

# THE SANDRINGHAM PRACTICE

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## NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2011

Welcome to the latest Newsletter. It would be really nice to see some sunshine as I think a lot of people I have spoken to are feeling relatively gloomy after what has been a pretty harsh winter. There is no doubt that laughter is the best form of medicine but it isn't always easy. Perhaps what I am about to tell you in this Newsletter will at least raise a few talking points.

### DR LOVE IS RETIRING - SORT OF

Well, it had to happen some time. Dr Love has been a partner in the practice since 1977 and over many years has maintained an extremely high standard of clinical medicine and kept his finger on the pulse of practice life. He is leaving the partnership on March 31<sup>st</sup> but I am pleased to say he is not leaving the practice completely. He will be available for clinical sessions in the year ahead but it is envisaged for no more than 3 sessions a week. This is because he cannot imagine life without seeing you, his patients - or that's at least what he said before he went to New Zealand for a month a few weeks ago. During his time in practice here at the Sandringham Practice he spent many years working 1 session a week in the Rheumatology Department at Doncaster Royal Infirmary and was also a GP trainer, i.e. training new GPs for 25 years. He has wielded the liquid nitrogen in the Wart Clinic and has carried out his Occupational Health duties at what used to be known as Crompton Parkinson years ago with great interest. We have all enjoyed working with him and I am sure there are many thousands of patients who have benefited from his clinical skills and wisdom. As I say, he has not left us for ever but he is reducing his commitment before final retirement.

### PARTNERSHIP CHANGES

So where does that leave the rest of us? Well Dr Sykes will be Senior Partner and Dr Mazai is joining the partnership for 9 sessions a week, having been what we call a salaried doctor over the last nearly 2 years. At present there is no replacement for the sessions we are losing with Dr Loves cutting down. This is because NHS Doncaster has since Christmas reduced and cut a lot of the funding to practices for clinical work, this has been Doncaster-wide and has been deemed necessary because of overspending of budgets and increased referrals of patients into the hospital network. Our own particular situation will be reviewed regularly and we do have solutions up our sleeves.

### NURSING CHANGES

As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, Kay York has now retired as Senior Nurse from the practice. She was overwhelmed by all the kind cards, presents and words of gratitude that she received from many, many patients who have benefited over the years from her clinical excellence and her emotional support. Since she left us on February 18<sup>th</sup> we have already seen her back in the practice in the role as grandma and of course she does live locally so we look forward to seeing her regularly on a social basis. I can assure you the girls gave her a good send off.

We have since the start of the year recruited two new nurses. The first to arrive in the role of Practice Nurse is Ann Whitaker who has joined us from the Regent Square Practice, she has already proved extremely valuable in her role as a General Nurse, Acute Illness Nurse and Chronic Disease Clinic Nurse. We hope she enjoys her working stay with us and that it may be a long and happy one. Next to arrive is Jayne Clamp in the role of Team Leader and Nurse Prescriber who has joined us from the Kingthorn Practice and I am sure you will all get to know her well. She comes to us with excellent references and will be instrumental in re-jigging some of our nursing processes with a view to improving services for you, the patients. Again we give her a warm welcome and hope that she has a long and enjoyable stay working within the practice.

I should add that this allows us to provide more appointments with the Nurses. We have changed the name of the Minor Illness Clinic to Acute Illness Clinic, as we see our Clinical Nurses as being very capable in diagnosing and managing a lot of the day to day acute, troublesome illnesses with which patients present. We would urge you to use their expertise as the doctors look after more and more complicated clinical problems and those who are unluckily chronically unwell.

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## **GP REGISTRARS AND MEDICAL STUDENTS**

Most of the GP Registrars (the doctors who are training to be GPs) these days work with us for 6 months, but we are very fortunate that Dr Davinder Singh is working with us for a whole year, He has some important exams coming up in the next week or two but having worked with him for 7 months now we are certain that he will pass these along the way to becoming a fully fledged GP. He remains with us until August. Dr Samina Qadir has joined us for 6 months and is entirely new to general practice having worked in hospital medicine. It is always challenging for young doctors to come in to general practice and see the totally different way from which we work to those in the hospital world and we hope that she enjoys her learning with us.

Our Medical Students come and go as part of the 7-week attachments with general practice. Ted Wilson, who we had recently, was an inspiration to us all that you can change career pathways even in your 40's as he had worked with the Forestry Commission and lectured on that work for 15 years or more. We are now joined by Fiona Coath who will be with us for the next 7 weeks, seeing how a "good" practice works and again we hope she enjoys her time here.

## **THORNY OLD PROBLEMS**

Appointments; one of the Armthorpe practices has reduced its practice boundaries and this has meant that all their patients living in Wheatley Hills, Intake, Cantley, Bessacarr have had to find alternative doctors, which is of course a great worry to those patients and also a challenge to the new doctors in building a relationship, understanding their illnesses etc. Essentially we have been inundated with new patients and this of course puts a strain on our already overloaded capacity. We like to think we can give everybody a good service but we are well aware that appointments at present are difficult to find. Again, I would ask that you do bear this in mind when making an appointment with our ever-understanding receptionists. Our reception staff do an incredible days work in managing the appointment systems that we run and in trying to help our patients when it is needed.

Please remember if you think you cannot make an appointment to cancel it, you can do this by phone or by texting 07521665649. We still do have quite a number of patients who fail to attend for appointments which is frustrating all round.

## **INFECTION CONTROL**

As you will have no doubt read, there has been a lot of talk about problems about controlling certain infections in the hospital world, such as MRSA and C-Difficile. This has an impact on us in general practice and the infection control staff have been round to inspect the practice. There is always a fine line between sensible approach and taking things too far. Suffice it to say, for instance, you will find no more toys in my room as I am not prepared to wash the surface of the toy down four times after every child has touched it. There has in the past been talk of carpets being removed and there has also been mention that magazines can be a source of passing infection on from one person to another. It may well be that we are advised to change our practices over certain things, which have been taken for granted over many years. So if you see us wearing more aprons for certain procedures, don't be surprised, but I am hopeful that you will still be able to see my mouth moving, i.e. I won't have to wear a mask!

## **THE FUTURE OF THE NHS IN DONCASTER**

That sounds a bit serious, but just to say that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes involving the GPs in the Doncaster area with setting up and working out how to take over and organise, for the better, the services to you the people of Doncaster. It is certainly a very challenging time for us as the time scheduling is extremely short, but hey ho, modern life is one big rush.

And finally, come on have a big smile, even a good laugh, you know it will make you feel better, I know it's not always easy. Laughter is always the best medicine, after all we don't know whether we will be able to afford any other medicine before too long - tongue in cheek!

Enjoy the spring.

**DR K B SYKES**

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