What it means to be a Fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners

“The proposal for fellowship of the Royal College was made by close friends and good colleagues in practice here in Donegal and I was touched and a little embarrassed by their nomination. I am very much a working clinician in rural practice. Although I teach and facilitate research I am not an academic GP. I associate FRCGP with the most respected senior practitioners who taught me on the West Cumbria VTS including my trainer Dr David Wilmot. I have the usual string of examination qualifications from those years and feel I am beyond that sort of organised study and assessment.

The process was surprisingly soul searching. I spent several weeks preparing a reflective essay on my journey in General Practice. The experience was something like preparing a midlife retrospective although the outcome is far from an artistic masterpiece. It renewed my conviction that as community-based generalists we are essential to effective healthcare provision. It also reminded me of the family members, teachers, colleagues and patients who helped me along the way and continue to support me.

The visit to Euston Square was a pleasure. I was surrounded by the most inspiring people who have advanced the discipline and made a positive difference to others. I felt a very minor member of that group but very proud of our rural health centre and resilient community here in Cloghan.”

Dr John Sheeran, FRCGP, Co. Donegal

“Many years ago I trained in Wales, and my trainer had been awarded the FRCGP. He gave me great and, at the time for me, novel insights into general practice and I always aspired to emulate his practice. He was kind, generous, and was proud of his role as a general practitioner, and reached out to the community to help in many ways. He was always smiling despite the turmoil of the job.

Many years later I started in my attempts to get the FRCGP. It was with the patient help of Eamon Shanahan and Conor O’Shea who patiently answered my question, pointed out what I was doing wrong, and then recruited a few people to say some good words about me. I was stunned by what they said with their kind words. I am delighted to be recognised as a Fellow of the College, the highest award the College can bestow upon a member. I am proud to be amongst the ranks of Dr David Murfin, my first mentor in General Practice.”

Dr Alan Moran, FRCGP, Co. Louth

Many thanks to Dr John Sheeran and Dr Alan Moran for their inspiring words on what it means to them to be a Fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners.