

## St. Peter's Medal BAUS Annual meeting 2019, Glasgow Ru MacDonagh



Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Ru MacDonagh was born in Portsmouth in 19xx where he attended St John's School. His early years as a child in Portsmouth were to leave a lasting mark on him as a passionate lifelong Pompey fan and a season ticket holder to this day!

Ru's parents were both doctors – his father practised as an anaesthetist but sadly died when Ru was only 6 years old. His mother raised the four children and continued her profession as an A+E consultant – more so, she was the first female A+E consultant to be appointed in the UK. Over the years, she remained a remarkable role model and influence on Ru throughout her life – in later years she was to become a generous supporter of Ru's work in Zanzibar.





Alongside his formal education, Ru was well known as an enthusiastic and accomplished sportsman. But more on that shortly....



Looking back, Ru recalls a passion for becoming a doctor from his very earliest years – as long as he can remember, in fact. He secured a place at St Thomas's Medical School where he excelled not only in his medical course but also on the rugby field. One of his proudest achievements was captaining 'Tommy's' in the final of the Rugby Hospital's Cup. With the clock running down, he carried an intercepted pass from his own touch-line the full length of the pitch to level the score at 10-10, taking the game into extra time. Tommys went on to slot a penalty and, in the highlight of his undergraduate career, Ru lifted the cup for his winning side!!





His initial career intention was to pursue a career in general surgery and he moved to Sheffield where he completed his surgical rotation before embarking on an MD thesis with David Thomas in the field of spinal cord injury (also working alongside Giles Brindley at that time).

As a senior registrar, Ru began the move southwest to 'God's own country' and completed his training in Bristol.

It was around this time that Ru first became involved in Urolink – a decision that was to completely shape his work over the next 25 years. In 1991, Ru re-located to the foothills of Kilimanjaro in Moshi (Tanzania) with two young children (Emily and Tom) and worked in the KCMC Institute of Urology alongside local surgeons as well as Lester Eshleman who was director of the Institute at that time. Neville Harrison, the then Chairman of Urolink, was notably one of Ru's inspirational role model at that time and a fire was lit for global surgery that remains indistinguishable to this day.





On returning to the UK, Ru was to develop a pivotal friendship and professional link with Dr Mohammed Jiddawi when their paths crossed at an RSM meeting. Mohammed was a Zanzibarian-born surgeon providing an almost single-handed surgical practice for the 1.5 million inhabitants of the island. His time in the UK was spent in Brighton with Phil Thomas and Neville Harrison – both enduring ambassadors of urological training in East Africa. I will pick up the Zanzibar thread again shortly...

In 1994, Ru was appointed a Consultant Urologist in Taunton where he delivered a busy and varied workload. It pre-dated major centralisation and he maintained a practice focussed on major cancer surgery. He established a vibrant research programme, notably outside of a mainstream academic setting, going on to produce landmark work in quality of life and actuarial survival in prostate cancer. His research interests aligned naturally with his strong patient-focus as a clinician and his easy manner allowed him to create many successful collaborations including his links with Kieran O'Boyle in Dublin.

Academically, Ru went on to be appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Bristol, awarded the Arris and Gale RCS Lectureship, supervised 6 MD theses and established the SW Regional Research Committee with Prof Paul Abrams.



All by now with 5 lovely kids

And so, finally, to 'global urology'... and indeed global health. Having joined the Urolink committee in 1993, Ru went on to take over as Chairman in 2007. During his Chairmanship, he oversaw changes in practice that increased the number of links, improved the approaches to equipment donation and eventually established the model of 3 main urological training hubs in Hawassa, KCMC and Lusaka. Funded jointly by TUF, BAUS and the BJU. Each with 20 million populations.

Urolink slide



But Ru's reach in global health was soon to extend beyond urology alone. Just over 10 years ago, the Prime Minister of Zanzibar asked Ru to consider running 1 of the 3 hospitals on the island in Makunduchi. Ru established a public-private partnership between the government of Zanzibar and his newly established charity HIPZ. He drew in donors from major UK businesses and set to work professionalising the provision of healthcare in Zanzibar. It is impossible in this limited time to do any sort of justice to the achievements that Ru and his charity HIPZ have delivered in Zanz.



But to offer an insight into the impact.....

**SEE POWERPOINT SLIDE SET.**

Ru has since been recognised in the New Years Honours 2015 and with the Christchurch Medal.

So Mr President, ladies and gentlemen. It is an extra-ordinary privilege to describe Ru's career in medicine, urology and global health.

***I want to mention here that the decision to put Ru forward for the medal came about following independent conversations between you, me and TOB***

He is an outstanding clinician, a hugely respected trainer, a mentor, a role model, an optimist, a risk-taker, a patient advocate, an ambassador for global health and hugely respected by so every one of us who know him. He is without doubt a worth recipient of British Urology's highest award...the St Peter's Medal.

