

Dermatology in Rotherham, 1983-2018.

I joined the Department as part-time consultant in May 1987 after an exemplary 'apprenticeship' with Drs Sneddon, Church and Bleehen in Sheffield. Dr Mike Kessler, appointed in 1983, had already begun to shape the service which had had no dedicated facilities and limited equipment. PUVA, additional skin surgery and staffing were initial developments. In September 1994 we moved into our 'state of the art', self-contained, combined in-patient/outpatient Department, opened on 28th October 1994, by Mr Alan Langlands, NHS Chief Executive. There were 10 beds, 2 phototherapy units, dedicated surgical theatre and leg ulcer treatment area, as well as 3 consulting suites. A large team of specialist Nursing Staff was developed, many of whom have stayed in post for 20+ years. We were one of the few Departments to provide a hypnotherapy service.

In 2000 Dr Anna Muncaster joined as consultant with special interest in skin surgery and Dr Fiona McNaughton as staff grade (becoming associate specialist in 2009, still in post). We were supported by loyal and long serving secretarial and clerical staff.

We held regular Stiefel Skin Forum meetings for local GPs for 25 years, presenting a variety of patients in person. We supported Sheffield Medical School in taking medical students for Dermatology teaching and experience and later provided a rotating 6 month placement for vocational training scheme doctors, subsequently joint with Rheumatology and Sexual Health.

My particular interests included medical dermatology, and vulval dermatoses. I was honoured to be President of the North of England Dermatological Society (NEDS) in 2011-12, and in May 2012 hosted the clinical meeting and annual dinner of NEDS. Mike Kessler had been the president of NEDS in 2008. His interest was in skin cancer and he inaugurated the multiagency Rotherham Skin Cancer Action Group. The chair passed to Dr Muncaster in 2005. Dr Kessler was Lead Clinician for the North Trent Skin Cancer Group 2005-07. In association with haematology, under the lead of Dr Peter Taylor, Consultant Haematologist at Rotherham, Dr Kessler developed a photophoresis service. Management was an additional interest of his and from 1999 he was Trust Deputy Medical Director. Mike Kessler retired in 2008 and I retired in August 2018

In the few years before I retired, the management of many skin conditions changed. Hospital admissions for skin treatment declined, such that the in-patient unit was lost. However, the space and time was soon filled with Botox treatment for hyperhidrosis, laser treatment of vascular lesions, busy leg ulcer clinics and a rapidly expanding biologics service.

Margaret L. Wood, May 2021