

## Surgery News

As most of you will be aware, I have a tough job to do this month, which is to bid farewell to Dr Mathew Hunt, who will be leaving the practice and moving on to a more peaceful, relaxed existence from 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Rumour has it that he's moving to Italy to grow apples and keep hens.

Dr Hunt, "MH" to his colleagues, was brought up at Pond House on The Green here in Great Bentley and joined the practice in August 1989. I am told that he looked about fifteen years old in those days. He still has his boyish good looks but 24 years of looking after you lot has left him with a scattering of grey hairs which betray his true vintage.

He has always been good copy for "Surgery News", with his exploits at various catamaran regattas – he's off tackling the world championships as I write this – and his biking expeditions to Europe, Africa and South America. There have been rounders and cricket matches to report on, including his century for St Osyth Seconds after which he had the tremendous good sense to retire from "proper" cricket immediately. What will I find to write about in future?

As far as the surgery is concerned, I think everyone would agree that Dr Hunt's time here has been spectacular in many ways. Along with "NC", Dr Cavenagh – plus of course Drs George ("MG") and Steiner ("NS") – he transplanted the practice from its old home in what is now Bentley House, into "The Hollies", which has been improved and extended four times so that it now boasts eleven consulting rooms plus (just) enough space for its ever increasing admin needs. Over the years here our patient population has risen sharply, which has led to the number of clinicians increasing to 7 GPs, 3 Nurses and 3 Healthcare Assistants. Additionally, we now host a variety of other clinics – midwives, health visitors, counsellors, physiotherapists, an osteopath, podiatrists, a smoking cessation expert and a patient care advisor.

This time has also seen our patient record keeping transfer from paper to computers, the introduction of telephone consultations and the dreaded e-mail. The practice website is now old-hat. The roles of Nurse Practitioner and Healthcare Assistant have come from nowhere; there are countless new treatments and a vast array of modern drugs. Dr Hunt also led us to "Training Practice" status, so for the last 14 years we have trained a succession of aspiring GPs before releasing them on the outside world. They have a lot to thank him for.

The energy of the then three "young" partners (NS, NC and MH that is) kept us at the forefront of innovation for a generation and led in 1997 to the establishment of The Green Pharmacy, which serves the whole area, not just our patients, regularly processing 17,000 prescription items a month – many of them delivered direct to people's homes – as well as being an excellent source of quality pharmacy goods and services.

I have been lucky enough to work with the doctors for 21 years now and one thing that has been notably constant over that time is their determination to foster good customer care, fairness and cheerful teamwork throughout the staff. As a result, we have a terrific and stable team who actually seem to enjoy coming to work each day, and who always have the good of the practice – that means you, the patients – at heart.

With Dr Hunt going and Dr Cavenagh gradually withdrawing from the scene, the new generation of "young" partners have the unenviable task of matching their achievements by taking the practice forward even further. You can be sure that those who head the team from September, Drs Bhatti, O'Reilly and Nambi – shortly to be joined by Drs Karen Chumbley and Bhavini Muir – will make a great job of it.

I don't think there's anything more to add this month other than to say, "Cheers Dr Hunt. Thanks for looking after us so brilliantly and being such an asset to the area over the years, and we all wish you every happiness, wherever your new life takes you."

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