

SPINNEY SURGERY NEWSLETTER SPECIAL EDITION

CHANGES AT THE SPINNEY. IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!

Despite speculation over many months, the announcement that George Smerdon is going to retire will no doubt come as a shock but not a surprise to many of you. However, retiring he is, and he will be leaving The Spinney on March 31st 2008 after 34 yrs of General Practice.

Many will be surprised and shocked that Dennis Cox is leaving as well, but unlike George he will not be retiring. He has been working part-time in the PCT for a few years and his career has progressed to the point where he now needs to take up a full time post in January 2008 in preparation for his role as the Chairman of the Professional Executive Committee of Cambs PCT.

We have included in this letter some of Dennis and George's thoughts on their times as GPs at The Spinney- a formidable combined total of 57 years.

Rosemary Lane will become our Senior Partner and we are currently making arrangements to move the practice forward. We realize that some of you may find it unsettling but it is an opportunity to review the way in which the practice works and improve the patient experience. We have already advertised for new Doctors to join the Spinney team and are confident we will be able to appoint excellent new GPs to continue our high quality health care. We will, of course, keep you all informed of developments.

We will greatly miss both George and Dennis having been Partners for so many years. It is impossible to summarize the contribution they have both made over their considerable careers but both have been instrumental in creating The Spinney as it is today for which we all owe them a great debt of gratitude.

We would like to wish Dennis every success in his new and challenging role and to wish George a well deserved, long, happy & healthy retirement.

Rosemary, Sean, Mark, Clare and Debbie

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM GEORGE SMERDON

Well, what can I say about 34 yrs as a GP at the Spinney! I can't believe it has been SO long but it does feel like a pretty amazing career span. However, you'll be relieved to know that I am not even going to attempt a summary here.

The decision to retire next March feels a good one even though I love the Spinney and am really enjoying my work. It's just time to do other things and be free to make some choices about what I do with my time. I'm also responding to the wise words of a friend who reminded me that the time to go is when you're enjoying yourself.

When Dee & I and our son Matthew arrived in St Ives all those years ago, family and friends asked how long we would be staying? When the reply came back "for the duration" most were incredulous that we could see joining The Spinney as a lifetime's work about to begin.

Those of you who have been my patients since then will remember how very different the Spinney was and how it has changed over the years. I am very proud of the changes. In particular, the way we have responded to meet the changing expectations of our patients and our political masters, and all the time trying to proactively manage the changing nature of General Practice, all very different professional challenges. During all these changes though, we have strived, I believe successfully, to foster the Spinney ethos. You will all know what I mean by that. Changes that took us from a team of 12 looking after 9000 patients in 1975 to one of 36 looking after 10,000 pts in 2007. This, of course, very much reflects the modern face of General Practice in the 21st Century and it is now time for me to pass onto the next generation the care of my, or, should I say, our, patients. With the passing of the traditional very personal list of patients that I began my career looking after, we now have a Practice list of patients being looked after by a wonderfully talented, committed and caring team of doctors, nurses, receptionists and administration staff each member dependent on one

another to work together to provide the excellent health care you all now receive.

It has been such a privilege to have worked for you all and with you all over these years. Saying 'Thank you' sounds pretty inadequate but it really is heartfelt gratitude. I am sure you will all understand that this is not the place for personal tributes and reminiscences and I do hope that over the next few months I will have the opportunity to say goodbye to my patients in a more personal way. It won't really be goodbye as we will not be moving away from St Ives. We really are here for the duration.

George

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM DENNIS COX

After 23years, the time has come for me to move on from the Spinney and I am writing this to let you know that I will be leaving the practice in the New Year.

Many of you will know that I have been working part time as a medical manager for Cambridgeshire PCT for the past year and in this time I have been closely involved with trying to sort out the serious problems that our local health service has been facing. This has now become a full time job and because of this I have made the decision to leave the practice so that I can give my full concentration to restoring Cambridgeshire NHS back to health!

I will not be leaving clinical medicine entirely behind as I plan to start working half a day a week as a GP to the homeless in Cambridge.

I will of course be very sad to say goodbye to so many patients, very many of you whom I have come to regard as personal friends. It has been a genuine privilege to have been of service to you, and I am very grateful for the way in which you accepted me and my family into your community.

Although I will no longer be your GP, as Chair of the Professional Executive Committee of Cambridgeshire PCT, I will continue to work on your behalf, developing a health care system of which we can all be proud.

I will always have fond memories of my time in St Ives and of my patients - one way or another we have been through a lot together.

Dennis