Probus Talk 9 April 2026

Opthalmology

or... Eyesight - what's normal, what's not and what can be done

Craig McArthur

Optometrist Craig McArthur, who owns Peter Ivins Eye Care and also works at various academic institutions, gave Allander Probus an extremely interesting talk on eye problems and treatments, emphasising how much the techniques and equipment have advanced in recent years.

Craig had an easy-going, knowledgeable approach and a very well-constructed slide presentation.

At times the slides were eye-wateringly full of medical names and descriptions, and sometimes even literally eye-watering with pictures of procedures – not for the squeamish!

Craig covered modern treatments for

- · Cataracts
- · Glaucoma
- · Macular Degeneration
- · Dry Eyes.

All of interest to our group as increasing age is a major driver for these conditions; for example 30% of over 65s will have cataracts and 75% of over 80s.

The good news is that cataract operations are relatively simple, straightforward and quick, especially when done by surgeons who regularly carry them out. The evacuation of the eye capsule and replacement by a type of lens can be as quick as 10 or 15 minutes and often with little numbing or sedation needed. Surprisingly the technique was originally thought of as medical quackery. It took over 20 years to be fully embraced by 1981.

Lifestyle and diet affect the onset of cataracts and other eye conditions.

Bad things are Smoking, overweight, sedentary, saturated fats, excessive UV sunlight & alcohol.
Good things are Omega 3 foods and control of the bad things.

Also, a major benefit comes from regular eye checks with ever more sophisticated equipment and techniques. Early diagnosis makes effective treatment far more likely and equipment improvements have reduced the need for more invasive treatments or injections. Software analysis of a patient's results over several years also makes interventions more accurate.

In a fast-changing area, gene therapy is also now possible for condition such as retinal pigmentosa but only partial eye transplants can be done yet, full replacements are still not possible.

Finally, Craig showed us some of the more lurid extreme treatments and also commented that the much-pushed laser treatment instead of glasses/contact lenses could be appropriate for some younger individuals. but was relatively crude and risky.

The group thanked him for his extremely knowledgeable and interesting explanation of an area of much relevance and interest to us.

Mel Burt April 2026