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Aesthetic Skin Clinic

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Guernsey Aesthetic Skin Clinic boasts two of Britain's top cosmetic doctors and plastic surgeons supported by a team of highly trained and committed nurses who get great satisfaction from seeing clients enjoy life changing cosmetic procedures. The Rock caught up with Dr John Curran and Mr Nick Percival and their nursing and support staff, who talk about why they continue to be so passionate about delivering state of the art aesthetic treatments to the Channel Islands.



Christine Bell worked as a midwife for 25 years before turning her skills to the field of cosmetic surgery. She joined the team at the clinic five years ago and now provides nursing support to cosmetic and plastic surgeon Nick Percival.

"Nick travels over to our clinic every two weeks to carry out procedures under local anaesthetic. Any procedures that require general anaesthetic are carried out at The Welbeck Hospital in London, but all the back-up care is provided by us here in Guernsey", explains Christine.

"Nick carries out consultations here at our clinic at South Esplanade to assess a patient's suitability. He will also take time to talk through the procedures and what the patient can expect once they get to the hospital in London."

The clinic is able to provide a whole range of cosmetic procedures but explains Christine, at present, the most popular treatment, and one which produces amazing results, is the upper and lower eye lifts carried out by Nick.

"It is a very subtle procedure but it certainly makes a huge difference. It is carried out under local anaesthetic here on the island, and the recovery time is relatively quick, but the results are incredible. Your whole eye area opens up and you look just naturally refreshed."

Christine explains that she has undergone upper and lower eye lid surgery herself so she feels able to put the patient at ease.



“It certainly helps if you are able to empathise with the patient and talk them through the procedure by drawing upon your own personal experience. I am more than happy to do so and it certainly helps.

But we also carry out lots of other diverse and life changing procedures – anything from scar revisions, the pinning back of ears to the latest in Vaser liposuction.

This is a state of the art version of the traditional fat removal system which breaks down the fat before it is removed. It is used for targeting specific areas like backs, arms and tummies.”

She also reports that the clinic is seeing an increase in the number of male clients.

At one time we did cater mainly for women but men are now catching on to how different they can look with a range of subtle treatments.”

Christine says that working in the field of aesthetics has given her a new passion for

her work.

“After I left midwifery I did work as a practise nurse at the surgery where Dr Curran worked. When he branched out on his own I was delighted to get a job at the clinic. Before becoming a midwife I did work on a plastic surgery unit and really loved it.”

“Working with Nick for the past four years has been really enjoyable as we are a small team and a very friendly one.”

“Most of us have been here more or less since the clinic started and, like all small teams we are able to work across all areas of the business so every day is different and varied.”

“The most important thing to say is that you never get tired of seeing someone feel happy about looking and feeling better about themselves following a treatment or procedure.”

Former general nurse Joyce Canham has worked with the ASC team for the past nine

years and loves the variety of her role as a support nurse to Dr Curran.

“I am also trained to carry out a number of procedures – primarily the Soprano Hair Removal treatment which is becoming increasingly popular”, says Joyce.

“This is a sophisticated laser hair removal system which gives patients amazing results. It is fast and efficient and works well for a number of conditions. We really get a buzz from being able to help women who have been struggling to cope with unwanted hair through a number of reasons. We see young women who have polycystic ovaries (where they develop cysts on the ovaries) and one of the side effects is the arrival of excessive hair on their face and bodies. It’s so lovely to be able to help someone and see what a great difference we can make”.

“Many women suffering from these conditions are concerned about the way the outside world views them. The hair removal

treatments allow them to go out with renewed self-confidence. But we also use the Soprano treatments for general grooming – and men are now taking it up too!”

The clinic is also able to help people remove small tattoos with the Q Switch laser system.

“This is a treatment to help fade and remove black ink based tattoos. It works best on smaller designs or initials – and again, this is a growth area for us though we don’t advocate it for coloured tattoos or overly large designs.”

Joyce also assists with Botox, sun damage, lesion removal and dermal filling treatments– minor procedures which are carried out under local anaesthetic at the clinic.

“Most of all I enjoy the patient contact I have here as we do tend to build up good relationships with our patients. No two days are the same either. I think the world of skin aesthetics has come a long way and we all love being a part of it working alongside some of the country’s best names in their field.

Hayley Rogers is the nursing manager at the Aesthetic Skin clinic, where she enjoys many roles alongside her nursing care.

“I enjoy assisting Dr Curran during his busy clinics, expanding my knowledge on the latest cutting edge anti-aging techniques, but also have my own patient base where I focus on skin rejuvenation, acne and pigmentation treatments.”

“I have recently developed my role in clinical governance and auditing. It is so important that standards of care are maintained to an optimum standard to provide patients with the best possible outcome.”

Hayley is four years into a law degree which has given her great insight into the importance of professional standards and ethics, and she regularly audits treatments to

ensure that they are exceeding patient expectations.

Like her colleagues Hayley has an extensive history as a clinical nurse, initially working as a surgical nurse at the PEH before embarking upon a career as a practice nurse. Despite gaining extensive experience and job satisfaction as a hospital nurse, Hayley now enjoys working within a smaller personalised nursing team where you can really focus on personal development.

“This is what makes the clinic so unique, we are more like a family, having all worked together for many years, it is a lovely welcoming experience for all our patients, where they feel comfortable and confident”.

I asked Hayley to tell me what she enjoys the most about her job.

“I really don’t see it as a ‘job’ because every day is so varied and enjoyable. Building a relationship with the patient is very important. so you can provide treatment that really makes a difference. It is always very rewarding to see how even a small change can make such a major difference to a person’s self-esteem and confidence. Hair transplantation procedures literally transform people’s lives, and Thermage body treatments, which tighten flabby skin, are a fantastic confidence booster particularly after pregnancy and weight loss when self-esteem is at a low.

“I have recently trained as a specialist in Lustre Blue Light acne treatment, which has been a revelation for teenagers and adults with acne. You can never under estimate how destructive acne can be to a person’s life, enabling them to regain control and treat their acne in the comfort of their home has been so rewarding.”

“I wouldn’t ever want to change the work I am doing no.... I love it.... particularly as I also get to know all the latest rejuvenation secrets....!

“I am also trained to carry out a number of procedures – primarily the Soprano Hair Removal treatment which is becoming increasingly popular”, says Joyce. “This is a sophisticated laser hair removal system which gives patients amazing results. It is fast and efficient and works well for a number of conditions”





FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

Our profile of Aesthetic Skin Clinic wouldn't be complete without a word from its founder. Jon Taylor builds a profile of a man who has built a team recognised for excellence in all they do - from top to bottom.

Dr John Curran is unaware of our first encounter. It took place in the departures lounge at Guernsey airport. As I wait with my wife for a flight to Jersey she tugs on my sleeve and whispers, 'a weekend in St Helier is lovely darling but if you really want to thank me for looking after you, our two errant sons and the dog then spend some money with him,' gesturing towards an upstanding gentleman in tailored suit and glowing health.

The gentleman in question is a leading physician and respected senior member of the medical community; he has graced the pages of Tatler, has an undeniable Irish charm, specialises in cosmetic dermatological, medical and surgical procedures. He is known professionally for his role in the education of cosmetic medical practitioners and is an active member and Past President of the British College of Aesthetic Medicine and only the third person to be made a Fellow of the Association. He also lectures regularly on aesthetic medicine, is quoted in leading cosmetic medicine journals and is involved in monitoring and setting industry standards through the committee. His experience of cosmetic procedures span over 15 years and Dr Curran apparently has a special interest in skin ageing, radio frequency, laser treatments and dermatological surgery.

Now that my wife has fully informed me of Dr Curran's credentials I, after several married years of experience, play safe with the line. "But darling you don't need anything done? This proceeds with a gentle squeeze of my hand in appreciation of my well intentioned gesture but I then ruin by making a schoolboy error and push the boundaries of honesty with "No my love, you really are as beautiful as the day we met." Announced with such amateur sincerity the person sitting next to me feels the full force of the impact of the wife's elbow. I am then presented with a list of lines, defects and embellishments that she believes Dr Curran can resolve without too much trouble at all. She then highlights an

even longer list of possible enhancements I could do with myself. From head to toe as it turns out.

Our flight is called and Dr Curran joins the queue to board the short trip. As passengers pass through the gate an attractive and professional woman approaches him and talks openly about her next appointment and how much she is looking forward to seeing the guys at Aesthetic Skin Clinic (ASC) again. She enquires about the health of Dr Curran's wife and family and asks him to say hello to the nurse who she had met at the clinic. Dr Curran politely engages the woman in conversation and quietly asks to her wellbeing. 'All the better thanks to you' she says with a distinctive air of mischief. The sleeve gets another tug and the inevitable "I know her, I wonder what she's had done?" is whispered to me. Assuming it is a question rather than a statement, I respond. "Not much, she looks pretty good to me". Some things are best not said out loud (an 'umm' would have sufficed). The person who had been sitting next to me and is now waiting to board, quickly moves to the back of the queue as another elbow is set in motion.

In my naivety I assumed anyone who has undertaken procedures of this nature would want to keep it relatively quiet, such is my pre-conceived notion that this subject is still one of certain taboo. Therefore, approaching an imminent physician, renowned for cosmetic procedures and publically thanking him for cosmetically enhancing her, came somewhat of a surprise to me. My wife explained during the short flight, that it would give the lady in question so much more confidence, make her feel sexier and above all proud of her body. "You must understand that the benefits are not just aesthetic but psychological," she said.

Perhaps I should be more aware of the benefit of cosmetic treatments? After all, they've been around for some time. It is certainly far removed from the somewhat sensational headlines of tabloid horrors stories and American TV series such as

the vane characters in NipTuck. Cosmetic surgery (or aesthetic surgery), defined as surgery undertaken for reasons of appearance, has long had a relationship to the medical profession in general. During the First World War it was nurtured and legitimised by the necessity for surgeons to reconstruct innumerable faces that were hideously shattered and scarred from bombs, because of the limited protection to soldiers' heads and necks provided by the trenches that were the main line of defence during that war. The modern Americanised practice of 'Plastic Surgery' was formed in 1921 by a group of trained specialists in the field of reconstructive surgery. They formed the American Association of Plastic Surgeons and thereby professionalised their specialty by establishing requirements for admission, while they combined it with the field reconstructive surgery, they were also responding to the lucrative moneymaking potential of aesthetic surgery, which was closely tied to major themes of the American experience, such as the long-standing drive toward individual self-improvement and pleasing personality. Overriding all this was women's drive to achieve beauty, which had become especially commercialised during the 1920s.

Cosmetic Treatments have been around for centuries but the legitimacy of the practitioners has been an issue well before the Americans formed an association to regulate procedures in the 1920s. "There are fascinating historical examples of Egyptian surgeons 'having a go' but how can anyone be truly sure, that the doctor or surgeon, in whom you place your trust, has the skill and caring to make your experience just perfect," explained Dr Curran when I caught up with him for this interview. Dr Curran's company, The Aesthetic Skin Clinic, and its Cosmetic Surgery Partners, have been offering cosmetic medical and surgery solutions for patients for over 20 years. Each of the company's medical team is recognised as a leader in their field, by

“His patients are certainly advocates of his work, as my experience at Guernsey airport would suggest but Dr Curran has also been acknowledge by the prestigious Tatler magazine as one of the top 30 anti-aging experts in the land”

both patients and colleagues according to Dr Curran, through lecturing, academic achievements and by the excellence of their work. “Most of all, we are doctors, who care about our patients, and who place their health and interests as our primary concern. Our promise to patients is excellence in cosmetic dermatology and surgery, delivered by an up to date and skilled medical team, using cutting edge technologies in a safe medical environment,” said Dr Curran.

One of Dr Curran's favourite quotes is by the philosopher Franz Kafka, ‘anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old’. He says it sums up the spirit of so many of his patients. “We will never lose sight of the deeply personal nature of what we do for our patients and we truly delight in helping them achieve their goal. Whatever that might be,” said Dr Curran.

My perception had wrongly been that cosmetic surgery was about vanity but it's so much more about wellbeing. You can never put a high enough price on happiness but my observation in discussing the industry with Dr Curran is that the modern face of cosmetic surgery is as much about creating confidence as it is about shaping beauty. Innovation also plays a significant part of his success and as so many of his patients would testify; technology is just as relevant as surgical procedure.

His patients are certainly advocates of his work, as my experience at Guernsey

airport would suggest but Dr Curran has also been acknowledge by the prestigious Tatler magazine as one of the top 30 anti-aging experts in the land. This is in recognition for Dr Curran's ability to recognise breakthrough treatments before others. For example, the Obagi skincare and peels range which eradicate dark spots, and Intracel, a Korean import that uses radiofrequency. Just two of the

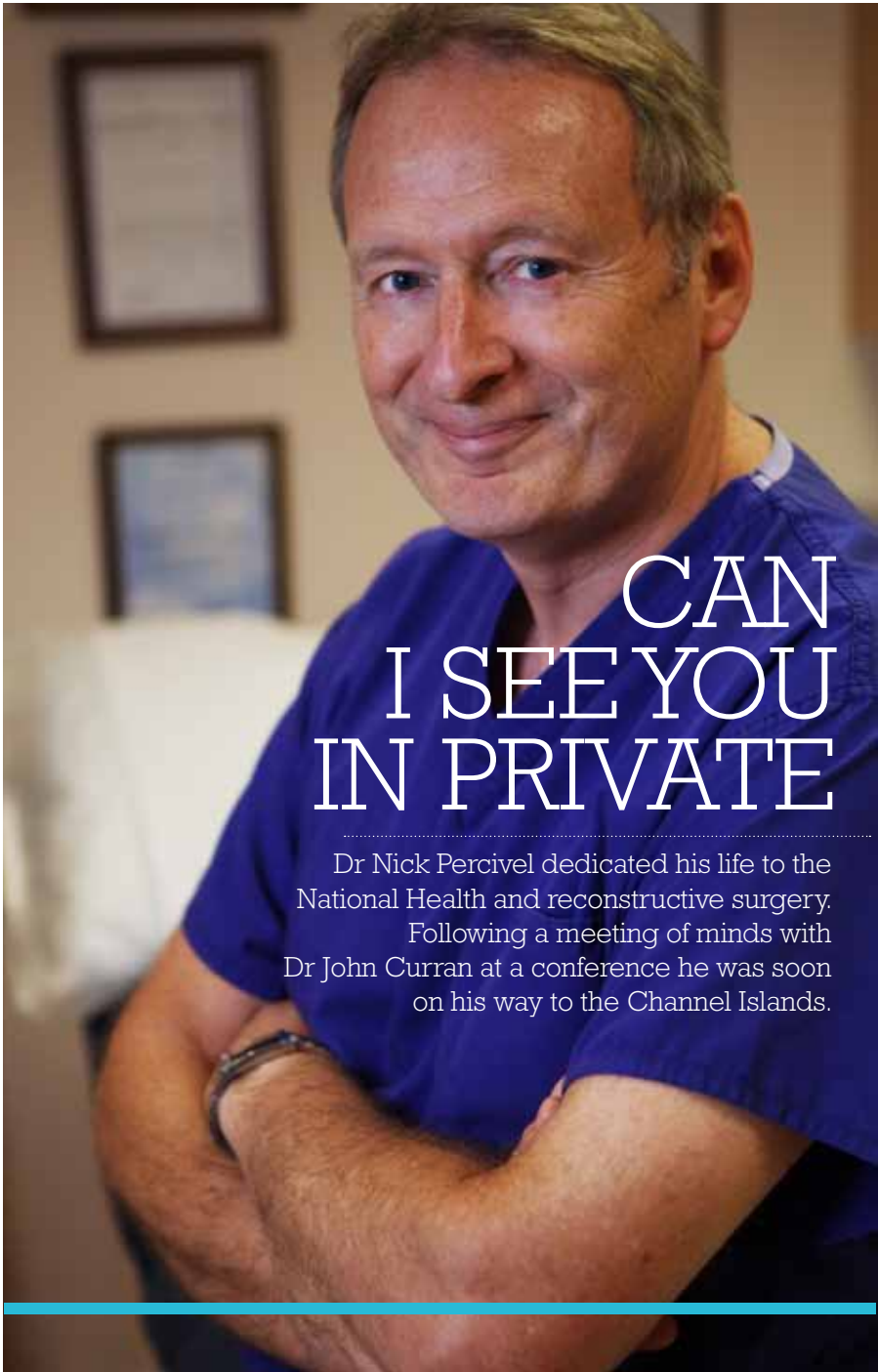
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diverse range of non-surgical procedures now available from ASC which has grown to include clinics in Guernsey, Jersey, Belfast and London. Dr John Curran has been at the forefront of the evolution of the industry and is proud of the Clinic's achievements in the field of cosmetic medicine. “There is nothing I have seen

in New York, Paris or London that we do not have in the Channel Islands and that's no surprise as I believe we have one of the most discerning clientele in the UK,” he said. “I have recently been working with some of my colleagues from Cornell University, New York on deep sculpturing and facial volumising techniques with Sculptra, a suspension which dissolves very quickly but leaves a stimulus in the tissues which causes new tissue and collagen to form. This is a highly advanced use of this treatment and needs to be delivered with great medical skill and underlying knowledge of the facial structures but in the right hands the results are astonishing.”

Dr Curran talks passionately about his profession and although his international acclaim is impressive, perhaps his most admirable attribute is his down to earth approach to people. The good doctor is comfortable in his island home and the relationship he enjoys with his patients is just part of the ongoing popularity of cosmetic procedure in Guernsey. As we've demonstrated in our profile of ASC, the expertise starts from at the front door but the benchmark is set from the founder of this extraordinary Guernsey business.

For my own well-being perhaps next year's anniversary should be spent in the good company of Dr John Curran and his excellent team.



CAN I SEE YOU IN PRIVATE

Dr Nick Percival dedicated his life to the National Health and reconstructive surgery. Following a meeting of minds with Dr John Curran at a conference he was soon on his way to the Channel Islands.

Five years ago top plastic surgeon Nick Percival gave up his national health post at the Charity Cross Hospital to go full pelt into private practise.

“I decided that after 25 years of reconstructive surgery, I had paid my dues to the National Health Service and it was time to do something different and concentrate on a private practise.”

He is now a regular visitor to the Channel Islands and works at the Aesthetic Skin Clinics in both Guernsey and Jersey.

“I met Dr John Curran at a conference 10 years ago when we were both investigating chemical peels. He asked me if I would consider coming over to the islands to work with his team at the Jersey clinic, and five years ago I took on the Guernsey side of things too when the consultant plastic surgeon, Dai Davies, retired.”

“There are some amazing procedures available but I would say without a doubt that he blepharoplasty (eyelid lift) is by far the best value for money – and one of the most effective.

The best thing about this procedure is that after about 10 days you are able to go back to work and people will tell you that you look well, or refreshed, but they can't quite work out why. This is a subtle, safe and straight forward procedure which is always very effective and patients are always very happy with the outcome.”

We have built up a good solid reputation at the clinic for the procedures we carry out, and we recognise that the island community works well as word of mouth recommendations are so powerful.

“We have also noticed an increasing number of male patients – that's a trend which has changed over the years. Ten years ago the majority of our patients were females now men make up around 20 percent of our clients – and again, I would say that eyelid surgery is the most popular among men too.”

Targeted liposuction – a state of the art procedure using the latest in vaser technology which breaks down the fat cells before the fat is removed.

“This is very effective and less traumatic. Because this treatment causes heat it is also doubly effective as there is shrinkage of the skin. This is an exciting and effective field and we are delighted to be able to offer such a professional service to Channel Islanders.