



OBITUARIES

John Michael Brudenell

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Former consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist (b 1925; q King's College London 1949; FRCS, FRCOG), d 30 March 2015.

John Michael Brudenell ("Mike") decided to specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology when he was a medical student, being much influenced and encouraged by John Peel and Stanley Clayton. After house jobs at King's College London and Queen Charlotte's Hospital he did national service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. After brief military training he spent most of his national service as the obstetrician in various military hospitals in Germany. Having completed his army service, he said he was not much of a soldier, but was a better obstetrician for having been responsible for the delivery of many army wives.

He returned to King's to do research on endometrial pathology and cervical cytology. He started cervical smear testing there and learned to interpret the results of the smears that he had taken. He bore the scepticism with which cytology was viewed in 1953 by many pathologists with cheerful enthusiasm. In cooperation with his laboratory assistant, he published the results of their work over the first three years. His interest in the early diagnosis of cervical cancer later resulted in his being asked to write up the results of the first investigation by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists into carcinoma in situ of the cervix. He left King's to gain general surgical experience and, after obtaining the fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, returned to King's as a registrar and later senior registrar. He was appointed as a consultant to St Luke's Hospital and the Royal Infirmary in Bradford in 1961. He was astonished by the volume of work undertaken by the consultants in the department at Bradford: in 1961, three consultants serves a population of upwards of 250 000. While he was in Bradford an outbreak of smallpox occurred, and one of his patients, who had been exposed to the disease, was at risk of developing it on the same day as her baby was due. To avoid the two events occurring together Mike Brudenell performed an elective caesarean in an outbuilding in the hospital grounds with a team of volunteers. Fortunately the mother did not develop the disease, and both she and her baby were well.

Brudenell enjoyed living in Yorkshire both for the big industrial city in which he worked and for the beautiful surrounding countryside of the Dales. He had expected to spend his consultant life there, but when a vacancy occurred at King's he was invited to apply, and after three happy years in the north returned to his alma mater.

He worked at King's and as a visiting consultant to the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead for the rest of his career. He had both a busy NHS practice and a private practice in Harley Street. At King's he was much involved in undergraduate and postgraduate education. When he was a senior registrar at King's he had been invited, to his surprise, to assist John, later Sir John Peel, at the birth of Prince Andrew at Buckingham Palace. As a consultant he also assisted at the birth of Prince Edward and Princess Margaret's two children.

During his time at King's he carried out extensive research on the problems of pregnant diabetic women. In cooperation with his diabetes physician colleagues, David Pike and Peter Watkins, he ran the diabetic antenatal clinic. Between them they reduced perinatal mortality in diabetic women to near the levels in non-diabetic women. Brudenell wrote extensively on the subject and lectured widely both in the UK and overseas. He delivered the William Meredith Fletcher Shaw lecture at the RCOG in 1987 on diabetic pregnancy and talked about various aspects of his research in his presidential address to the section of obstetrics and gynaecology at the Royal Society of Medicine in 1981. He was very involved with the RCOG, sitting on its council for 16 years and being honorary treasurer for seven years. He also sat on the council for the RCS for four years. During his time as treasurer of the RCOG charity, Birthright, he persuaded Phillip Harris, later Lord Harris, to fund a number of research units in obstetrics and gynaecology. The Harris Birthright department of fetal medicine at King's was the first of its kind in the UK. Opened by Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1984, it is now one of the largest in the world, dealing with more than 20 000 patients from home and overseas each year.

Mike was interested in all things sporting, especially rugby, which he learned to play as a medical student. In spite of breaking his ankle on the first occasion that he played, he went on to play for King's for the next three years. He was president of the KCHRFC for 20 years and of the United Hospitals RFC for five. An enthusiastic tennis player and skier he did both until he was in his eighties. In retirement he wrote an autobiography covering the first 80 years of his life, not for publication, but for the fun of it for his family and a few close friends. He had a very happy family life and leaves his beloved wife, Mollie; four sons; nine grandchildren; and, at the last count, seven great grandchildren.

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