

NEWSLETTER

Saying Goodbye

It is with great sadness that we have said goodbye to our Senior Partner, Dr John Davies, who retired after 25 years as a GP. He will be greatly missed by patients and everyone here at the Practice but we wish him well in his future ventures. Dr Davies' patients have been transferred to our new Partner, Dr Catherine Sherwin who joined the practice at the beginning of October. As with Dr Davies before her, Dr Sherwin will work between Churchinford and Hemyock.

We have had a lot of comings and goings over the last few years but have been very fortunate to recruit excellent doctors at a time when many other Practices are struggling to do so.

- ◆ Drs Brocklesby (our new senior Partner), Spicer and Sherwin will work between Churchinford and Hemyock
- ◆ Drs Barnes and Perry will work between Dunkeswell and Hemyock
- ◆ Dr Leach will remain at Hemyock
- ◆ Dr Murray remains as versatile as ever and will be working at all three sites

Festive Opening Times

Please be aware that all three surgeries will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day

Fri 22 December:	Usual site opening times.
Sat 23 December:	Open at Hemyock only between 8am and 11am*
Sun 24 December:	Closed
Mon 25 December:	Closed
Tues 26 December:	Closed
Wed 27 December:	Usual site opening times.
Thurs 28 December:	Usual site opening times.
Fri 29 December:	Usual site opening times.
Sat 30 December:	Open at Hemyock only between 8am and 11am*
Sun 31 December:	Closed
Mon 1 January:	Closed
Tues 2 January:	Usual site opening times.

*This is by appointment only, please phone before coming to the surgery as the appointments tend to go very quickly. The message directing you to telephone 111 to access the out of hours service will be activated once our appointments are full.

What to do when we are closed

If you need help due to a life threatening condition, telephone 999 to contact the ambulance service. Please note that 999 should only be called for an emergency situation.

If you need to contact a GP with an urgent medical condition that cannot wait until the practice re-opens, please telephone 111 to access the out of hours service. NHS 111 staff hold an up-to-date list of the services available during the festive period and they will direct you to the most appropriate place.

Opening times of pharmacies over the festive season can be found on our website: <http://www.theblackdownpractice.co.uk/> and on all the front doors at each site.



Feedback from Friends & Family Questionnaire

One patient asked the question "Why in this day and age do you not accept cards? The answer is as follows: The Practice has investigated the use of card machines in the Practice, the costs associated with these are considerable and, unlike commercial organisations, the Practice does not pass these charges onto its customers i.e. our patients. The running costs are considerably reduced if the machine runs over Wi-Fi. It is anticipated that Devon CCG will install Wi-Fi in all GP surgeries during 2018 therefore we would aim to introduce card machines at this time.



Armed Forces
Covenant

Veterans

When service personnel leave the armed forces, their healthcare becomes the responsibility of the NHS. It is highly important for continuing healthcare that you register with an NHS GP and remember to tell them you've served. Telling the GP practice about your veteran status will trigger the transfer of your full medical documentation from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to your GP and enable you to benefit from veteran-specific services.

If you are registered with us, but you do not think your veteran status is correctly recorded, please let the receptionist know at your local surgery. Our registration department can then ensure that your complete medical record is transferred.

Further information regarding healthcare for veterans can be found on the NHS choices website: <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/veterans-families-reservists/Pages/veterans.aspx>

Handy Vans



The Royal British Legion's handy van service, Poppy Calls, provide Armed Forces personnel, both serving and ex-Service, and their families with home repairs and maintenance, allowing them to remain safe in their homes.

Further details can be obtained from the website <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/independent-living/handy-van/>, by telephone 0800 032 0306 or email homesupportadmin@britishlegion.org.uk



Adverse Weather Conditions

To date the practice has not had to close due to adverse weather conditions. However, in the event of particularly bad weather, please phone the surgery before you travel to check that we are still open. We would not want patients to risk travelling only to find that we have had to close/reduce services.

The Blackdown Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG)



If you have used our services you will be aware of things you think we do well and where you think we could improve. How about becoming a member of our PPG to learn why we do things the way we do and feed in to how we develop our services? This doesn't mean attending oodles of meetings, although we try to arrange around 3 to 4 meetings a year for those who do prefer to meet. We think we have finally been able to generate an e-mail distribution list that will remain up to date so you could become a member of a 'virtual group'. The current topics to be included at the next meeting (date to be advertised shortly once venue has been confirmed):

- ◆ Review of the appointment system – how we manage triage calls and queries?
- ◆ Dispensary services – what are the potential implications to the practice of patients using internet pharmacy services and how can we add value to our existing dispensary service.
- ◆ Social prescribing – what is it and what do we need to do about it.
- ◆ On-line services – improving the website, booking on-line appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions, viewing medical records.

Please pick up a leaflet and joining form in reception.