

Minutes of the Derby Medical Society, Thursday 6th November 2025
Derby Medical School Lecture Theatre

Open Meeting
"Our Grand Designs Experience"

Professor Antony Narula

MA MB BChir FRCS FRCS (Ed)

Past-Treasurer, RCS England

Current Associate Professor, Plymouth University School of Medicine & Dentistry

Apologies: None Received

Professor Judd welcomed members and guests to this the annual Open Meeting. At this meeting the Society also highlights the work of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund (RMBF) and attendees are invited to support the charity. He invited Jean Oliveira, a current second year medical student on the University of Nottingham GEM course and volunteer for the RMBF to explain more. Jean explained that every year the RMBF helps hundreds of doctors, medical students and their family members who are in serious hardship due to age, illness, injury or bereavement. In the last year it has been able to support 270 people. It supports doctors of all specialties and at all stages of their careers. In addition to financial support, they provide practical advice. Jean has also found that volunteering is personally rewarding and encouraged others who might be interested to join.

Professor Judd introduced the speaker Prof Antony Narula, a retired consultant ENT Surgeon, who has held many distinguished roles in British Society for Otolaryngology and the Royal College of Surgeons. He was for many years a distinguished ENT Consultant in Leicester before moving from the East Midlands to London. He is co-author of the textbook Clinical ENT. Although 'retired' he currently holds a post as *Current Associate Professor, Plymouth University School of Medicine & Dentistry*.

Prof Narula started his talk by thanking the Society for the invitation to give a lecture and the opportunity to meet colleagues and friends from his time in the East Midlands. However this was a new lecture about the experience he and his Charlotte had on designing a house, not one of the many pre-prepared lectures on various ENT topics he regularly gives.

Their journey started as they thought about retirement planning. They realised how important open space was for them after their move from the East Midlands to London. As they considered various popular retirement locations such as Cornwall, Devon or Dorset these were too far away from their family. By chance they spotted a new design home and although were not successful in purchasing it, the seeds were sown for designing their own place. Charlotte comes from a family of architects and such an opportunity would fulfil her creative instincts. They met with the architect John Pardey who had a special interest in the Case Study House designs, a new style of housing after WWII, that originally was conceived as a possible solution for the returning GIs. The principles of this style of design were something they thought would meet their aspirations.

Their project started taking shape when they purchased a house on the banks of the river Loddon near Henley on Thames. Their intention was to demolish the house but decided to live in it for a year so as to familiarise themselves with the area. It was on a floodplain and

had in recent times been flooded. Being in the house also gave them chance to appreciate where the views were best appreciated from and the most suitable orientation to maximise the natural lighting.

The demolition work once started was quick, but the building phase took 2 years. Prof Narula talked through the principles of the steel frame house, how the steel columns were sized and 'planted' to support the single story build some 2.5m above the ground level. He explained how the linear structure fitted with the curve of the river. The design incorporated ground source heating, their own water supply, solar panels and bespoke lighting designed by their son.

The talk finished with illustrative video clips. This first one was from the architect John Pardey, the second from the Grand Designs programme presented by Kevin McCloud. This stunning family home was Winner of both RIBA Regional Award & RIBA National Award in 2021, and longlisted for RIBA House of the Year 2021.

Prof Narula answered the many questions that arose from his inspiring presentation.

The meeting closed with a collection for the RMBF. The initial sum raised from the collection on the night was £290 but the final total from any online donations and gift aid will be more than this.

31 guests and member signed the register.