

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2020

Welcome to the first issue of this newsletter for 2020! A Happy New Year to you all, I hope and trust that you all had a fabulous Xmas! The New Year is a great time to look ahead to what the next 12 months has in store. As the world spends 365 days making its journey around the sun (correction - 366 days this year!) the New Year is the perfect way to set your stall out and decide what you want to achieve in the 366 days ahead. For some it could be getting fitter; having a healthier lifestyle; spending more time with the family; moving house; taking that offer of a new job; starting a new hobby or past-time; doing some voluntary work, the list is endless. And I guess that's the point. The next 366 days ahead are a blank canvas, like a cartographer's yet-to-be-drawn map of an uncharted land, new discoveries and experiences lie ahead of us all. Which is quite exciting when you think about it! Carpe diem as they say! The New Year is also a good time for reflection, an opportunity to take stock of all the good things that have happened, to celebrate

the achievements made (however big or small), to gain some perspective, and to recommit to being good, whatever being "good" means to you. The golden rule "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is a pretty good place to start. As a bonus, treating people well is an excellent way to be treated well yourself. It's a win-win strategy all round, whichever way you look at it.

One of the best things about treating our clients well at Clarke & Roskrow (we're not perfect at this but we do try really hard) is that our clients treat us well too. When I chat with other friends who have businesses of their own (and not just other opticians) I'll often hear stories of how miserable and unpleasant some of their clients are. This is always a surprise to my ears because it really isn't the experience that we have. Sure, we have the occasional Mr Grumpy once in a while, but we always give him the benefit of the doubt and cut people some slack. We all have our off-days. But by-and-large people will leave the practice in a better mood than when they

came in because we look after people and treat them well. Even the Mr Grumpys of this world! We'll often get Thank You cards, a box of chocolates, or even delicious homemade flap-jacks (you know who you are Mrs A!) and the occasional gift from our clients (not that I ever get to see most of these delicacies as they're often devoured long before I get a chance to sample anything!) And we even get the occasional gift or card by way of apology from Mr Grumpy when they've returned home and realised that maybe we shouldn't have been on the receiving end of their "hairdryer treatment".

So we treat our clients well and we're treated well by you in return. You're a good bunch and a pleasure to serve. And I think that's where my friends and colleagues with the miserable clients are going wrong - they haven't learnt the secret to being nice and the benefits that brings! Treating people well is good for us all. And that's my New Year message. Go forth and spread some kindness to the world! Wishing you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2020!

PAPER - THE SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY

You can't help but notice that you're reading this newsletter on good old-fashioned paper. Some of you have requested the newsletter be sent by email instead of traditional "snail-mail", commenting that email would be a much more efficient and economical way of distributing the newsletter. Some of you have even suggested that it's the more "modern" form of communication and that we're a bit behind the times sending a paper newsletter. But here's why you're receiving the newsletter on good old fashioned paper. People often get confused between "efficient" and "effective." Sure, sending this newsletter by email would be more efficient. It would be cheaper (no postmen to pay), it would be greener (no trees felled and no toxic inks used), and it would be faster. Email wins the efficiency argument hands-down and yes it's far more economical. But now let's look at the "effective" side of the equation. Effective means it works, it achieves the intended result, it has the desired effect. So, in the case of this newsletter, the paragraph on the back page explains why I write and send this newsletter. We're interested in having meaningful, lasting relationships with you, in some small way, in between visits to the practice. To hopefully give you some information and news that is more

interesting, entertaining and educating than the daily dose of misery you get from the mainstream media. This newsletter is designed to add a smidgen of pleasure to your day. We want to keep a relationship going with you because I think we can offer you something of great value - interesting eyewear, a level of optical experience and expertise, personal service and humanity that you can't get elsewhere.

Specsavers spends approximately **£25 million** on advertising. Read that number again. Chances are you receive more flyers and mailings, and see and hear more adverts from them each year than you do from me. I don't have that sort of money to spend on marketing, but I can afford to invest £0.70p in our relationship every month. I'm a pragmatic person. While email is more efficient, it won't get the same results. I wouldn't get this type of feedback from regular readers:

"Good Morning, Thank you for your latest newsletter. I really enjoy reading them, I even take them to work for them to read but I get them back to keep!" - Pamela M.

Nobody sits down with a nice cup of tea or coffee to have an enjoyable 5 minutes reading an email. You might have done 25 years ago when you got really excited to receive one email per day (after waiting 20 minutes for the dial-up connection to download the message).

Today you get 50 emails per day and every time you open your inbox it feels like you're drowning in a sea of inbound email. As much as you might like us, I know that if this newsletter showed up in your inbox you'll more than likely hit the delete key in a fraction of a second. It's ok, don't feel bad, I'd do the same thing myself. But a letter arriving through your letterbox. Now there's something to get excited about. And we don't get that many personal letters these days. And paper is so much easier on the eye than the glare of a screen. And it has a texture and smell that you can't get from a tablet or other digital device. It's an experience to read a nice letter. The simple fact is that a printed newsletter allows us to have a better relationship with clients

AS FEATURED IN EYESTYLIST!

I know I talk a lot about our renovation and refurbishment project in these pages. Although it's been nearly two years since the work was completed we still receive daily compliments about how we've transformed the practice, particularly from those of you who are long-standing clients and can remember what the practice used to look like. We've attracted a lot of interest since winning the regional Federation of Master Builders Award last June, most recently being featured in **Eyestylist**, the online magazine for fine eyewear and accessories. Clodagh Norton, editor of Eyestylist and sister

publication **Europe 20120** contacted me after reading about our story in another optical publication **The Optician**. Clodagh travels the world in search of new and exciting designers, eyewear brands and optical practices that are defying the norm when it comes to the world of optics. She's more accustomed to finding hidden gems in exciting cities such as London, Paris, New York, Milan, and Tokyo, so I was honoured to learn that she wanted to interview me and visit our practice in Harborough! We had an enjoyable couple of hours chatting about our story at Church Street and how the refurbishment project came about; where we took our inspiration from and how we went about choosing our design and building partners. Clodagh was also impressed by our selection of fine eyewear brands, something she's perhaps more used to finding in bigger, trendier towns and cities. To be recognised as **"...a stylish contemporary practice that rivals some of the UKs successful contemporary optical retail spaces"** is high praise indeed!

than an email would. Paper is definitely the superior technology. For me a paper newsletter delivered through your letterbox by a friendly whistling postie every month or so beats an impersonal nondescript email in your inbox any day of the week! For as long as you continue to enjoy receiving it and reading it, I'll continue to use paper and ink. But if you don't enjoy getting the newsletter, that's fine and it's easy to unsubscribe by emailing hello@clarkeandroskrow.co.uk or just give the team a call. I hope you'll stick around though!

To read Clodagh's article on Eyestylist visit: eyestylist.com/category/boutiques/

INTRODUCING...VIKESH!

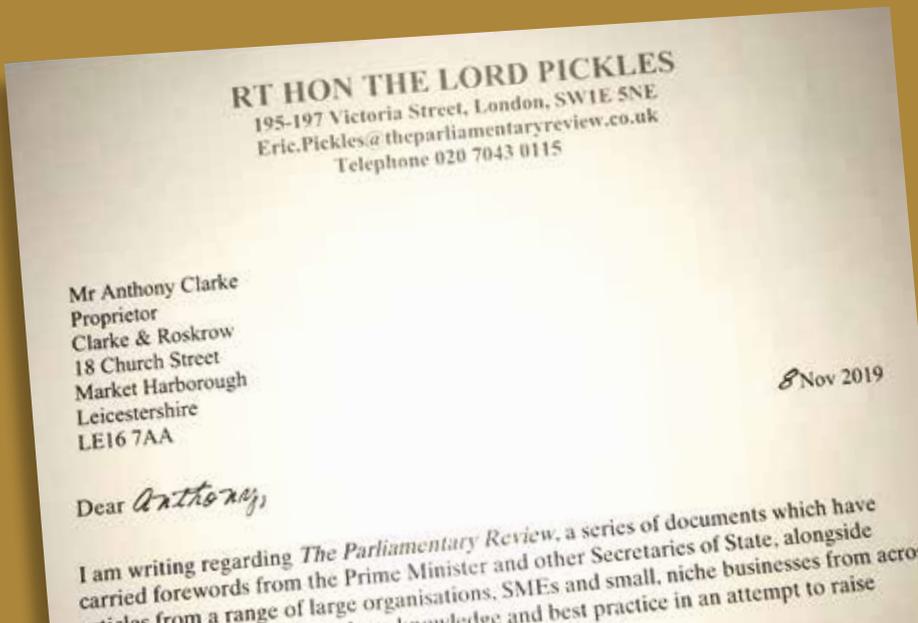
There's been a new face at Clarke & Roskrow Styling Opticians since the summer, and some of you may already have met our latest addition to the team. I thought it was time to introduce Vikesh properly through the pages of the Chronicle! Like me Vikesh is an Optometrist but this is his first experience of working in an independent practice. Vikesh first experience of optics was as a teenager when he did his work experience at a local opticians. Vikesh went on to study Optometry at the University of Bradford and qualified in 2004. He has worked in several optical practices within the Midlands, and is now working on Fridays and Saturdays for us at C&R. Vikesh is married and has a 2-year old daughter. Outside of work Vikesh enjoys gardening, going to the gym, cooking, and spending quality time with family and friends. Welcome to the team Vikesh!





A LETTER FROM THE HOUSE OF LORDS

I was surprised and intrigued to receive a letter from the Rt Hon The Lord Pickles in early November. Addressed to me personally the letter arrived in a very nice, buff envelope. I turned it over a few times in my hand, the paper felt almost soft to the touch, and on the reverse I could clearly see the return address for Rt Hon The Lord Pickles. Upon reading the letter I was even more puzzled as it was an invitation to contribute a 1,000-word article to the 2020 edition of *The Parliamentary Review*.



Now at this point, I should admit my ignorance, as I had absolutely no idea what *The Parliamentary Review* was. At the foot of the letter was the name and contact number for Lord Pickles' assistant who could shed more light on things, which he duly did! Basically, *The Parliamentary Review* is a series of documents written by people from a range of large businesses, SMEs, and smaller niche businesses from around the UK, with the purpose of sharing knowledge and best practice in an attempt to raise standards within each of the particular industries the contributors work in.

Our name was put forward by someone (no idea by whom), which is how we came to the attention of Lord Pickles, who is the Chairman of *The Parliamentary Review*. Not only will the article appear in the next edition, but also Karen & I will be invited along to the annual gala dinner at the Palace of Westminster, where we'll rub shoulders with some of the country's leading business executives, politicians and other notable figures from the worlds of sport and entertainment. I must admit to being flattered and humbled that someone out there has nominated us for *The Parliamentary Review*,



The Church Street Chronicle is a monthly(ish) conversation about life as it looks from the helm of Clarke & Roskrow Opticians. I believe in relationships and am working hard to build our practice based on lasting and loyal long-term relationships with our clients. Your feedback is invaluable.

I'm extremely interested in what our clients have to say and I enjoy responding to the comments. Please send your thoughts and comments on what we're talking about to hello@clarkeandroskrow.co.uk.

I try to rise to the mammoth challenge of making every newsletter a riveting read. If I've failed in your eyes to do that and you would rather not receive our newsletters please email hello@clarkeandroskrow.co.uk or telephone us on 01858 462996. Thank you.

and who feels that we have something to contribute, so thank you whoever you are!

The four-years of writing these pages should stand me in good stead when the time comes for me to write my 1,000 words!