

**“YOU CAN'T BE WHAT YOU
CAN'T SEE”**

**A history of general practice and
medical education**



Brian R McAvoy

Overview

- Context
- History of general practice
- Education and training of doctors
- The future of general practice

"You can't be
what you can't
see."

-Marian Wright
Edelman



The ages of medicine

- The Dark Ages (pre-19th century)
- The Scientific Age (19th + early 20th century)
- The Golden Age (1930s to 1980s)
- The Age of Uncertainty (1990s to present)

The physician



The consultation on last hope

The surgeon



The apothecary



**SURGEON AND APOTHECARY
PRESCRIPTIONS AND FAMILY MEDICINES
ACCURATELY COMPOUNDED
TEETH EXTRACTED AT ONE SHILLING EACH
WOMEN ATTENDED IN LABOUR, TWO SHILLINGS
AND SIXPENCE EACH
PATENT MEDICINES AND PERFUMERY
BEST LONDON PICKLES. FISH SAUCES
BEAR'S GREASE.SODA WATER. GINGER BEER
LEMONADE. CONGREVE'S MATCHES AND
WARREN'S BLACKENING**

Academic bodies

1518 - Royal College of Physicians of London

1540 - Company of Barber Surgeons of London

1617 - Worshipful Society of Apothecaries

1800 - Royal College of Surgeons of London

1844 - National Association of General

Practitioners in Medicine, Surgery + Midwifery

1952-College of General Practitioners (RC 1972)

1974 - Royal NZ College of General Practitioners

Regulation of medical practice and health services

1815 - Apothecaries Act

1858 - Medicines Act + GMC (UK)

1867 - Medical Practitioners Act (NZ)

1911 - National Insurance Act (UK)

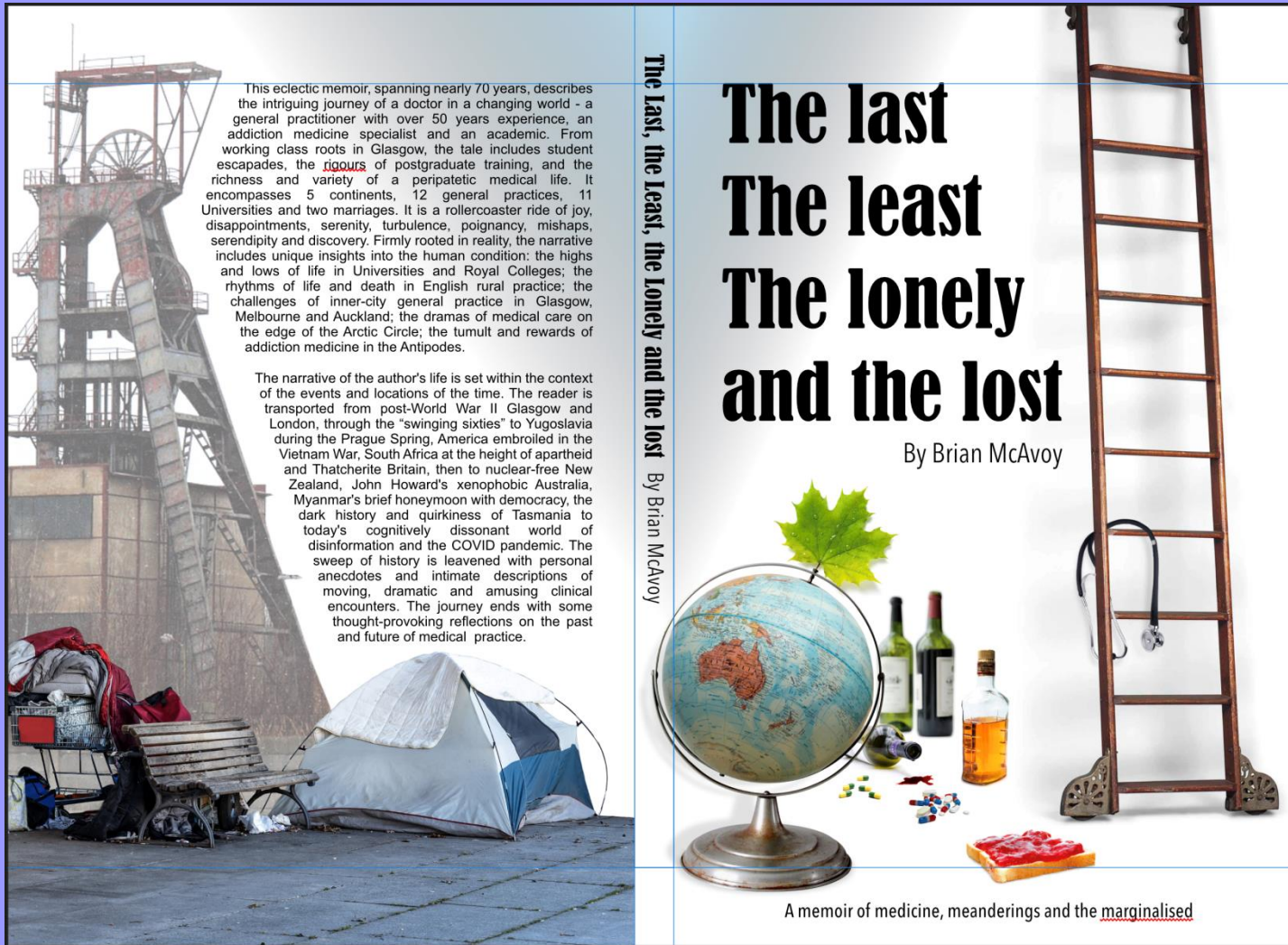
1938 - Social Security Act (NZ)

1948 - National Health Service Act UK)

MBCChB 1965

- 1 - Physics, chemistry, biology, botany
- 2 - Anatomy, physiology, biochemistry
- 3 - Pathology, bacteriology, pharmacology
- 4 - Junior medicine + surgery, orthopaedics
- 5 - Senior medicine + surgery, forensic medicine, infectious diseases, public health
- 6 – Obstetrics, gynaecology, paediatrics, ear, nose +throat, dermatology, ophthalmology

Lord Moran's career pathway



**The last
The least
The lonely
and the lost**

By Brian McAvoy

A memoir of medicine, meanderings and the marginalised

The last, the least, the lonely and the lost By Brian McAvoy

This eclectic memoir, spanning nearly 70 years, describes the intriguing journey of a doctor in a changing world - a general practitioner with over 50 years experience, an addiction medicine specialist and an academic. From working class roots in Glasgow, the tale includes student escapades, the rigours of postgraduate training, and the richness and variety of a peripatetic medical life. It encompasses 5 continents, 12 general practices, 11 Universities and two marriages. It is a rollercoaster ride of joy, disappointments, serenity, turbulence, poignancy, mishaps, serendipity and discovery. Firmly rooted in reality, the narrative includes unique insights into the human condition: the highs and lows of life in Universities and Royal Colleges; the rhythms of life and death in English rural practice; the challenges of inner-city general practice in Glasgow, Melbourne and Auckland; the dramas of medical care on the edge of the Arctic Circle; the tumult and rewards of addiction medicine in the Antipodes.

The narrative of the author's life is set within the context of the events and locations of the time. The reader is transported from post-World War II Glasgow and London, through the "swinging sixties" to Yugoslavia during the Prague Spring, America embroiled in the Vietnam War, South Africa at the height of apartheid and Thatcherite Britain, then to nuclear-free New Zealand, John Howard's xenophobic Australia, Myanmar's brief honeymoon with democracy, the dark history and quirkiness of Tasmania to today's cognitively dissonant world of disinformation and the COVID pandemic. The sweep of history is leavened with personal anecdotes and intimate descriptions of moving, dramatic and amusing clinical encounters. The journey ends with some thought-provoking reflections on the past and future of medical practice.

General practice curriculum time

1972 Glasgow – 6 year course

1 week elective

2024 Auckland – 6 year course

13.5 weeks + ½ day (<5%)

The future of general practice



International trends

- NZ - Currently 250,000 patients not enrolled with GPs

Nearly 500 GPs short (750-1000 next 10 years)

2023 MOH NZ Health Survey – 34% unmet

health needs for GP services (availability, wait times, costs or travel distances)

>22% increase in ED attendances past 10 years

- Oz -\$227m for more Urgent Care Clinics (87)

Only 1 in 10 medical students want to be GPs

International trends

- UK – 15% increase in GP consults, 9% decrease in number of GPs over past 10 years
Health Hubs + Physician Associates (medical practitioners, 2 years training)
- Canada – Up to 30% of population in some regions now lack access to a GP
Applications for GP training posts at lowest level for 15 years

RNZCGP Workforce Survey 2022

- 5,000 GPs, 72% response rate
- GPs 40% of workforce 1980-2020, 25% in 2022
- 51% work full-time (>36 hours/week)
- 64% intend to retire within next 10 years
- 9% intend to move overseas within next 5 years
- 48% feel burnt out
- 31% unlikely to recommend a career in GP
- Median annual income \$138,000

What lies ahead?

- Demographic changes
- Changes in lifestyle and expectations of patients and GPs
- Technological changes
- Commodification and commercialisation
- Political changes
- Growing inequalities → toxic mix

CONCLUSIONS

- GP has been backbone of healthcare system in NZ, Australia, UK and Canada
- It has provided personal, primary, preventive + continuing care to individuals, families+practice populations, often over several generations
- The current models struggling + not sustainable
- General practice is at a crossroads
- Change is needed – will require resources, leadership, vision and political resolve
- GP core values need to be protected, nurtured + promoted, while adapting to a changing world

