

Re:View

Keeping excellence in your sights

 February 2010

 Issue 3



Focusing on the future

Highlighting the first employer liaison event

Putting you in the frame

Practical advice on selecting the right frame for your patient's face

Focusing on the future –

ABDO College holds its first employer liaison event



Encouraging dialogue

A clear way of ensuring that ABDO College keeps it aims and objectives in line with the demands of the UK optical market is through constructive dialogue with the key decision makers of major employers and other stakeholders. A new platform to stimulate this interaction is the introduction of an employers liaison event, which is intended to become one of ABDO College's regular activities. The first ever meeting of this kind, recently held in Godmersham, served as an extremely useful platform to hear the views and ideas of our retail partners and the joint challenges we face in the future.

The event commenced with a welcoming presentation conducted by Michelle Derbyshire, ABDO College's Head of Distance Learning Institute. During her introduction, Michelle provided an overview of the College's activities and highlighted the fact that ABDO College students consistently attain successful examination results at a level that is well above the national average. The meeting was then opened up for a debate and a wide range of issued were discussed.

A degree of success

In 2008, ABDO College, working in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University, introduced a Foundation Degree course, which, in turn, will lead to a BSc (Hons) in Ophthalmic Dispensing. One of the main questions put forward was why had this been introduced and how did it differ from the existing diploma course? Professor Kate Springett, Head of Department at Canterbury Christ Church University, provided a succinct answer as to why a degree course was introduced, as an alternative to a diploma course. She stated 'This will bring the academic qualification of dispensing opticians in line with their peers. The GOC are keen to have an all degree profession as it will produce well rounded practitioners who are able to research and solve issues in a more developed manner'. Professor Springett then went on to explain that this academic standard 'will produce a professional who will provide commercial interest in their ability and be a reflective practitioner'.

Indeed the topic of consistent standards between professions in the UK has been featured extensively in the national media over the past few months, mainly due to the proposal for nursing to also become a degree standard profession.

Regarding the difference between the degree and diploma courses there are more assessments on the degree course and it is a more demanding and structured way of learning whereby the student will produce a dissertation that is useful to their practice.

Active support

Another new initiative that was welcomed by those attending was the introduction of a Practice Support Team (PST) launched in October 2009 to assist degree course students and supervisors. In a short space of time, the PST is proving to be a valuable asset and is another strong reason why employers should consider ABDO College as their first choice training provider. The College also provides a guidebook with published, annually updated, guidelines for supervisors.

Location, Location, Location

When it came to discussion as to why employers do, or don't, send their students to ABDO College extremely different perceptions exist. Those that don't still put forward the old arguments that geographical location, accommodation and other such service issues could pose a problem, whereas those that do, based on their personal experience, totally disregard these issues as they are impressed by the results, quality of tuition and working environment provided by the College.

Understandably, many people around the UK are unfamiliar with Kent, but it does in fact form the gateway between England and continental Europe and now benefits from the massive resources put into major new road and high-speed rail networks. This, combined with being an area of outstanding natural beauty, explains why the region, despite the current economic situation, remains a property hot spot for both domestic and commercial development.

Accommodation – easy and cost effective

Another benefit that the College has to offer is that it has a dedicated accommodation officer so organising block release stays is hassle free, easy to book and cost effective.

Progress

This first ever Employer Liaison Event achieved its objective and has provided vital feedback that will assist the ABDO College team in concentrating on progression within the profession and the evolving scope of practice. We therefore extend our thanks to everyone who participated and look forward to the next event in 2010.

Progress and development

I am delighted to welcome you to 'Re:View', the third issue of the ABDO College Newsletter. We hope you find it interesting and informative as it includes features about our future aims and intentions

Our theme in this issue is 'Progress' and we are sure you will agree that we have tried to ensure we are moving forward, and indeed, proceeding in the right direction with renewed consultation and discussion with some of our stakeholders. This consultation process is vitally important particularly for our plans, but also to you, our professional colleagues and clients, to enable us to keep you informed of our aims and to give you the opportunity to influence the way we develop. We appreciate suggestions and will always try to bear your contributions in mind when formulating our strategic objectives.

One of the greatest criticisms that are often levelled at the College is its geographical location, with many people feeling that it is so far from almost everywhere (apart from Kent!) and that travelling there is a big disincentive. Those of you who have had the chance to visit Godmersham are quickly reassured as to its closeness to the motorway and the new high-speed rail networks, but especially to the tranquil atmosphere and lack of distractions! All the students who have attended our courses, come away absolutely loving the place, they find it so conducive to study with an aura of equanimity. I would therefore urge any of you that are able to visit the College and witness first hand the benefits we have to offer. Please just give Jo Underwood or Michelle Derbyshire a ring and they will be very happy to give you the guided tour.

Our academic achievements speak for themselves with ABDO College students attaining excellent pass rates at all stages with a minimum number of retakes. As they say 'the proof of the pudding', hence the College is now rapidly becoming more widely recognised as providing the 'gold standard' in dispensing education.

There is no doubt that we are assisted in maintaining our technological lead by the help we are given from our sponsors in Industry. We are extremely grateful for the innovative instrumentation, recently installed in Godmersham, as this ensures our students are at the forefront in knowing about the latest developments and their use in today's practice.

A new feature in this issue is a 'Where are they now?' piece, following the progress of three of our past students in their career. It is good to see the way in which our training is helping so many to achieve a successful career and one which is so enjoyable!

Should any of you wish to communicate with me to pass on your views please feel free to contact me either through the office or directly by email at c.lee349@btinternet.com. We would welcome your continued input.

Colin Lee FBDO, Chairman, ABDO College Board of Trustees

Courses

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

- An extensive range of courses to suit your needs
- Dedicated and experienced academic staff
- Friendly and supportive learning environment
- Consistently high theory and practical examination results
- Helpful course tutors
- Vibrant and positive attitude towards students
- Committed to the furtherance of the optical profession

For further information about the College and application forms for these and other courses please contact DLI at ABDO College on 01227 733 921 or email info@abdocollege.org.uk.

FOUNDATION DEGREE IN OPHTHALMIC DISPENSING (YEAR 1) FELLOWSHIP DISPENSING DIPLOMA (YEAR 1)

ABDO College now offers a choice of two distance learning courses on the route to becoming a qualified dispensing optician: the Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing course and the Fellowship Dispensing Diploma course.

- Year 1 courses will commence in September 2010
- 32 weekly distance learning units
- Four weeks block release at Godmersham
- Entry requirements: grade c GCSE in Mathematics, English, a science based subject, plus two other subjects
- Block release accommodation can be provided

Application deadline:

13 August 2010

The College receives a Colorimeter

ABDO College students and dispensing opticians now have direct access to some of the world's most advanced technology for the investigation and, often, the relief of visual stress, thanks to a joint initiative between ABDO College and the Cerium Group.

Cerium, one of Britain's leading ophthalmic equipment and goods manufacturers, has presented a latest-model Mark III Colorimeter to the College at Godmersham. Received by College Principal Jo Underwood from Claire Armstrong of Cerium, the Colorimeter is an unique instrument for in-practice use, to evaluate the role of coloured filters in relieving visual stress, especially the stress associated with reading which may be experienced by children or adults.

Originated by vision scientist
Professor Arnold Wilkins with Medical
Research Council (MRC) backing, the
Colorimeter is designed for use in
conjunction with a normal optometric
eye examination. It enables an
optometrist or dispensing optician to
lead patients through a lifelike simulation
of a text-reading task while displaying
a sequence of coloured filters to
pinpoint and quantify which tint, hue
and saturation of a tested series most
effectively reduces the sensation of
visual stress, enhances comfort, and
improves reading performance.

Cerium, whose HQ is in Tenterden, Kent, just a few miles from Godmersham, produces the Colorimeter under MRC licence and markets it worldwide through its office and specialist distributor networks. In its Tenterden laboratories it produces a range of precision tints in CR39 which can be prescribed as spectacles for reading or worn in plano form. With Colorimeters already in use



in several hundred UK practices (and many others in North America, Ireland, Continental Europe, Asia and Australasia) as well as in hospital eye departments, more dispensing opticians are likely to need understanding of and expertise with this technique.

The computerised Mark III Cerium Colorimeter installed in Godmersham's 'Dispensing technology suite' is already enabling student and CET groups to gain hands-on experience of a technology which offers real life benefits for many patients and a truly worthwhile means of practice differentiation.

Optomerist Claire Armstrong, Cerium's professional services manager, is taking part in colorimetry workshops at Godmersham and will also welcome dispensing opticians to the first-ever International Conference on Colorimetry, which will be held at the Royal Society, London, 10 and 11 March 2010. The conference is being held in conjunction with the launch of the International Institute of Colorimetry. Its board is planned to include research scientists, practitioners and educationalists. The conference will feature a multi-national roll call of presenters who are working on all aspects of colorimetry and helping to establish the increasingly firm basis of science that supports the subjective findings of 'intuitive' colorimetry. For conference details visit www.colorimetryconference.co.uk.

Students have access to latest dispensing technology

Another company who has recently been added to the increasing list of ABDO College sponsors is BiB Ophthalmic Instruments who have installed the Anyview Vertex dispensing system into the College's *Dispensing technology suite*. The Anyview Vertex has been developed to provide an intelligent and full 3D measuring system to make the fast and reliable measurements for all types of lenses, but it is particularly useful for premium individualised progressives.



The system also features a 'frames on face' facility that provides the ultimate life like resolution that captures up to 20 images, enabling simulation of the finished spectacles showing lens thickness and lens tint colours.

The powerful and advanced 3D graphics cover virtually everything required to support opticians in the dispensing process with simulation of vision through different types of basic and advanced single vision, progressive, tinted and coated lenses. Intuitive explanation of presbyopia and the benefits of premium progressives in relation to 'swim' effect,

comfortable posture, width of the near vision zone, contrast and glare can also be demonstrated.

A contact lens module is also included which simulates the colour of contact lenses available from various manufacturers. It also outlines the merits of RGP and soft contact lenses dependent on ocular conditions, together with 3D educational information which includes fitting, handling and aftercare.

Commenting on the new instrumentation, Gillian Smith, ABDO College senior lecturer, said 'This really is a fantastic system that enables

us to demonstrate to students first hand the innovative technology that is now on the market to assist them in communicating the benefits of better quality lenses to their patients. It also enables accurate position of wear measurements.

One of the first groups of students to see the system were fairly new to optics and just starting their first year studies, so the 3D simulation certainly made some of the theory more readily fall into place. On behalf of everyone at ABDO College I would like to sincerely thank BiB for their generous support'.



EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Practical dispensing tips

Frames on Faces

by Sally Bates FBDO, ABDO College Lecturer

The first thing people notice are your specs. When we meet, we make eye contact – the wrong specs give the wrong impression and project the wrong image. Eyewear should match the style of the wearer, and suit their personality – they should have Specs Appeal!

The dispensing optician will ensure that the chosen spectacles are correctly fitting on the bridge of the nose, not resting on the cheeks, the correct temple width, and comfortable behind the ears.

There are two basic rules:

Select eyewear shapes that are opposite to the patient's face shape

- For example, a patient with a round face should wear a square frame
- A patient with an oblong face should wear a curved frame

Select frames that have the same proportions as the face

- For example, a wide short face needs a wide, shallow frame
- If the patient has a large face, select a large frame; a long face requires a deep frame

Top Tips

Brows and cheeks

- Frames should not sit higher than the line of the eyebrows
- The lower rims should not rest on the cheeks, even when smiling
- Add width to a narrow forehead with a prominent top brow bar

Frame width

- If the frame is too narrow, the eyes will appear closer together
- The frame should be no wider than the broadest part of the face

Noses

- If the patient has a long nose, a low set bridge will appear to shorten it
- A frame with a high set bridge is best for a short nose
- A thin or clear bridge can add width between close set eyes
- A coloured bridge will make wide set eyes appear closer together
- For flat noses, select frames with adjustable nose pads for added comfort

Repeat the patient's best feature

- For example, if the patient has defined cheek bones, select a frame with a square shape at the temples
- If the patient has blue eyes, select frames which enhance the colour

The Do's and Don'ts of Frame Selection

Oval Shape

This is an ideal face shape, as the proportions of the face are balanced. The chin is slightly narrower than the forehead and the cheekbones are high.

Oblong Shape

This is a 'long' face, it is longer than it is wide, and often patients have a longer nose.

Round Shape

A round face has the width and the length in the same proportions, without any angles.



Do

- Select frames that keep the natural balance of the oval face shape
- Choose frames that are as wide, or slightly wider, than the broadest part of the face
- Detail can be at the top or the middle of the frame.



Do

- Select frames that are deeper in size, rather than width, to give the illusion of the face appearing shorter and more 'balanced'
- Select frames that have a low bridge – this will give the effect of 'shortening' the nose
- Choose frames that have detail at the temples – this will appear to widen the face
- Softer upswept or rounder and oval frame shapes will flatter a female oblong face



Dο

- Select frames to make the face appear longer and thinner
- Angular shaped frames will lengthen the face
- Look for frames with a clear bridge to give the illusion of wider set eyes
- Select frames that have temple detail or coloured detail to add the illusion of width to the face
- Square shaped frames look great on round faces

Don't

 Choose frames with low temple detail, as this unbalances the oval face shape

Don't

 Choose shallow frame shapes – the face will appear even longer

Don't

 Choose round or excessively square frames

Celebrity oval face

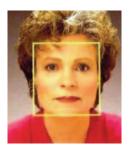
Annie Lennox

Celebrity oblong face
Celine Dion

Celebrity round face **Twiggy**

Square Shape

This patient has a strong jaw line, wide forehead, a wide chin and cheekbones.



Do

- Select frames to make the face appear longer and soften the iaw line
- Choose frames which are wider than the widest part of the face, and not too deep
- Semi rimless styles are ideal as they draw the attention to the upper part of the frame
- Look for softer shaped frames oval, round and slightly upswept styles

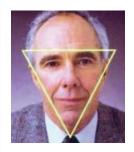
Don't

 Stay clear of square shapes, a flat lower rim, and Aviator/ Pilot styles, as these draw attention to the square jaw line

Celebrity square face **Maggie Smith**

Heart Shape (base up triangle)

This patient has a fairly wide forehead and wide cheekbones. The face gradually narrows to the chin.



Do

- Minimise the width at the top of the face
- Frames should add width below the eye line to balance the narrow chin
- Select frames with low temple detail, or low sides, lighter colours and rimless styles

Don't

 Aviator/Pilot styles are definitely out, as they will accentuate the narrow jaw line and the chin will appear pointed

Celebrity heart face

Jennifer Aniston

Triangle Shape (base down triangle)

The triangular face has a narrow forehead that widens at the cheek and chin areas.



Do

- Select frames that add width to the forehead and temples
- Choose large frames the lens size should be as wide as the widest part of the jaw line
- Rectangular, aviator and oval styles are a good choice
- Semi-rimless frames with emphasis on the top half of the rims are ideal to balance the jaw line

This is the rarest face chan

Diamond Shape

This is the rarest face shape and the most difficult to suit. The diamond shaped face is narrow at the eye line and jaw line, with a small forehead and chin. The cheekbones are often high and quite 'chiselled'.



Do

- Select frames that widen the forehead and jaw, and minimise the temples
- Choose frames that are wide and heavy on the top
- Square frame shapes or those with a straight top and curved lower edge are ideal
- Rimless frames are a good choice, as there is less definition

Don't

 Choose narrow and shallow frames, or those with low detail or low joints

Celebrity triangle face **David Coulthard**

Don't

 Choose shallow frames, or those with low detail

Celebrity diamond face **Victoria Beckham**

Frame Selection

Rimless styles

not recommended to be dispensed with standard plastics, 1.74 or glass lenses due to easy cracking at the drill holes, or high powered lenses over +/- 5.00D due to the excessive lens thickness.

Take care if dispensing high positive powers as the edges maybe extremely thin and chip easily. Polycarbonate may 'star' around the drill holes if water leaks onto the lens whilst glazing.

Rimless spectacles are lightweight and ideal for patients who require a full field of vision.

Recommend Trivex/NXT/PNX lenses which are far more flexible and impact resistant than CR39, 1.6 or 1.67 lenses.



Supra styles

recommend Trivex/NXT/PNX or polycarbonate lenses which are light weight and impact resistant, 1.6, 1.67 or 1.74 Aspheric lenses. Not recommended for high powered lenses over +/- 5.00D due to the excessive lens thickness.

Supra spectacles are lightweight and the top of the lens is hidden by the frame rim.



Small metal frames are ideal for high plus and minus

powers.

The smaller the frame – the

The smaller the frame – the thinner the lenses.

Recommend small plastics frame styles for high minus powers to hide the lens edge thickness.



Recommend 1.6, 1.67 or 1.74
Aspheric lenses. Order Surfaced positive lenses to reduce thickness and minimise spectacle magnification.

Large metal frames

not designed to be dispensed with glass lenses due to weight, or high minus/plus powers or high cyl powers due to excessive thickness.



Recommend Trivex/NXT/PNX or polycarbonate lenses which are light weight and impact resistant, 1.6. 1.67 or 1.74 Aspheric lenses.

Aspheric lenses reduce the 'bug eye' magnification effect with positive powers and 'jam jar' minification effect with negative powers.

Plastic frames

hide the edge thickness of minus lenses compared to metal frames. However, a thick rim and thick sides may not be ideal for patients who drive, as peripheral vision is reduced.



Rectangular, Oval and Round styles

excellent for dispensing high powers and high cyls, as the lens thickness will be reduced in an even/regular shaped frame.

For the best cosmetic effect select frames where the Box Centre Distance (frame PD) is the same as the patient's PD. This minimises lens decentration and results in an even edge thickness.

Always verify progression fitting heights as some frames maybe too shallow, cutting the reading area off the lens.

How low can you go?

Minimum fitting heights vary from different lens manufacturers, some examples are listed below:

AO Compact 17mm
AO Pro Easy 18mm
AO Pro 15 18mm
BBGR ANATEO PdM (Personal Data
Management) fitting heights

Minus powers: 14mm Plano powers: 15mm Plus Powers: 16mm BBGR EVOLIS fitting heights Minus powers: 16mm Low powers: 17mm Plus Powers: 18mm

BBGR SELECTIVE: 18mm Hoya Summit CD 14mm 14 & 18mm Hoyalux ID Hoya Summit PRO 18mm Hoyalux Wide 18mm Hovalux GP 19mm Kodak Concise 14mm Kodak Precise 17mm Nikon Presio W 12&14 15 & 17mm Nikon Seemax 12 15mm Nikon Seemax 14 17_{mm}

Orgatech SY/Emblem 15, 17, 19mm Seiko Wing 17, 19, 21mm Varilux Physio Short 14mm Varilux Ellipse 14mm Varilux Ellipse Advans 14mm Varilux F360 17mm Varilux Physio 17mm Varilux Comfort Advans 18mm Varilux Comfort 18mm Zeiss GT2 short 14mm Zeiss Gradal Individual 14 to 20mm Zeiss GT2 18mm

Sally Bates FBDO

Sally is a self employed dispensing optician and part-time lecturer at the ABDO College in Godmersham, Canterbury.

She is the proprietor of 'Identity Optical Training' and frequently organises dispensing courses for professional and support staff, including NVQ courses, revision days, mock exams and CET evenings.



Sally has presented her lectures at various events including the Varilux University in Paris, and has articles published in optical journals. She lectures and examines for the Association of British Dispensing Opticians both nationally and internationally.

Access to optical knowledge for Vision Aid Overseas' Howard Payne

ABDO College has provided distance learning to Vision Aid Overseas warehouse manager Howard Payne and as a result he has been successful in completing the College's Access course in Optics and Dispensing.



One aspect of Howard's work is to supervise the Specsort system at VAO's warehouse in Crawley. Unwanted spectacles are delivered here from all over the UK, where they are cleaned, graded and boxed up ready to be sent to the developing world. The spectacles are then sent with teams of optical professionals to some of the poorest countries on earth where they set up clinics, screen large numbers of patients and provide spectacles were necessary.

With 90% of the spectacles being used by VAO still coming from the Specsort system, the knowledge gained by undertaking the ABDO College Access course has assisted Howard in ensure that the quality of the spectacles sent abroad continues to meet the high standards set by the charity.

When asked about the course Howard Payne said 'The Access course was very informative and gave me a greater understanding of dispensing optics. The quality of spectacles we recycle is very high, and I will be able to apply what I have learnt to ensure this high standard is maintained.'

Michelle Derbyshire, ABDO College's head of DLI, commented 'We are delighted that Howard was rewarded for his efforts with the successful completion of his course assignments. It's good to know that the course has helped him with his work for the charity. The great thing about our range of Access courses is that they provide an opportunity for anyone who is seeking to embark upon a career in dispensing optics if they do not have the normal GCSE entry requirements or have been out of education for some time. In Howard's case the Access course in Optics and Dispensing provided him with the ideal starting point for a more formal optical education'.

ABDO College runs Access courses in five key subjects: English, Mathematics, Optics and Dispensing, Human Biology and General Science; to find out more call DLI on 01227 733 921 or email info@abdocollege.org.uk.

For more information about Vision Aid Overseas visit their website at www.vao.org.uk.

Official ABDO College Sponsors

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

BIB Ophthalmic Instruments
Bierley
Buchmann UK Limited
Carl Zeiss Vision UK Ltd
Cerium Group Ltd
Essilor Ltd
Norville
Rodenstock (UK) Ltd
Signet Armorlite Europe
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

Where are they now?

In the first of a regular series, we spotlight three former ABDO College students to find out what led them to the College and what has happened since they completed their studies.

Adam Murray FBDO SMC(Tech)

ABDO College student 2005–2008, FBDO Dispensing Diploma

'I started in optics in 1988 working as a technician for the Robert Stanley independent practice in Oxford. I then worked briefly for Conways, another independent, setting up their in-house glazing lab before moving to Boots where I achieved my SMC(Tech) awarded by the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. Over the next ten years I moved around the South East before ending up in central London in a management role in a Boots Opticians superstore. It was a fantastic time with great experiences and I made terrific friends. Everybody should work in London at least once to witness the fantastic cosmopolitan country we live in.

But soon it was time to let my body regenerate from the hectic pace of London life and I began looking for a job elsewhere in the country. I was given the opportunity to move to the North East of Scotland by Dollond & Aitchison who offered me a job as their store manager in Aberdeen. This I accepted and I stayed there for five years. It was at this point I realised the professional dispensing qualification would come in very handy and I embarked on the course at ABDO (thanks to Gordon Dingwall for sponsoring my application). After 18 months I decided it was time for another move in order to concentrate on the dispensing side

of the job – this time to Duncan and Todd, the largest independent in Scotland, as a trainee DO.

After six months I was promoted to area manager for the North looking after 11 stores. My own area is quite large, ranging from Aberdeen to Wick, so I spend approximately two days in the office and three days visiting stores. This is a lot of time on the road or train – so it's certainly not a nine-to-five job.

We have a freeform generator which enables us to offer the best solutions to meet our patients' problems without costing them the earth (very important in these days of recession). We also offer a one-hour service in three locations through our smaller instore surfacing and glazing labs.

Unfortunately, I think our role is still perceived by the public as that of salesmen, and we all know that we are

'I also get involved with the long-term resource planning and marketing strategies of the company. This is a highly varied role where I might be selling properties on one day and then building extensions for new consulting rooms the next.'

My role as Regional Manager (North) involves supporting and coaching my colleagues into improving both their behavioural and commercial skills, without losing any of the clinical aspects of the business. I also get involved with the long-term resource planning and marketing strategies of the company. This is a highly varied role where I might be selling properties on one day and then building extensions for new consulting rooms the next. I still dispense when in store and also act as holiday cover for my managers.

Duncan and Todd has a broad patient profile ranging from NHS Vouchers to designer frames. The majority of our sales are at the top end of designer frames with premium quality lenses supplied through our own surfacing lab. far more than just that. Therefore I am interested in highlighting the true profile of dispensing opticians to the public.

Outside of work I am keen on all sports but especially hockey where I am the President of my local team Ellon Hockey Club; also golf, which I play badly but enthusiastically. Still, to this day I have never lost to Tim 'fatty' Burgess FBDO in any format.

I would encourage anybody starting in optics to undertake the ophthalmic dispensing course. Not least, because the knowledge instilled in us by all the tutors at ABDO College, proves invaluable as we continue with our careers. Many thanks to all the tutors who helped me through my three years of hard work (and excessive drinking in the Conningbrook).'

Sasha Rowland FBDO

ABDO College student 2002–2005, FBDO Dispensing Diploma

'I am originally from Pretoria, South Africa. After school I studied physiotherapy but, fortunately for me, I never finished the degree as I got the opportunity to travel to study and work in the UK. I had quickly realised that the role of a physio was not for me as I did not particularly like the 'close physical contact'! I soon discovered that I much preferred the role of a dispensing optician, added to which, a career in optics still offered the opportunity of working in the medical field.

At the time I began my course at Godmersham, I was working for Specsavers in London's Dalston Cross. Specsavers sponsored my studies and, on graduating, I remained with them for another six months. While studying and working, the directors from Dalston Cross trained me in practice management. When I left Specsavers, I joined Boots
Opticians as a practice manager and,
at that time, you had to be a qualified
optician to manage one of their
practices — so thankfully I was a 'newly
qualified'! Since then I have moved
around in Boots Opticians, managing
different practices all around the Surrey
and Sussex areas — and I absolutely
love my job!

The three years at Godmersham were really fantastic. I made great 'friends for life' there. Not only did we do some serious studying but we had a great social life too. We ended up staying the weekends in between the two weeks to ensure we made the most of our time together! All the staff and lecturers were amazing and obviously loved having the buzz of all the students around them.

I think the reason we made such good friends at the College was because, at that moment in time, all the students were going through the same stress and worries. It's tough completing the course in combination with your daily life and some of us were working full-time supporting families. All the changes within our professional lives brought us really together; we understood each other's circumstances and therefore knew what type of support to offer.

On the domestic front, my beautiful little boy is ten months old in February. He was born with an iris, retinal and optic disc coloboma – any vision in his eye is highly doubtful. If it hadn't been for my studies and qualifications, I would not have been able to act as quickly to ensure the necessary tests were performed on him in order to rule out the different syndromes which go hand in hand with coloboma. I feel tremendously privileged to have gained the right knowledge at Godmersham in order to help my little boy live a practically normal life now.'

Michelle Derbyshire receives VAO Trustee Award

At the 2009 Vision Aid Overseas (VAO) AGM & Conference in Birmingham in October, Michelle Derbyshire, ABDO College's Head of DLI, received a Trustee Award. The award recognises those volunteers who have continued to provide an outstanding service to all aspects of Vision Aid Overseas' work and have thereby demonstrated the tireless effort that they give to this worthy charity.

Michelle was specifically honoured for promoting VAO's work among dispensing opticians, she has spent nearly a decade juggling her role as head of the distance learning institute at the ABDO College and being a keen activist for VAO. It has been her specialist interest in developing volunteering opportunities for dispensing opticians which has enabled many to travel on projects with Vision Aid Overseas.

Everyone involved with ABDO College is delighted that Michelle's dedicated hard work has been formally acknowledged by the presentation of this prestigious award.



Nick Warrilow FBDO

ABDO College student 2005–2008, FBDO Dispensing Diploma

It took the FBDO Dispensing Diploma to provide myself and Five Towns Optical Ltd, the glazing lab of which I am one of the directors, with a greater insight and understanding of the modern independent practice and the problems which opticians face. This is normally something a lab would be unaware of. We also felt it was imperative that, when an optician or a receptionist contacted us to ask for advice on lenses or, if we had to inform them that their chosen lens was no longer available, we could provide a far more informed recommendation on a suitable replacement.

During my time on the course I continued working at Five Towns
Optical. As the course required students to carry out a minimum of 30 hours a week under the supervision of a qualified optometrist or DO, I contacted one of our customers, Pamela
Girdwood FBDO, and asked her if she

would allow me to work in her practice for three years, to enable me to achieve the required supervision. Pam was happy to help and while I was there she generously passed on to me her many years of experience.

On graduating, it was straight back to the lab and business as usual. During the three years of the course I was working 30 hours a week with Pam, and anything outside of that I worked back at Five Towns. Since qualifying, my career direction hasn't changed, and I never intended it to. However I do now spend the majority of my time at Five Towns carrying out the final checking and being a 'problem solver' for the regular amount of daily calls we get seeking help or advice.

Five Towns Optical was set up in 1959 to offer a full glazing and in-house surfacing facility. I started there in 1989, working on Saturdays for my step-dad, Ken Halfpenny while I was still at school. I commenced full time immediately after leaving school and began learning all aspects of glazing. We provide a service for independent opticians all over the UK but we have recently supplied a couple of specialist jobs for a practice in Malaysia. As partner labs with the majority of lens manufacturers, we can offer anything the optician requires and, being totally independent, we provide totally neutral advice, depending on the specific needs of the patient.

Being a family-run firm, we enjoy an excellent working relationship with a number of our customers – although I think a few of them were concerned that I was doing the DO course to enable Five Towns to follow suit with many other labs, and go direct to the public. This was never the case and I have already, since qualifying, been able to solve problems and offer specific advice and solutions which previously I would have been unable to do. All this is down, not only to the varied syllabus, but mainly to the fantastic lecturers at Godmersham whom I now count as friends. We are still in contact from time to time, just to say "Hi", and see how everyone is doing at the College.'

We're here to accommodate you

As well as providing first class optical education and training facilities ABDO College also has a dedicated accommodation officer to arrange block release stays inline with individual students needs.

During the three years duration of their ophthalmic dispensing courses, students will undertake a total of twelve weeks block release which, in most cases, will require them to stay within easy reach of the College. To ensure they are booked suitable accommodation and well looked after during their stay, ABDO College has established a successful accommodation service administrated by Joan Griffin.

Commenting on the service the College provides Joan said 'It's very important that our students feel comfortable and relaxed while they are with us. For many younger students it is their first time away from home on their own, so we do like to ensure that we can provide them with all the support they may need.

The College has its own facilities, within the grounds of Godmersham

Park, that can accommodate 17 students and we have also negotiated excellent relationships with numerous local hotels and boarding houses, all within a few miles of the College.

Booking the on-site accommodation is really easy, the rates are extremely competitive and the standards of accommodation are exceptionally good. We can also advise about the local

ABDO College Bookshop Supplying the optical profession worldwide

A useful facility provided by the College to the optical profession worldwide is the ABDO College Bookshop which stocks an extensive selection of the most popular optical titles.

Publications covering all aspects of modern practise e.g. dispensing, optometry, ophthalmology, contact lenses etc. plus other products such as DVDs, rules, gauges and charts are readily available and a fast, efficient and friendly service is assured.

Useful Revision Guides

Particularly useful for students studying ophthalmic dispensing are the PQE and FQE Revision Guides, the latest editions of these publications have been updated and are now relevant to the current syllabus and examinations.



ABDO Frame Rule

An essential tool for any dispensing optician is the ABDO frame rule. Originally designed by George Clayton in the mid-1970s the rule has been recently updated and is supplied with a newly revised 24 page instruction manual.

Easy ordering and personalised service

The full range of publications and other products can be viewed and ordered online via the ABDO College website (www.abdocollege.org.uk) or for more personalised service and advice contact Justin Hall, the ABDO College Bookshop Administrator, by telephone on 01227 733 904 or by email at jhall@abdocollege.org.uk.

Please feel free to contact us we look forward to assisting you.



B&Bs most suitable for a students individual needs, be it a request for somewhere quiet and cosy, or a place where they can have a drink or two in the evening and maybe even join in with the local pub quiz. For those that do not drive we will advise which B&B can provide transportation, back and forth, to the College every day.

Indeed our accommodation service has been so successful that many students decide to stay over rather than return home at the weekends.'

For further information contact Joan Griffin by telephone on 01227 733 911 or by email at jgriffin@abdocollege.org.uk

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