

## Casting Off



With a great deal of support from the Practice and my family, and countless good wishes from my patients, I have completed the six months I set myself when I returned to work in August. My last working day is 31<sup>st</sup> January.

As I look back over my 28 years as a Gosport GP, three themes emerge: that medicine is a fascinating and brilliant vocation; that having long term relationships with patients and families is the most joyous and satisfying part of General Practice; and that I have been very fortunate to work with colleagues who are committed to patient care, to each other, to the Practice, and to the wider community.

While off work last year, I concluded that the time has come for me to step aside from regular GP work, and to make a fresh start, doing something completely different. So, in March, I start a one-year full-time boatbuilding and restoration course at the International Boatbuilding Training College (based in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard). For several years now, I have been dreaming of doing this course when I retire.

Making the decision to retire a couple of years earlier than planned, has not been easy. As I said in my July Newsletter, I still feel a strong loyalty to you, my patients, to the Practice, and to all those with whom I have enjoyed working. However, I have come to recognise that it is time for me to leave The Willow Group, and to grasp this opportunity to do something I have long wanted to do. A better work-life balance will allow me to enjoy more time with my family, who have come second to my work, too often and for too long.

I want to thank you, my patients: for placing your trust in me, and for your support, particularly in the more difficult recent years. Thank you especially, for all your kind messages of thanks and good wishes in the last year. I have been deeply touched by them, and these last six months have been some of the most emotional in the Practice that I can remember.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my colleagues in the Practice, for all their generous and kind support and, indeed, to Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust, who stepped in and supported General Practice in Gosport when it was at risk of collapse. The NHS, General Practice, and General Practice in Gosport in particular, is under huge pressure. I am proud of the team that I work with – they are hugely committed to you and to each other. I wish them every success as The Willow Group strives to maintain and further develop the services you receive.

I am casting off now, to set a new course, but I do so with many fond and happy memories. I wish you and your families well for the future.

Very best wishes,

*Stuart Morgan*

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