

# ABDO College newsletter

Keeping excellence in your sights

September 2009 | Issue 2



## Opening a door to career pathways

ABDO College Principal Jo Underwood is representative of a dedicated body of teaching staff who bring a wealth of experience to their roles.

In the eight years since ABDO College was founded, staff and Trustees have taken every opportunity to strengthen, enhance and develop courses to equip students for practise in the evolving profession of dispensing optics. Now, more than ever, dispensing optics offers a doorway to a broad range of career pathways. College courses are regularly reviewed and adjusted to fully prepare students for this diversity of working possibilities. As well as being provided with the necessary clinical and dispensing skills, students are also given training in how to effectively communicate these skills to their patients and customers in the High Street.

There is a strong emphasis on treating each student as an individual, offering personal attention as required, enabling development at many levels. The students,

themselves, enthusiastically confirm the dedication and encouragement of tutors who consistently strive to deliver teaching standards of the highest calibre.

Like many of the academic staff at the College, Principal Jo Underwood has travelled widely in her work, gaining extensive understanding of the cultural, political and educational systems of many countries. Like the other tutors, she also brings to her role professional skills gained from a range of dispensing fields. Prior to joining the College, she was senior lecturer and head of ophthalmic lenses at City College in London and before that she gained first hand experience as a DO working in practices in London and Birmingham.

So how does Jo keep abreast of all the new clinical and technical innovations and developments in optics? She replies,

'I sometimes visit labs and manufacturing companies, and many of them visit the College to talk to students and staff. The teaching staff also attend the ABDO conference and its programme of lectures. In addition, we undertake the CET in the journals and, since we all examine for ABDO, we attend examiners training days.'

In addition to her responsibilities as principal examiner in ophthalmic lenses, in contact lens visual optics and in advanced ophthalmic lenses for FQE – the new final qualifying theory examinations set by ABDO prior to final qualification – Jo acts as an ambassador for the College, representing the teaching arm of ABDO at meetings and events in the UK and overseas. She also represents the colleges and universities teaching ophthalmic dispensing on various GOC committees.

## Introduction from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

I am pleased to welcome you to this second issue of the ABDO College newsletter, designed to help you keep abreast with the current happenings at the College.



Following the introduction of the Foundation Degree course last year, we are now working hard on the next step, the introduction of the BSc(Hons) course in Ophthalmic Dispensing. This is being worked on alongside the normal running of the College and the administration of the thousand or so students currently enrolled on our distance learning programme. We are therefore very fortunate to have such fantastic, committed staff who really do go the extra mile, I would like to publicly convey to them my thanks.

I am pleased to welcome our new Trustees; Gillian Twyning and Matt Trusty were featured in issue 1 and profiles of Jennifer Brower and Kevin Gutsell appear in this copy of the newsletter. The Trustees all give their time freely and willingly to help further the working of the College. They have all recently taken on responsibility for a specific aspect of the running of the College, there will shortly be an announcement of some of the exciting new activities that are being developed by two of the Trustees, so watch this space!

Michelle Derbyshire, head of DLI, is in the process of organising a meeting with some of our Stakeholders, the Employers, to gain an insight into their future needs from our training and to obtain feedback on our present courses. Communication is a vital part of the successful running of any organisation, none more so than our College. All communication must be two way and whilst we are trying to keep you all updated through this newsletter and meetings etc, it is vital that we get as much feedback from you, the members of our profession, on any aspect of the College and its courses to help us go forward in the way you would wish. Please feel free to email me on [c.lee349@btinternet.com](mailto:c.lee349@btinternet.com), or write via the ABDO College address on any aspect you wish to help us know your views. I would welcome any correspondence from you and I guarantee you will get a response.

The current economic downturn is giving everyone concerns; those involved with the College no less than anyone else. The training of new employees is often one of the first cut backs to take place when things get tight. So far we are holding our own and through the wider encouragement to all in optics, we hope to continue to keep our numbers of students at the optimum. Please remember that you are all our ambassadors, as ABDO members and past students, you all know the value of your training and qualification and the benefit you give to the public. Please ensure, whenever you can, that you pass on these benefits and encourage the perpetuation of our great profession.

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

Summer 2009

## VAO's new CEO thanks ABDO College for its support

During a recent visit to ABDO College Dr Natalie Briggs, the new chief executive officer of Vision Aid Overseas, expressed gratitude for the support the College has given the charity, especially when it comes to optical training that it has provided to key members of VAO staff.



Sue Rose and Natalie Briggs get to grips with glazing

Dr Briggs was previously executive director of the education department of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and dean of faculty for business and management at Bromley College of Further and Higher Education. Having toured the College with ABDO College's Technician Sue Rose, Dr Briggs said 'My visit to Godmersham has given me a valuable insight into the extensive training that dispensing opticians undergo and the high standards that they seek to achieve. With my background in education I can clearly see that the activities undertaken by the College and the goals it has are highly commendable. It is particularly comforting to know that VAO can rely on ABDO College for continued staff training support'.

But it is the actual tutoring that is Jo's first love. She explains, 'I love teaching and always have done. My father would tell me to remember just how lucky I was to be paid to do something that I enjoy so much. There is nothing better than to see a student suddenly understand something (that Gestalt moment) in one of your classes. It's even better when they thank you for it! I gain such satisfaction and pleasure from seeing the students with their proud families at the graduation ceremony in Canterbury Cathedral.'

This summer, 120 students on the new Foundation Degree course in Ophthalmic Dispensing completed their first year of study. Jo outlines the kind of career advantages open to these students once they complete the course: 'Today it is less common for people to stay in the same job throughout their working lives and many professions

now require graduate entry or provide graduate fast tracking. A foundation degree and a degree are recognisable across the board in professional life, therefore the students will experience more flexibility with their future career options. Within optics I would expect the students to have greater opportunities in management and development because of their graduate skills.

'The College is always looking for good tutors, ABDO for theory and practical examiners and the profession for supervisors. I would hope these graduates would wish to continue their education and training by being involved in these areas.'

Jo's final reflection illustrates the possibilities of career development as she adds, 'I am delighted to see the students progress through the profession and then to meet them some years later as tutors, examiners, lecturers, board

members and Trustees. And maybe even as an ABDO President one day!'

**Jo Underwood**  
MSc,  
FBDO (Hons) CL,  
(Hons) SLD, PGCE



#### Memberships and committees

- ABDO and dispensing colleges nominee on General Optical Council education committee, registration committee and competencies committee
- ABDO academic committee
- BCCLA member
- Member of the International Association of Contact Lens Educators
- Honorary member of MAPO
- Freeman of Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers

## Come and see us at the ABDO Conference and Exhibition

ABDO College and ABDO College Bookshop will both be exhibiting at the 2009 ABDO Conference and Exhibition, which will be held at the Hilton Brighton Metropole on 3 to 5 October. Staff will be on hand throughout the exhibition to discuss the extensive range of over 70 different courses that the College now offers.

ABDO College Bookshop will be displaying a selection of the most popular optical titles that it supplies to the profession and individuals worldwide. Dispensing, Optometry and Ophthalmology books plus, rules, gauges and charts are available from the Bookshop and a fast, efficient and friendly service is assured.

ABDO College also extends an invitation to all past, present and future students to come along and say hello and also invite tutors and students to use the

College stand location as a central meeting point. The College staff are looking forward to seeing you on their stands.



The College exhibition team Tracy, Justin, Michelle, Joan and Paula look forward to seeing you in Brighton

# 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

## LOW VISION HONOURS COURSE

The job satisfaction you get from working in low vision is said to be greater than in any other area of dispensing practice. You can begin a consultation talking to a patient who is frightened and depressed, and end it with that same person being ready to go out and face the world again. If you really want to help people, this course may be the one for you. This interesting and popular honours course includes both theory and practical aspects of low vision consultation and fully prepares students for the FBDO (Hons) LV examinations. Distance learning assignments are complemented by a short block release at ABDO College to reinforce practical skills and routine.

- Course commences: January 2009
- Method: Blended learning and block release
- Entry requirements: Fellowship Diploma and GOC registration
- Duration: Approximately 23 weeks
- Block release accommodation can be provided

Application deadline:

**18 December 2009**



## EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

# Practical dispensing tips

In this second issue of the ABDO College newsletter we are publishing the first of a series of articles designed to provide readers, particularly students, with practical advice that we hope may be of assistance in the practice.

## Dealing with dispensing non-tolerances

by Sally Bates FBDO, ABDO College Lecturer

The trouble with spectacle non-tolerances is often the wrong product has been dispensed correctly, rather than the right product dispensed incorrectly.

**Communication** with the patient is very important both at the time of refraction and dispensing. As eyecare professionals we have to develop our questioning skills in order to find out the patient's needs and requirements, in order to dispense the correct lenses for the correct patient.

Patients are often vague when describing their visual concerns or fitting problems associated with their new spectacles. From experience I have found it easier to start with the technique of 'open' questions followed by 'closed' questions in order to assess the problem and decide upon a solution for the patient.

**Open Questions** begin with Who, What, When, Where, Why and How, and require an open explanation as an answer.

**Closed Questions** require a 'Yes' or 'No' answer.

For example:

Open questions: 'What sort of problems have you experienced with your new Varifocals?'

Closed Questions: 'Are the problems related to distance vision?' 'Are the problems related to near vision?'

On the rare occasion that problems do arise, the following checklist may help you:

## 1. Progressive power lenses

### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

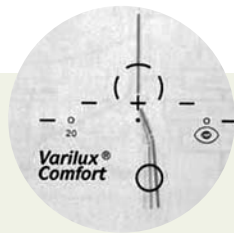
- Distance vision, intermediate vision, near vision, right, left or both eyes.

### Check the frame fitting

- Ensure the pantoscopic tilt is approximately 10 degrees.
- Check the vertex distance is equal right and left, and kept to a minimum. If the frame slips further away from the eyes, the fitting cross will be too low; the patient will experience reduced VA for distance and complain that near is not achievable at a working distance of 35cm.
- Ensure the frame is not misshapen.
- If necessary, raise or lower the frame by adjustment.
- Check the front isn't too flat or excessively bowed.

### Check the lenses

- Remark the lenses, using the correct progressive lens template. Is the distance from the fitting cross to the full Add circle the same for each lens?



- Check the distance power, prism and Add.
- Verify the prism thinning on both lenses – is it equal? Check the horizontal and vertical fitting cross positions.
- Are the manufacturer's engravings glazed horizontally?
- Are the base curves the same?

### Check the fitting on the patient

- Check the position of the fitting cross relative to the patient's pupil centres, with the eyes in the primary position.
- Using a mirror, verify that the patient is looking through the reading circle for near vision. This method will also check if the inset is correct.

### Evaluate use of lenses

- Check the patient's head position for distance, intermediate and near.
- Check the patient sufficiently moves their head to view laterally placed objects.

### OTHER TIPS

- Has the correct type and design of lens been dispensed?
- Have the lenses been glazed in the correct eyes?
- Does the patient require different Adds, due to Antimetropia?

## 2. Bifocal lenses

### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

- Distance vision, intermediate vision, near vision, right, left or both eyes, working distance.

### Check the frame fitting

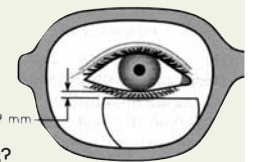
- Check the seg top position in relation to the patient's lower limbus.
- If the frame slips further away from the eyes, the seg top will be positioned too low.
- If the frame is fitting too tightly on the head width or bridge, the segment top position will fit too high.
- If necessary, raise or lower the frame by adjusting the pads or angling the sides.
- Check the vertex distance is equal right and left, and kept to a minimum.
- Check the front isn't too flat or excessively bowed.
- Check the pantoscopic angle. If excessively angled, the segs will be raised, if too flat, the segs will be too low.

### Check the fitting on the patient

- Check the position of the segment top relative to the patient's lower limbus.

### Evaluate use of lenses

- Check the patient's head position for lens use.
- Are the segment shape, diameter size and position suitable for their requirements?



### Check the lenses

- Verify the distance power and Add.
- If the segment can be felt on the front surface, remember to turn the spectacles over to record the back vertex power of the segment. This can often make a difference of 0.25 to 0.50D depending upon the distance power and lens thickness. This is the near vision effectivity error.
- Check the horizontal optical centres, the segment height and inset. Are the base curves the same?

### OTHER TIPS

- Does the myopic patient prefer to read without spectacles?
- Is the patient complaining of colour fringing? If the lenses are glass, there will be increased chromatic aberration in the segment if fused, due to the higher index of the segment.
- Has the correct type of lens been dispensed?
- Is the segment incompatible with the patient's occupation?

### 3. Aspheric lenses

#### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

- Right, left or both eyes.

#### Check the lenses

- Verify the power. Check the horizontal and vertical optical centres.  
Are the base curves the same?

#### Check the fitting on the patient

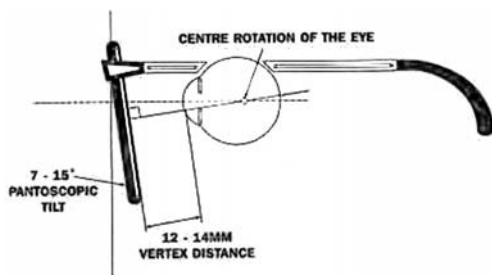
- Check the position of the horizontal and vertical optical centres.
- Check the frame fitting compared to the previous pair.

#### Evaluate use of lenses

- Check the patient's use. Are they turning their head sufficiently on first wearing?

#### Check the frame fitting

- Check the pantoscopic tilt of the frame and the vertical centration.
- For both distance and near vision, for every 2 degrees of tilt the vertical centres should be decentered 1mm down.
- If this was not considered at the time of dispensing, then reduce the frame tilt and the centres will be effectively lowered.
- Check the vertex distance is equal right and left, and kept to a minimum.
- Check the front isn't too flat or excessively bowed, as this may cause distortion.



#### OTHER TIPS

- Distortion maybe greater with Aspherics, the patient may take time to adapt.
- For positive powered lenses, the patient experiences pincushion distortion; for minus powered lenses, the patient experiences barrel distortion.
- Reflections at the lens surface are increased with Aspherics due the flatter lens form; dispense an MAR coating.
- Aspherics are normally 2 to 3D flatter than standard lenses, however the base curves are more difficult to check as the power changes over the lens surface.

### 4. Aniseikonia

#### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

- Blurred vision, headaches, dizziness or nausea when wearing the spectacles.
- Does the problem stop when not wearing the spectacles?
- Does the problem stop when wearing contact lenses?

#### Check the frame fitting

- Check the pantoscopic tilt of the frame and the vertical centration.
- Check the vertex distance is equal right and left, and kept to a minimum.
- Check the front isn't too flat or excessively bowed, as this may cause distortion.

#### Check the fitting on the patient

- Check the position of the horizontal and vertical optical centres.

#### Evaluate use of lenses

- Is the patient alternating between contact lenses and spectacles?  
If so, SM Contact Lens = 1
- The patient will notice a greater problem if not constantly wearing the spectacle prescription.

#### Check the lenses

- Are the base curves the same?
- The most positive powered eye should be dispensed with the flattest form lens in order to reduce Spectacle Magnification.
- A high index Aspheric lens would be the ideal.
- Verify the power.



#### OTHER TIPS

- Check the Visual Acuity.
- Difference in retinal image size between both eyes is 1% for every dioptre difference in power.
- Most patients can tolerate 1% difference.
- Patients who have grown up with Aniseikonia often do not experience any visual problems.
- If dispensing a hi-index Aspheric to the most positive eye, and a standard lens to the other eye, ensure you order both lenses from the same manufacturer for the MAR coatings to match.

## 5. Anisometropia

### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

- Visual problems when looking down to read e.g. diplopia.  
If so, the problem will cease when not wearing the spectacles.

### Check the lenses

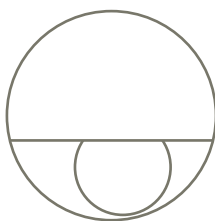
- Check the powers along the vertical meridians.
- If there is a difference in power this will induce vertical differential prismatic effect at near.

### Check the fitting on the patient

- Check the position of the horizontal and vertical optical centres.

### Dispensing solutions

- Slab off the most negative powered lens, in order to remove prism base down from the lower lens portion.
- Slab off flat top bifocals and E-lines, progressives and single vision lenses.



## 6. Aphakia

### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

- Distance or near vision.
- Is the patient a first time Aphake?

### Check the frame fitting

- Check the vertex distance is equal right and left, and kept to a minimum.
- Check the front isn't too flat or excessively bowed, as this may cause distortion, and reduce the field of view.

### Check the lenses

- Check the lens form – Lenticulars or Aspherics?
- Verify the power.
- Check the horizontal and vertical optical centres – they must be accurate.

### Evaluate use of lenses

- Is the patient experiencing increased Spectacle Magnification due to the lens power?
- Lens limitations include a narrow field of view and Ring Scotoma ('jack in the box' effect) when wearing Lenticulars.
- Perception of depth is often a problem for first time Aphakes.
- Expectations of achievable VA's and near print size may be a problem.

### OTHER TIPS

- Give the patient reassurance that this is normal following cataract surgery.
- Near print can be improved with the aid of a magnifier.
- Advise reading in good illumination and the working distance is important.

## 7. Off axis blur

### Ask the patient if the problem is related to:

- Right, left or both eyes.
- Does the patient notice colour fringing at the lens edges?

### Check the frame fitting

- Check the pantoscopic tilt of the frame and the vertical centration.  
For both distance and near vision, for every 2 degrees of tilt the vertical centres should be decentered 1mm down.
- Check the vertex distance is equal right and left, and kept to a minimum.
- Check the front isn't too flat or excessively bowed, as this may cause distortion.

### Check the lenses

- Verify the power and cyl axes.
- Is there a significant change compared to the previous pair?
- Check the horizontal and vertical optical centres.
- Check the lens form – are the lenses Aspheric?
- Are the base curves the same?
- Using a lens measure, check both lenses are made in the same forms i.e. either both plus cyl or both minus cyl form.
- Compare to the base curves of the previous pair.

### Check the fitting on the patient

- Check the position of the horizontal and vertical optical centres.

### OTHER TIPS

- Distortion maybe greater with Aspherics, the patient may take time to adapt.
- For positive powered lenses, the patient experiences pincushion distortion; for minus powered lenses, the patient experiences barrel distortion.
- Transverse Chromatic Aberration may be noticeable to the patient as 'colour fringing' at the edges of the lenses, due to the reduced v-value if hi-index lenses have been dispensed.
- Reflections at the lens surface are increased with Aspherics due the flatter lens form; dispense an MAR coating.
- Aspherics are normally 2 to 3D flatter than standard lenses, however the base curves are more difficult to check as the power changes over the lens surface.

Sally Bates is the proprietor of Identity Optical Training, specialising in training courses for practical examination revision and Optical Assistants VRQ training. She is also an ABDO examiner and part-time lecturer at the ABDO College, where she is responsible for teaching all aspects of practical dispensing.

### References:

With thanks to the following for the photographs:  
Essilor catalogue  
'Practical Optical Dispensing' David Wilson 2008  
Norville Prescription Companion



## ACCESS COURSES

ABDO College's Access Courses are designed to help prospective dispensing optician students to meet the necessary entry requirements. They are also a useful refresher for those who have been out of education for some time. The entry requirements for the Fellowship Dispensing Diploma (FBDO) and ABDO College Foundation Degree Course are five GCSEs at grade c or above, which must include English, mathematics and a science. Each access course is considered the equivalent of one GCSE. The access courses are available in the five key subjects of English, Mathematics, Optics and Dispensing, Human Biology and General Science.

- Courses commence: February 2010
- Method: Distance learning
- Entry requirements: Candidates should ideally be educated to GCSE standard and possibly have already attained some of the GCSEs required for enrolment to dispensing courses
- Method: Approximately 20 weeks

Application deadline:

**22 January 2010**

## WINTER REVISION COURSES

ABDO College will once again be offering their popular revision courses this winter to help students prepare for ABDO's examinations. Half day sessions will be offered in the four old final dispensing theory subjects, the new FQE Advanced OL & OD theory, four final dispensing practical elements, and the three theory contact lens subjects. A one day course is offered for contact lens practical revision. If you are taking any of these exams this winter these courses are for you. All revision courses will be held at ABDO College, Godmersham, Kent.

- Courses commence: Mid-November
- Method: Half day or full day tuition
- Overnight accommodation can be provided if required

Application deadline:

**6 November 2009**

For further information and application forms for these and other courses please contact DLI at ABDO College on 01227 733 921 or email [info@abdocollege.org.uk](mailto:info@abdocollege.org.uk). We look forward to hearing from you.

# A role of trust

In this second issue we continue our series of profiles of the College Trustees with features on Jennifer Brower and Kevin Gutsell who were both appointed to the ABDO College Board of Trustees in September 2008.

## A fulfilling life in optics

ABDO's Vice President **Jennifer Brower**, FBDO (Hons) LVA Cert Ed, brings extensive experience to her role as a College Trustee. An enduring area of particular interest throughout her career has been in low vision which she would encourage newly qualified dispensing opticians to consider specialising in.



Education and training have been central to Jennifer Brower's working life. She was originally a lecturer in business studies before training as a dispensing optician at City & East London College. Together with her optometrist husband David, she established an independent village practice in Hertfordshire and, last year, the couple celebrated its 30th anniversary. Over the years, Jennifer and David have built a loyal and long-standing patient base. She says, 'We are now seeing the children of the children we first saw all those years ago.'

Among her many roles within ABDO and optics in general, Jennifer is an examiner for the ABDO Low Vision Honours Diploma, Chairman of the Low Vision Committee and Chairman of ABDO's Benevolent Fund Management Committee. She also served for seven years as a member of the General Optical Council.

She is also an author and her articles have appeared in many publications including *Dispensing Optics*, *Optometry Today*, the *Sight Care Group Newsletter* and local community publications.

Jennifer says 'Although I changed my career early on, ABDO has given me the opportunity to continue my teaching through lecturing and examining and this has been a source of great pleasure for me over the years.

Jennifer's interest in low vision began early on in her career when she became aware of the special needs of elderly low vision patients. She explains, 'Older patients often believed that nothing could be done to improve their reduced vision. I was also concerned that optical practices were not generally recognised as sources of help by younger adults and children who needed low vision aids.'

In 1994, Jennifer and David were among the first ten ABDO Low Vision Honours diplomates. Jennifer says, 'The Diploma continues to set the highest standard in low vision expertise in UK optics.' In 1998, Jennifer was a founder member of the ABDO Low Vision Committee and in 2004, as part of a GOC Committee looking at revising core competencies for training DOs, Jennifer was instrumental in introducing competencies in low vision. She says,

'I believed then – and still do – that specific low vision training would provide our members with the confidence to undertake low vision work.' It would also encourage more members to specialise in low vision. The competency-based dispensing courses commenced in 2006 and Jennifer is looking forward to congratulating the first graduates at Canterbury Cathedral later this year.

Jennifer has been a member of Area 11 (London) since she was a student and served as Chairman for eighteen years. She says, 'We were the first Area to have a designated CET officer and we continue to actively encourage students to attend our events. We also have a student representative on our Committee.'

In her role as College Trustee, Jennifer has this message for students: 'When you qualify as a dispensing optician you will be entering a very worthwhile profession. You may go on to specialise in low vision or contact lenses, and decide to study for one of the ABDO Honours Diplomas, but whatever you choose your patients will expect the highest standards of expertise and professionalism. Be proud of these skills – which set you apart from others – and you will gain much satisfaction from using them throughout your working life.'

## Working across the profession spectrum

The past few years have been eventful for **Kevin Gutsell** FBDO. He is about to complete his first year as a College Trustee, he became a member of the Dispensing Optics Journal Advisory Committee in 2007, and a member of the FMO Board in 2006. All this – in addition to his role as an ABDO College Personal Tutor, his position as professional services director with Nikon Optical – and new baby Liam, born on the 5 February this year, weighing in at 9lb 6ozs!

Kevin Gutsell joined Melson Wingate as a trainee DO in 1984, qualifying in 1987. He worked for the group for ten years until, after managing several of their practices in the south east region he then went in to independent practice with Wendy Carey Opticians for two years. However, the attraction of sales became irresistible and, in 1996, he became an area account manager for Alcon Labs UK.

Kevin says, 'I enjoyed nearly three years of selling solutions to contact lens opticians across the region when the opportunity of getting back into spectacle lenses arose. Suddenly I was selling the attributes of lens designs, coatings and brands to the many knowledgeable opticians in London and the south east.' Although working primarily in

manufacturing, Kevin has been able to combine this with an active and professional association within ABDO. This includes his role, for the past 20 years, as a distance learning tutor. It was this experience that led him, in 2002, to try his hand at teaching with City and Islington College. However, another turn of events meant he had to make a difficult choice. He says, 'A great opportunity at Nikon Optical arose – meaning, with some sadness, that my time at City and Islington was to be shortened.' Fortunately Kevin's positions within Nikon have always included a degree of training responsibility and, to this day, in his current role as professional services director, Kevin can continue to enjoy teaching and learning.

Kevin became a College Trustee in October 2008 having seen an advertisement in *Dispensing Optics*. He says, 'I had been involved with the College for many years as a personal tutor and saw the trustee role as a progression of my experience as a tutor as well as my contact with the profession on a daily basis. It's great to be involved in the evolution of the College and to gain an understanding of what is required by the students of today and tomorrow.'

'The Trustees have an overall responsibility for the financial, administration and academic affairs of the College. This is obviously a very important and responsible position – ensuring the College is run both as a business and a high quality provider

## AOP/FODO President visits Godmersham

A recent visitor to ABDO College was Don Grocott, the president of both AOP (Association of Optical Practitioners) and FODO (Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians).

Commenting on his visit he said: 'This was my first visit to the College in Godmersham and it was very instructive and enjoyable. ABDO College has very imaginatively developed a fine teaching institution in this stunningly beautiful building with its spectacular grounds. Everyone I met was enthusiastic about the work they do at the College and showed a real interest in achieving its aims. Jo Underwood briefed me on the many educational and academic plans being developed by the College (also reported in the first College newsletter) whilst Tony Garrett gave me an overview of the considerable ambitions both ABDO and ABDO College have for the profession. There is clearly a great deal going on!'



ABDO College Principal welcoming AOP/FODO President Don Grocott



of education, as well as ensuring the long-term plan for this important institution.

Kevin regularly attends ABDO Area meetings, which includes giving CET-approved talks, and he is sometimes struck by the low attendance. He says, 'These meetings offer the best opportunity to learn what is happening in dispensing optics – how we are being represented, how we are being affected by GOC changes. They also offer the chance to catch up with old friends. Attendance at Area events is a very good way to become involved with the profession, so I would urge members to travel along to the meetings – and get involved!'

A Board member of the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians since 2006, Kevin has also been an active member of OLMADA since 2003. He comments: 'Again this carries a responsibility to the business' of the FMO as well as looking at the mid and long-term plan for the major trade body of our industry. The FMO represents the manufacturers and distributors to the optical industry as well as the organisation of Optrafair. It also fully understands the importance

of involvement and discussions with the other bodies in our industry.' Regarding the introduction of the College newsletter, Kevin feels very positive saying, 'It will, in a short amount of time, become the best form of communication we have – certainly the best way to keep the profession up to date with what is happening within education for opticians. I also enjoy the fact it is also available by email.'

Having worked for Nikon Optical for nearly ten years, first as an account manager, then as marketing director, Kevin greatly enjoys the wide-ranging appeal of his current role as professional services director. As well as CET and implementation of all internal and external training and education, it includes involvement in conferences, manufacturing and college events, market analysis, coordination of the marketing department, creation of all technical information plus communication with Nikon Optical internationally in the creation of new concepts, implementation of new products and compliance to use of brand.

Although he tries to do some dispensing, time constraints mean opportunities are few and far between right now. Kevin says, 'I enjoy dealing with opticians, as well as consumers. I must say though, that I tend to enjoy more the discussions on premium lens types, new concepts and brands. But there is also much to be said about the challenge of patients and the joy that is felt when you have fulfilled – or even exceeded – their visual needs.'

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