

COMPETITION SEASON

Welcome to this March edition of the Church Street Chronicle. As I type, the wind is howling and the rain is near horizontal as storm Ciara blasts its way across the UK. And yet, despite the storms and wintry weather, there is definitely a sense that spring is just around the corner. Cherry blossoms are appearing on the trees, snowdrops are on show in the woods, and the daffodils are just starting to poke through. Another indication that spring is in the air is that this time of the year is also competition time, particularly in the optical industry with many trade and professional competitions taking place around this time.



Last year was a great year for C&R, having been finalists in the Fashion Practice of the Year category of the Optician Awards last March, and being regional winners in the Federation of Master Builders Awards for our renovation and refurbishment project in June. This year, I'm delighted to report that we're finalists in the inaugural Harborough District Business Awards in the Retailer of the Year category.

The awards are to celebrate, support, recognise and reward the town's hardworking, innovative and enterprising businesses, so I'm thrilled that the judging panel has put us through to the final in our category. I'm also delighted to be a category sponsor for the "Outstanding Personal Achievement Award", and to be supporting the first of what will hopefully be an annual event in the district's business calendar.

The awards ceremony is also a great way for me to thank my team for their hard-work, and it's a good excuse for a team outing and to get our glad rags on! The awards ceremony will be held at The Three Swans Hotel in Market Harborough on 6th March, so hopefully I'll be reporting good news in April's newsletter!

Thanks for your Google reviews!

Over the past 12 months many of you have taken the time to leave us a review on Google. As I type we have 63 5* Google reviews, second only to our friends at the Big Green Glasses Machine (or Specsavers as you might know them). Our Google reviews are the highest of any other independent optician in the town, and in fact the second highest of any independent optician in Leicester and Leicestershire, which is a fabulous achievement

for a small team of eyewear enthusiasts in a small market town in South Leicestershire!

Your Google reviews have a number of benefits. Firstly, you give the team a warm glow each time a new review pops up on our Google page. It shows them that we're on the right track, we're making people happy with the service and eyewear we provide and you like what we do, which is hugely satisfying and fulfilling. Secondly, your

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Google reviews help other people who are in search of an optician they can trust and that has something different and unique to offer than the “mainstream” opticians on the High Street; thirdly, they are often an enjoyable read, none more so than our most original Google review so far from Hilary B. who left us this delightful review last December:

“If you want to feel great in your glasses everyday, Then there’s only one place to go without delay, From start to finish the staff and service are beyond measure, They make your visits there such a pleasure, Everyone is so different but they will have just the right frame for you, Different styles, shapes and sizes and lots of colours too, There really is only one place to go, And that is Clarke & Roskrow.”

– Hilary B.

New!

And now, as a Thank You for your Google reviews, every month we are giving away a **meal for two worth £75!** Simply tell us your favourite restaurant and we’ll do the rest! And if you’re one of the 50 or so people to have left us a Google review last year don’t worry, I’ll be doing a separate prize draw just for you! But we don’t want any fake reviews; this competition is only for existing Clarke & Roskrow clients and we’re looking for real, sincere, honest reviews of Clarke & Roskrow Styling Opticians.



Refer A Friend Competition Winner!

Congratulations to Mandy Noss and husband Steve on winning our latest Refer A Friend competition, a luxury hot-air balloon ride experience courtesy of our friends at Virgin Balloon Flights. Mandy and Steve will experience about an hour of exhilarating flying time over the UK’s stunning landscape at anything up to 5,000 feet! They also receive a luxury sparkling wine and chocolates gift hamper.

Thanks to Stephanie S. for the referral! And thank you to all of you who have recommended your friends and relatives to us over the past year or so, your recommendations are highly appreciated.

And I’m pleased to announce details of our new Refer A Friend competition enclosed with this latest edition of the newsletter!

“a luxury hot-air balloon ride experience courtesy of our friends at Virgin Balloon Flights”

CHARITY FUNDRAISING EVENT REMINDER!

Just a reminder about the charity fundraising gig being held on **Thursday 12th March** at Little Bowden Bowls Club. Friends of C&R Deborah Seabrook and partner Phil Riley are hosting the event to raise much needed funds for **Cransley Hospice** in Kettering, and **New Futures**, a charity supporting disadvantaged adults and children in Nepal. Having sponsored the sell-out gig at Harborough Theatre in 2018 with Phil’s

previous band “Borderline Crossing”, we are delighted to be sponsoring this latest performance. Phil’s band (renamed “Kites Collective”) will be joined by Heidi Carascon (“a veritable nightingale” says Phil!) for an evening of original songs, cover versions, and high quality musicianship with an acoustic guitar feel. Having been a guest at the concert in 2018 I can guarantee you’ll enjoy the show!

Tickets cost £10. For more information call Phil Riley on 07715 535219

A DOG’S LIFE!

The Week reported recently that a black Labrador named River that failed guide dog training and lasted just days as a trainee police sniffer dog has found her true calling - supporting vulnerable people being held in police custody. River was bred to be a guide dog, but her inability to resist chasing squirrels made her unsuitable for that job; the consequences could have been disastrous! She failed in her next vocation as a police sniffer dog for the same reason.

Being the proud owner of a working Cocker Spaniel, I can fully understand this story of dogs giving chase. Just what makes those damn squirrels so chasable? Or, for that matter, the birds, pheasants, rabbits, hares and lately badgers! I’m concerned that my beloved Spaniel pup is becoming a menace to our indigenous wildlife. Although his body-count is quite low (one pigeon and one French magpie to date), it’s only a matter of time before he bags a pheasant for his labours. Or worse, he comes off worse the wear after hassling Mr Badger one time too many! Wilfred isn’t exactly a blood-thirsty attack-dog, as those of you who have met him in recent times will confirm, but this is an undesirable character trait. And he comes from good breeding, both parents being excellent gun dogs (to be fair, his talents as



a gun dog are wasted on us keeping him as a pet.) And we’re not taking a lackadaisical approach to his training; we work with a gun dog trainer in Gretton, he’s doing really well responding to whistle and hand-signals, sitting, staying, walking to heel, all are coming along brilliantly, but this unrestrained desire to chase almost anything that moves is causing a headache. Like most problems, this one is of our own making, having allowed him to chase birds unchecked from an early age. Remedial action is being taken to modify this chasing habit, but I do wonder what to do with him if this habit can’t be reigned-in. I wonder if the Leicestershire Police could use him to give chase to criminals..?.



Skiing with ZEAL this season!

As you know we only work with the creme de la creme when it comes to our eyewear and lenses. One of our (and your) favourites is Maui Jim, the ultimate in polarised sunglasses technology, which has been a firm favourite since we introduced the collection back in 2016.

For those of you unfamiliar with Maui Jim, it's the world's third largest sunglasses manufacturer, a privately owned company based in Maui, Hawaii, where they know a thing or two about the sun! They make phenomenal polarised sunglasses, which is why they are the preferred sunglasses for the PGA golf and ATP tennis tours, the Wimbledon tennis line and court judges, and the International Cricket Council umpires.

Maui also owns a company called ZEAL, based in Colorado, far removed from the almost 365-days-a-year sunshine of Hawaii. But what it lacks in sunshine it more than makes up for in snow! With a philosophy of making a quality and durable ski-goggles that you can trust in the harshest of conditions, ZEAL are at the forefront of ski-goggle technology. With five goggle styles and three lens choices, including the Automatic+, the only ski-goggle to combine



polarised and photochromic technology in one lens, the ZEAL ski-goggle collection will have you covered this season, whatever the weather!

And I'm delighted to announce that Clarke & Roskrow Styling Opticians is the exclusive stockist of both Maui Jim sunglasses and ZEAL ski-goggles in Market Harborough and the surrounding area. If you're heading off to the slopes for some last minute ski-ing over Easter, and you're in need of ski-goggles or your current ones need replacing, call the team on 01858 462996 or email hello@clarkeandroskrow.co.uk and we'll arrange a convenient time for you to try the ZEAL ski-goggles - I think you'll be impressed!



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.

Marketing Genius!



I go to great lengths each month to put together this newsletter. Many of you compliment me on rising to this mammoth challenge and consider it to be great marketing. But a recent piece in The Week made me realise that this newsletter is nothing compared to the lengths some people will go to in order to get noticed. A lovelorn Sheffield man has raised his game in his search for romance. Thirty-year-old Mark Rofe, who describes himself as "extremely handsome

and modest", spent £450 for a billboard ad asking for a date. The ad features a picture of Mark along with a link to his website DatingMark.co.uk. The board is positioned on a busy roadside in Manchester, and Mark hopes it will help him to meet his perfect woman. "More than 1,000 people have got in touch" said Mark. "Half of them are men, but I'm still very flattered." Good luck in your search for romance Mark, you are a marketing genius! (Have a look at DatingMark.co.uk, it's very amusing!)