



# Optometrist of the Year

**W**inning the Optometrist of the Year Award at this year's Optician Eye Care Awards has only added to the reputation Andrew Millington has built up in the Welsh border town of Chepstow. As you approach his practice along a quaint biscuit tin lid thoroughfare, it is quite apparent that Millington Dawson Optometrists is integral to the local community. Even before winning, Millington was well known in the community and made no secret of his regular appearances in the local press. Perhaps this has been helped by his being spotted around town on his penny farthing bicycle or cruising in his van emblazoned with the practice logo. Winning the award has been big news in Chepstow and raised the Millington profile yet further. 'It has done nothing but good for the practice,' he says.

Millington is senior partner at the practice he co-founded 22 years ago. Over this period he has ensured the very best of instrumentation and provides a range of services reflecting his particular interests. The practice is involved in a diabetes scheme and, with Millington being accredited with the Welsh low vision scheme

Andrew Millington's emphasis on good communication at all levels makes him a worthy winner of this coveted award. **Bill Harvey** reports



**Andrew Millington enjoys a high profile in the Welsh Border town of Chepstow**

Autistic Society's award for clinical excellence.

Millington has a passion for clinical communication and the proper application and teaching of this subject. He is currently studying for a master's degree in psychology at Cardiff Metropolitan University and has just completed an iPro funded research project in patient satisfaction. His skills and interest in this subject will certainly have helped the practice establish itself as the trusted and successful eye care centre it has clearly become.

### Beyond the consulting room

His contribution to the local community goes way beyond matters concerning the practice. Whether helping raise funds for the Welsh prostate cancer charity, sporting dubious facial hair for the Movember fundraiser, trekking across Mongolia for help for Heroes, teaching in local schools about eye health, dressing as Santa each Christmas, organising the local Easter egg hunt or organising trade events in Chepstow, Millington's tirelessness in helping others is impressive.

He still manages to find time for 'extra-curricular' activities such as juggling and keeping chickens, but perhaps the recreation he is most fanatical about is rugby. 'Chepstow is a town divided by rugby,' he explains. 'On international days we all sport rugby jerseys and this leads to lots of friendly banter, making us seem human and approachable. In fact, people often pop in to just remind me of the results when we play badly!' His love of the sport is perhaps most apparent when he proudly recalls how he was instrumental in establishing the Magor Veterans RFC, a club which has gone from strength to strength and now boasts a youth programme too.

At the heart of Millington's success, however, and what makes him a worthy winner of this award, is his emphasis on good communication – not just with patients, but in encouraging best interpersonal skills in other students and practitioners. ●

as well as the Welsh WECI/PEARS programmes, has become a trusted primary care centre in the town. He adopted a fee structure that better represented professional services some years back and the practice has gone from strength to strength. He has always been keen to be involved in enhanced services and is often a first point of referral from allied professionals.

His enthusiasm for clinical work does not stop there, however. He is familiar to students at Cardiff University where he has responsibilities teaching undergraduate modules in learning difficulties, professional awareness along with postgraduate courses in paediatrics among others. As a member of the Cardiff University Special Assessment Clinic, he has been instrumental in raising the profile of eye care for people with special needs. This has been partly achieved by his promotion of the clinic resulting in it being shortlisted in the National



OPTICIAN  
AWARDS

### ● Optometrist of the Year Award, sponsored by CooperVision

Winner: Andrew Millington, Millington Dawson Optometrists

Shortlisted: Reshma Patel, Templeman Opticians  
Austin Roberts, Judith Roberts Opticians  
Rohit Narayan, Boots Opticians, Nuneaton  
Geoff Shayler, Shaylers Vision Centre