
Knocking at the portals of fame

FATE allows few of us to enter the Hall of Fame. Most of us knock vainly at the tradesman's entrance.

It would be nice to rub shoulders with the famous, and I often long to save some filmstar or politician from death, thus earning the gratitude of a nation, at least in the case of the filmstar. I am sure this dates back to my childhood. Most people looking back to their schooldays can remember when the editor of "The Times" was refused a job on the school magazine, or when they beat Sebastian Coe in the second form cross-country. But my school confederates seem to have been as destined to oblivion.

The only exception rose from respectable obscurity to become bass-guitarist in a notorious punk-rock group. He used to beat me consistently in examinations. But one can't impress one's colleagues by tapping the "Daily Telegraph" with one's pipe and saying: 'I see my old schoolmate has been jailed for three months for knocking a policeman unconscious'.

I seem to have a worrying effect on the health of any notables who cross my path. I have no sooner to start basking in the glory of treating a high-ranking Indian politician for angina than I hear on the nine o'clock news that he has died of a heart attack.

I can destroy livelihoods; my treatment for palmar eczema in the drummer of a well-known rock-and-roll band was so magnificently unsuccessful that he had to give up altogether.

Sometimes, I have even had my management rewarded by national news coverage. When a motorcycle stunt-rider miscalculated his aerodynamic abilities, I was the casualty officer of whom it was said:

"Doctors found him to be dead on arrival."

Admittedly, he had failed to remember that you are supposed to land on top of your motorbike, rather than *vice versa*, but it seems a pretty undistinguished way of making the front page of the "Daily Mail".

As middle-age creeps on, I am content to treat the ordinary folk of rustic Chelmsford. Nobody famous ever comes here, except Norman St John Stevas.

But if anybody of rank or influence does make their home here, they may like to remember that in me they will find a doctor who is experienced and enthusiastic in treating their sort of problem – and move to Birmingham.

Dr Jon Garvey