

Dr Jonathan Botting retires:

In 1989 I was invited to join Dr George Brown & Partners. Our eldest son was but 6 months old. Now, 34 years later his first son has reached 6 months.

I have had the honour of serving Barnes as a GP for a whole generation. For a while I have even been the family GP to 4 generations of one Barnes family!



The practice has a very long history, before Dr George Brown the Hovenden brothers ran the practice from the house cornering Glebe Road & Church Road. By purchasing the end of gardens belonging to several Church Road houses, 1a Glebe Road was built by digging down so not to block our neighbours' views; the front door was where my desk is.

The practice expanded & purchased 1 Glebe Road, and then 30 Chartfield Avenue in Putney. Later we built the rear extension into the garden, and then the extension over the original flat roof. We were a first wave fund-holding practice which revolutionised the delivery of patient care. But the practice grew too big, we were 12 partners, 22,000 patients over two sites and with two separate

health authorities (MSW & Richmond) necessitating a split.

When I joined, we did all our own out of hours cover, for weekends we were on-call from Saturday morning until Monday evening. All our notes were held on written cards, the appointments were written in a ledger, there were two telephone lines, one for appointments, one for emergencies, no computers, no mobiles, and a requirement for lady GPs to wear skirts and gentlemen to wear suits (ties were essential and only in sweltering weather would we ever take them off, there being no air conditioning). How things have changed, some for the better, many not.

I have loved being a GP in Barnes and I thank you all for the faith you have entrusted to me over the years. We call it the practice of medicine reflecting our need to constantly learn, and I do hope I have followed this doctrine. I don't intend to stop learning, life as a grandparent should keep me on my toes!

I now leave the practice with a strong and cohesive team, albeit struggling with what the NHS keeps throwing at it. My wife and I look forward to travelling, especially to the house we have bought in Umbria where the pace of life is a wonderful antidote to life in the capital. I share with you my mantra for life:

We all have no entitlement to health nor happiness, so grab them when you can!