

# LIPHOOK & LISS SURGERY

Our senior partner, Doctor Barbara Rushton is retiring at the end of January 2019 – bringing to an end over thirty years working as a GP in Liphook and Liss. In that time, she has been involved in just about every aspect of health in our communities, from setting up clinics for long-term conditions like diabetes, asthma and heart disease, looking after patients on a hospital ward, delivering babies, travelling to remote snow-bound homes to see seriously ill patients armed with a shovel and blanket to make sure she reached her destination.

**We invite all patients to tea in Liphook surgery on Tuesday 29th January from 2 to 5pm to say goodbye**

Thank you all for making this huge chapter in my life such a rich and rewarding one

**Dr Barbara Rushton**



**A** huge and important chapter of my life will end when I retire from Liphook and Liss Surgery at the end of January after more than 30 years. I obviously didn't want this event to pass without saying 'goodbye and thank you' to so many of you who I have come to know so well over the last three decades.

Clearly, a GP is nothing without patients – so I would have to say that I couldn't have done it without you! But of course what I actually mean is it certainly would not have been the same without all of you. I count myself to have been extremely fortunate to have patients who have been a pleasure to serve. You have shown such understanding about the growing challenges to the NHS and in particular to general practice.

I have loved my time in Liphook and Liss, building relationships with families. For some I have shared the high points such as the delivery of new-borns at home or recovery from significant illness. Of course, there have been many extremely sad times too. I hope you will bear with me if I reminisce a bit.

I trained in medicine at Oxford and then as a GP in Hammersmith hospital and in a practice in Notting Hill. My first role as a GP was as a partner in Shepherds Bush.

I started working as a partner here in September 1988 with Richard Hardwick and John Sedgwick. There were two small surgeries - one in each village. Both have been developed over the years. Liss had more consulting space added and its own dispensary, able to deliver packs of medicines to a lot of our frail elderly rural patients.

Liphook has been extended to provide more consulting space for our expanding team of doctors and nurses as well as an administrative hub.

In my years here, there have been many changes to our communities, as the population of both villages has expanded with more housing, schools and commuters. This has had a big impact on access to health and care services, and GP practices have had to change their ways of working.

When I started, I worked across both surgeries. We were at the forefront of change even in those days, with a practice nurse at either end offering health checks to our patients, diagnosing people with hypertension and heart disease 20 years ahead of the checks the NHS now offers.

Early on I ran baby clinics and child immunisations that are now the province of our practice nurses. I taught our nurses to offer cervical screening and family planning services so as to free up my time to do more complex cases, fitting coils and offering HRT advice.

We held cardiovascular, diabetic and respiratory clinics for our patients with long term conditions that are now run so superbly by our experienced nursing teams.

I enjoy doing minor procedures and joint injections but my major love has been to offer support to families, some of whom I have known through generations from babies I delivered at home to steering them through childhood and adolescence now starting their own families. People who were fit parents with lovely families have now become frailer with complex needs and that is where my passion lies. I have longstanding patients whom I guide to make wise decisions about their future health and care needs who I know I will miss.

My other great love has been as an educator. I encourage people wherever possible to prevent illness by understanding the impact of smoking, lack of exercise and unhealthy diet on their health, and how to take action to make positive changes. Where patients are living with long term illness I educate them to understand how they can take control of their treatment by setting achievable targets for them to better manage their conditions.

As my family grew up, I had more time to train GPs. Watching them learn skills and develop in confidence and ability to diagnose and treat patients, going on to join practices and become confident and skilled GPs has given me particular pleasure.

Some of you will remember the photographs in my surgery of mountains in Nepal where I spent six months educating the local health workers in remote Himalayan villages living on the edge of survival. Here I was privileged to share their houses and their food while teaching health workers to take greater care of health in these communities of subsistence farmers.

Many of you will know that for the last few years I broadened my career to include being appointed as clinical chair of the NHS South Eastern Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group, working with commissioning colleagues to make sense of whole pathways of care for patients. Whilst this has inevitably meant I haven't been at the surgery as much as before, I have been able to raise the profile of some of the things which I know matter most to you about the health services that you need and want. I have acted to promote changes in areas where we can and have made a difference, such as improving communication between colleagues in hospitals and practices to make wise decisions about patient care.

In this, the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday year of the NHS, I have been elected as co-chair of NHS Clinical Commissioners. This is a shared national role working to influence direction at the highest level with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and other national bodies.

So in retiring as a partner from Liphook and Liss surgery, I won't be idle.

I will however miss working locally with the team. I value the contribution of every member of our staff who work in an increasingly pressurised environment.

I feel strongly that Liphook and Liss Surgery is one of the most respected in East Hampshire and I am very proud of the team. I know that with your support they will go from strength to strength.

But my final words must go to you, our patients, as this big chapter in my life and career comes to a close. Thank you and my best wishes to you all.