


# Leading lights

Not everyone knows what they want to do when they leave school, but trial and error can lead to some fascinating and rewarding careers



**Michael Wareing**, Consultant ENT Surgeon, Barts and The London NHS Trust, The London Clinic

(where they are now trying to fail you) and then speciality training in South London and Kent, which took 12 years until I was appointed back to Barts.

I always feel the big question is "would I do it again"? And the answer is yes. I'm lucky - I have a fantastic job with variety and interest on a daily basis. There are academic and intellectual challenges and technical/manual challenges relating to the art of surgery. There is also the advantage of working with, and hopefully helping people, which mainly means one's patients but also junior doctors, nurses and other paramedical staff. ENT is also a civilised specialty, in that the majority of work fits in to sociable hours, which is important for the work/life balance issue.

## Work hard, play hard

**T**here was no one eureka moment for me that led me into Medicine. I was lucky enough to get into Haberdashers on a state-funded place (sadly no longer possible) and being near the top academically, with an interest in science and people, Medicine was both possible and a desirable choice.

I ended up choosing Barts because I met some students playing hockey, got invited to look round, applied, got an interview and they said yes! Nowadays, some work experience seems necessary - perhaps just because everyone else does it, although you should have some idea what you're getting yourself into.

Medical school is fantastic fun - so much

so that I took 6 years and got an additional degree along the way. You do have to work hard but medical students are rightly known for playing hard as well. After an uninspiring medical attachment when I thought about giving up, my enthusiasm was really fired by a surgical placement in Southend. That set my heart on surgery - I just had to decide what sort of surgery. All the Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) surgeons I had met seemed to have their lives sorted out so I did an elective period in ENT and decided to pursue it.

After qualifying, I began the rather long process that eventually leads to a Consultant post. This involved some anatomy teaching, junior surgical training posts, a few exams

So what do you need and what should you be prepared for if Medicine interests you? Well, there is little doubt that a Medical degree requires hard work as well as understanding many new concepts; if you don't put the effort in you will get found out.

After qualifying it then gets more difficult, as there will be occasions when it is a matter of life and death! The academia and studying never stops but has to be fitted into a working life.

My experience has been a very conventional, single minded one but there are lots of different avenues in Medicine, so in many ways there is something for everyone.

[www.michaelwareing-ent.com](http://www.michaelwareing-ent.com)

