

# Changing face of general practice

Dr Jon Garvey's man of letters.

The Surgery  
Inglenook House  
Snailsbourne Fossett  
April 11, 1974

Dear Humphrey,  
Nice to hear from you again, and very pleased to hear you like your new practice. We've just got a new practice nurse here, which eases a lot of the routine workload.  
It may have been all right in the old days for GPs to spend all day syringing ears and cutting old dears' toenails, but in this day and age there's too much time and money invested in us to waste on trivial jobs.  
Anyway, I hope it will give me more time to get the age/sex register into some sort of order, and do some reading!

Best wishes, Bob.

Inglenook House  
January 5, 1976

Dear Humphrey,  
**A Happy New Year to you, too. Thought you might like to know we're getting a clinical psychologist attached to the practice. Impressive, eh? The idea is that she'll be able to take on the long-term care of our neurotics, thus leaving us more time for really sick people.**

In fact, she'll be the second new staff member this year, as we've acquired a chiropodist two days a week. The nurse said she thought that after three years of training it was a little undemanding cutting toenails, so we now use her mainly to screen the minor complaints and advise them if they don't really need

medical care. Love to Veronica.

Yours, Bob.

Inglenook House  
September 4, 1979

Dear Humphrey,  
Yes, we're plodding on here as usual. We lost our chiropodist to the hospital, worst luck. He said he needed to spend more time on 'proper chiropody', corrective work and so on, if he was going to get on in his profession. It seems more and more of their training is oriented towards that sort of thing now, and finding a replacement for routine foot care proved impossible, so we've got a sort of medical orderly now — ex-army chap — who drops in to trim the nails.

One good thing was that before he left, our chiropodist was able to recommend his wife to us. She trained as a statistician before she had her family, and has been able to take over the morbidity register, as well as helping in the management side. She does it far better than me, and the information she's compiled is really useful.

Regards, Bob.

Inglenook Health Centre  
January 24, 1980.

Dear Humphrey and Veronica,

Thanks for your card. Now we've got the computer, we can rattle off statistics as quickly as it can type them out. We had a local medical group meeting on the Court report last year, and as a

result have decided to give most of the paediatric stuff to Heather Potterton-Boyler, since she's got DCH, and would rather have been a paediatrician anyway.

**If the truth be told, general practice is beginning to pall a bit for me, too. When it comes down to it, anything interesting has to be referred to the hospital, and life seems to be an endless succession of antenatal checks and certificates for flu. Whatever happened to the days when GPs were at the forefront of medical science?**

**Well, we make our own beds, don't we?**

Cheers, Bob.

Nassau, Bahamas  
March 9, 1981.

Dear Humphrey,  
Surprise, surprise! We've moved to the sun! I got a phone call from the editor of "Pan-Global Medicine (UK)" last August. They were looking for a new consulting editor for epidemiology, and I got the job. We produce the international edition out here, so here I am.

It's got everything — even a chance for a little clinical medicine at the local hospital, as a sort of clinical assistant in 'medical orthopaedics'. Mainly private patients: nailcare, and that sort of thing. Makes a change from the old life!

Look us up if you're out here,

All the best, Bob.