their heads out of the soil.

It is a good time to catch my breath and consider the past eight years of developing the dispensing course and to remember all the individual students who have studied here at ABDO College. They have not only become friends to my staff and me, but their contribution has been vital to the success of the College. With their help and input, my staff and I have been able to develop an expanding range of choice both in the content and delivery of our teaching. With a growing understanding of the needs for distance learning students we have been able to focus specifically on the kind of support they need to help them not just achieve academic success, but equip them for a lifelong career in their chosen profession.

The whole team at Godmersham are focused on giving our students the background, not only in clinical and dispensing skills, but how to communicate those skills to their

patients and customers on the High Street. This, I believe, is the very essence of vocational education and training and this, along with dedicated support from their employers, will produce excellent results, both for the commercial world of work and in delivering first class primary eye care in their practices.

My team and I know that expertise and knowledge well communicated is of the highest value in practise and we have exciting news on how that is developing in order to give even more choice in the future. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter all our staff are very excited about the chance of delivering a BSc (Hons) in ophthalmic dispensing. At last, recognition for all the hard work and depth of study undertaken by our students. We are hopeful of having ex-students back for the opportunity to take their diploma on to a full degree in the near future. I even plan to tackle it myself!

Gillian, Sally, Gill, Sue and I along with all the staff who support the course are justifiably proud of our students; in their results in the final professional examinations, in their commitment to our profession and even in bringing the Essilor Challenge cup back to Godmersham! It delights me to see our ex-students returning to attain advanced qualifications with us as well as becoming tutors, examiners and Trustees. We have come a long way since 2001!

So as the bleating of the first lambs of spring drift through the air it's back to work on a full agenda with real challenges, but that's what spring is all about, new life – and more prismatic effects, Panum's fusional areas and timetables!

## **Jo Underwood**

MSc FBDO (Hons) CL (Hons) SLD PGCE  
Principal



# New faces on the Board of Trustees

Matt Trusty and Gillian Twynning are the newest Trustees of ABDO College. Both Matt and Gillian have graduated from the College in the past four years and have quickly become involved in busy careers that carry much responsibility. Their appointments ensure a voice to represent the interests of the younger membership.

## GILLIAN TWYNING FBDO

Gillian Twynning FBDO graduated at Canterbury in October 2005 and was appointed to the Board of Trustees in September 2008. Gillian entered optics in 1992, aged 18, as a junior receptionist/optical assistant at Neil Cuthbert

Optician, an independent optometrist in Dundee. After two years, she moved to the Dundee branch of Dollond and Aitchison as



an optical assistant. She says, "I became interested in the dispensing side of optics, when I started with D&A. My then manager John Muir engaged my interest and was a fantastic teacher." However, the right opportunity to embark on the Dispensing Course didn't present itself until 1999, when she took up the position of optical assistant for Pinders Optometrist in Southwell, Nottinghamshire. Pinders offered to sponsor Gillian and to support her through the course.

Gillian found her time as a student very positive and she particularly valued the encouragement from the College staff. She says, "There was help and support from everyone at Godmersham

but the teaching staff, in particular, went above and beyond the call of duty to help any student who asked – and many who didn't. The standard of teaching was consistently high and I found the encouragement of the lecturers invaluable. Without their dedication I wouldn't have got through the course."

Since qualifying, Gillian has worked as a full-time dispenser for the same independent optician. She has also become a correspondence tutor for SMC and a probationary practical examiner for ABDO. In addition to this, she sits on the Journal Advisory Committee and has had two articles published in *Dispensing Optics*.

When Gillian spotted the advertisement in *Dispensing Optics* for College Trustees, she immediately applied and an interview was arranged with Chairman of Trustees Colin Lee and the then ABDO President Kevin Milsom. She explains, "The role of a Trustee is to act in the best interests of the College, and to help promote it. As a member of ABDO and a qualified DO, I feel the training a student DO receives should be standardised to the same level and quality and I believe

that ABDO College ticks this box. As DOs, we should all strive to communicate this strength; the more evidence we can provide regarding the quality of our training, the more we can effectively promote our role in the optical industry.

## MATT TRUSTY FBDO

Matt Trusty FBDO, who qualified as a dispensing optician in January 2006, is the latest appointment to the Board of Trustees, replacing John Pugh. Before studying to become a dispensing optician, Matt began his working life as a work experience student at the Margate branch of Specsavers. He then moved to Dover to begin his training.

One of the key advantages of the profession of dispensing optics is that it offers a diverse working life with many different possibilities for career pathways. Matt was quick to spot this benefit. He says, "I liked the idea of a varied career where I could spend time helping people and working on the shop floor, as well as in the lab and also with more administrative management work."

**Gillian and Matt join the current ABDO College Board of Trustees who are: Colin Lee (chairman), Duncan Counter, Barry Duncan, Kevin Gutsell, Kevin Milsom, Huntly Taylor and Sir Anthony Garrett (secretary).**

# Bierley join the list of official sponsors

Bierley, the company that specialises in manufacturing high quality, simple and affordable electronic magnifiers for people with low vision are the latest to join the official list of ABDO College sponsors.

Like Gillian, Matt's experience as a student at ABDO College proved to be an enjoyable one. He says, "I found the lecturers at the College to be very supportive to all students, giving them extra help with studies if necessary."

On qualifying as a DO, Matt was quickly offered greater professional responsibility. He explains, "I was promoted to store manager and have continued with this job for a year. During this time my current director expressed interest in leaving the company, which opened up a great opportunity for me to move into that role. I am now the Director of Dover Specsavers, Deal Specsavers and Dover Hearcare.

Matt was also quick to respond to the advertisement for a Trustee



featured in *Dispensing Optics* and his interview was successful. By taking on the role of College Trustee,

in addition to his new professional responsibilities with Specsavers, Matt is clearly demonstrating the importance that he places on what he describes as "...assisting with the continued success of a well-run college."

ABDO College is now in the process of setting up a completely new '*Dispensing technology suite*', the concept being a separate area within the College where new innovations, that can be utilised during the dispensing process, can be demonstrated to and used by students.

One of the specific aims of the suite is to showcase new developments in Low Vision correction.

As part of their sponsorship agreement Bierley has undertaken to provide a number of electronic magnifiers for use in the new dispensing suite, which includes their top of the range BigReader as well as the Shoppa portable electronic magnifier.

Commenting on the installation of the Bierley equipment, ABDO College Technician, Sue Rose FBDO SMC(Tech) said 'ABDO College runs a number of Low Vision courses and shares a common goal with Bierley, namely to encourage opticians to enhance their Low Vision skills and thereby give back independence to people who suffer from vision loss. I am confident that being able to demonstrate the benefits of new electronic aids, along side more traditional magnifiers, will assist in creating greater awareness on how rewarding and professionally fulfilling Low Vision work can be'.

Mark Statham, General Manager of Bierley, commented 'The BigReader is simple to use and is ideal for reading or looking at books, magazines newspapers, maps, letters, checking utility bills, labels on boxes, bottles, packets etc. The version we have supplied to ABDO College provides 17x magnification and provides the user with a choice to view in full colour, white on black or black on white. We are delighted that ABDO College staff and students will now have our latest products at their disposal and are proud to be associated with the commendable work that the College carries out to stimulate opticians in becoming Low Vision specialists'.

For more information, current prices and an application form for Low Vision courses please call ABDO College on 01227 733 901, or email [dli@abdo.org.uk](mailto:dli@abdo.org.uk), where a member of our team will be happy to help you.



Bierley's General Manager, Mark Statham with ABDO College Technician, Sue Rose

# Pre-Examination Revision Courses Summer 2009

ABDO College will once again be offering their popular revision courses in June 2009 to help students prepare for ABDO's summer examinations.

Courses will be offered in all subjects studied over the 3 years of the current dispensing diploma programme, theory subjects of the old second year programme and of course the Contact Lens certificate course. Dates and times are as follows:

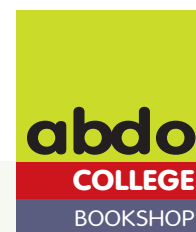
<b>Year 1</b>			
	PQE Theory – Ophthalmic Lenses	Monday 1st June	am
	PQE Theory – Optics	Monday 1st June	pm
	PQE Practical (all sections)*	Tuesday 2nd June	all day
<b>Year 2</b>			
	FQE Theory – Professional Conduct	Wednesday 3rd June	pm
	FQE Theory – Ophthalmic Lenses & Dispensing	Wednesday 3rd June	am
	FQE Theory – Communications	Thursday 4th June	am
<b>Old Year 2</b>			
	Final Optics	Friday 5th June	pm
	Final Anatomy	Friday 5th June	am
<b>Year 3</b>			
	FQE Theory – Refractive Management	Monday 1st June	pm
	FQE Theory – Contact Lens	Tuesday 2nd June	am
	FQE Theory – Low Vision	Tuesday 2nd June	pm
	FQE Practical Section A	Wednesday 3rd June	am
	FQE Practical Section B	Wednesday 3rd June	pm
	FQE Practical Section C	Thursday 4th June	am
	FQE Practical Section D/E	Thursday 4th June	pm
<b>Old Year 3</b>			
	Visual Optics	Thursday 4th June	pm
	Ophthalmic Lenses	Friday 5th June	pm
	Final Practical Section 1	Thursday 4th June	am
	Final Practical Section 2	Friday 5th June	am
	Final Practical Section 3	Thursday 4th June	pm
	Final Practical Section 4	Friday 5th June	pm

## Contact Lens Certificate

CL Practical*	Monday 1st June	all day
CL Theory Practice	Tuesday 2nd June	am
CL Theory Visual Optics	Tuesday 2nd June	pm
CL Theory Anatomy	Wednesday 3rd June	am

The course fee for full day practical courses (\*Year 1 & Contact Lens Certificate) is £120 with lunch included and £60 for part day courses. Lunch is also included for any full day of tuition booked.

All revision courses will be held at ABDO College, Godmersham, Kent and applications must be received by 22nd May 2009. For further information and an application form, please contact ABDO College (DLI) by telephone on 01227 733 921 or by email: [dli@abdo.org.uk](mailto:dli@abdo.org.uk).



New 2009 edition now available

## Ophthalmic Lenses Availability

The Ophthalmic Lenses Availability guide collates information from leading lens manufacturers enabling you to rapidly locate the most suitable lenses for your patients.

A valuable dispensing aid the guide features:

- An availability index
- Manufacturers' data
- Lens data files
- Lens selection by type or refractive index
- Progressive lens corridor length and fitting heights
- Information on the optical properties of materials, tints and coatings
- Summary list of lens engravings

The new 2009 edition of Ophthalmic Lenses Availability is now available from the ABDO College Bookshop for only £44.00 plus £5.00 p&p.

To place your order contact Justin Hall at the ABDO College Bookshop on 01227 733904.

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