

# Ian Pearce

We were delighted to catch up with our old friend, Ian Pearce, former Editor of *Urology News* and new President of BAUS.

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## Can you tell us a little bit about what led you into the field of urology and the highlights so far?

This is probably a two-pronged answer and certainly isn't as straightforward as a seismic event or encounter that resulted in an irreversible journey down a urological career path.

The first part must be the people. The people involved in delivering urological care, whether they are nursing, medical or allied professionals, all share a certain something that I have always found inherently magnetic. They all possess, in a variety of ratios of course, empathy, positivity, humour and humility, and it was my early experience of colleagues working in urology that really made me feel that these were the colleagues I would love to work alongside and spend my professional life surrounded by. That feeling and my impression of the urological workforce has only grown stronger and higher throughout my career and, as the number of colleagues I have been lucky enough to work with, and for, has increased over the years, so too has this feeling of belonging increased. Just as I believe that the people make the place, so too do the people make the specialty, and I think urology is a natural home for an unbelievable number of amazingly talented individuals.

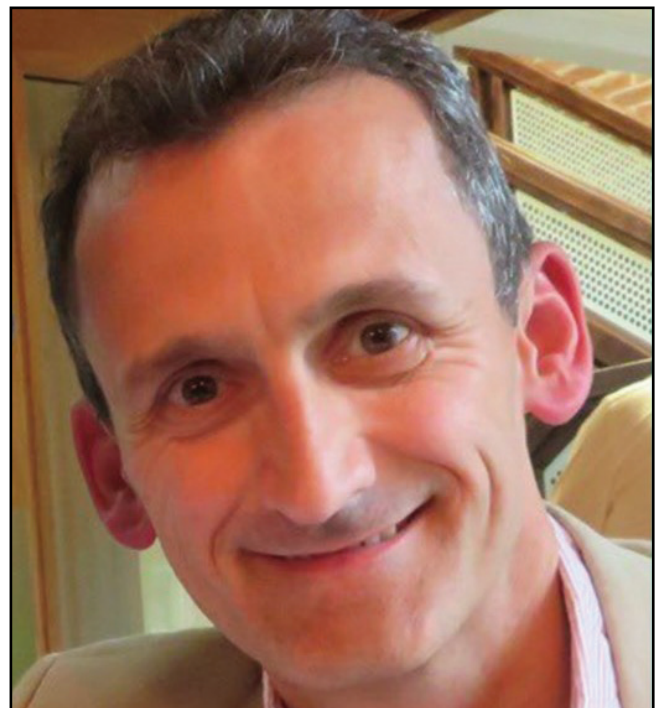
The other half of the story must be the variety of work, whether inpatient or outpatient-based that urology encompasses. Which other specialty could realistically claim to offer such variety of surgical and non-surgical diagnostic and therapeutic options? None I would argue. In my view, urology is unparalleled in this aspect and this not only affords us huge choice but also allows us to embrace and enjoy great diversity of personalities but with significant commonality.

So really, it's very much a combination of these two factors, coupled with an incredibly enjoyable six-month post in Stoke on Trent in the early 90s that cemented my desire to pursue a career in urology.

## What has been the best piece of advice that you have received in your career and what advice would you offer to those following in your footsteps?

I have been extremely fortunate to have been the recipient of more excellent advice than any one person could have the right to expect. Having to select the star at the top of the tree is almost impossible but if I had to come off the fence it would be that the first step in any career must be clinical credibility. From this, all else flows positively and yet without it, doors do not open, opportunities may not arise, and job satisfaction is poor.

I think the best advice I could give anyone is that variety keeps you fresh. By that I mean that I have always found that activities outside of the normal 'day job' have always had the dual benefit of being both independently enjoyable and rewarding but have also



maintained the appeal of the 'day job' which I feel has contributed enormously to my job satisfaction.

Having said this, anyone reading this should make their own footsteps, this is far more rewarding than following a set already laid down.

## What do you think have been the most exciting clinical developments in urology in recent years?

One of the things that attracts many people, myself included, into urology is that clinical developments and innovations are both numerous and frequent. The BURST collaborative is very worthy of special mention and represents a real-world clinical research juggernaut delivering guidance and advice on common urological issues that are pertinent to all of us within the field of urology.

The rapidly advancing field of minimally invasive surgical techniques (MIST) for the treatment of benign prostatic enlargement continues to be an exciting, rapidly evolving field with massive impact in urology and I am excited to be able to witness its continued development, maturation and widespread implementation.

## IN CONVERSATION WITH

### **You have of course just taken on the role of BAUS President – many congratulations! What do you think will be the biggest challenge? And the most enjoyable aspect?**

Thank you so much. I think there are many challenges facing all of us delivering urological care in the British Isles. The greatest of these rests, I think, with our aspiration to ensure that every member of the public has equitable access to urological care at the time of need. This requires meticulous workforce mapping, correlation with population demographics including deprivation indices and an appreciation of the vast geographical variation in existing waiting lists for both admitted and non-admitted urological care. I think this is a Herculean task and although we are well on the way with our excellent annual workforce reports which are increasingly detailed, there is still much work to be done and much influence to be exerted on government decision makers before we can truly realise this ambition.

Without question the most enjoyable aspect of the role will be the opportunity to work with so many exceptional friends and colleagues both here and overseas within the sphere of urology. I am particularly looking forward to greater and closer collaboration with our key partners here in the British Isles including BAUN, TUF and BJUI. I firmly believe that the closer we all collaborate, the stronger our voice will be and the more effective we will be in delivering on behalf of the urological workforce.

### **BAUS has declared it has three main pillars – membership, education, and care provision. Can you tell us a little bit about the aims in each area?**

These three main pillars were determined at a BAUS strategy meeting in York in September 2022 to be the three main themes of a full-year strategy which spanned the presidency of Jo Cresswell and of my own.

The membership pillar essentially focuses on the need for BAUS to have greater representation amongst those colleagues delivering urological care. This is on the basis that the greater and more comprehensive our membership, the stronger our united voice can be for the benefit of both our patients and colleagues.

Education has always been a massive part of the BAUS offering to its members and this aspect has itself seen a significant evolution through the BAUS Office of Education to the creation of the BAUS Education Committee.

It became apparent during and after the COVID pandemic that the sheer volume of educational material offered by BAUS had grown significantly and an overarching review was desperately needed to both prevent duplication and to ensure that educational gaps did not exist. This pillar of the strategy therefore looked to create an overarching view of the educational material offered not just by BAUS but also by allied partners such as BJUI Knowledge. I think this is the most complex review ever undertaken and is a work in progress, expertly navigated by Joe Philip, BAUS President-Elect and Honorary Secretary.

The provision of care pillar is a much more diverse strategic stream encompassing a variety of initiatives from best practice pathways, consensus documents, collaborations and workforce planning. It is this latter aspect that I believe to be of the utmost importance, without an accurate idea of the urological workforce, and without being able to triangulate this with the needs of the population and the future aspiration of our colleagues in training, how can we possibly hope to achieve our aim of delivering equitable access to urological care?

### **Do you think BAUS has adapted and evolved over the past decade and what has been the biggest achievement?**

I am now in my 10th year as a BAUS Trustee, so I have been closely involved in the evolution of BAUS over the last decade. I'm extremely proud of the way BAUS has embraced and pioneered diversity and inclusion at National Association level. I distinctly remember my first BAUS Annual Meeting in Harrogate many years ago. I came away with the impression that BAUS was run and delivered by the same five people who all appeared to have had exactly the same life experiences, background and outlook.

Fast forward to where we are now, BAUS is without question the most richly diverse and I believe inclusive National Association in the UK, I believe that we lead the way with our widening participation programme which has been an outstanding success and continues to evolve. I feel very privileged to have been involved in that.

### **Would you encourage all urologists to get involved in BAUS?**

The short answer, of course, is absolutely 'yes' every single day of the week!

I believe BAUS offers a home for all urologists within the UK and of course beyond and I am convinced that the strength and the unity of BAUS lies in its inclusivity, its warmth and the sense of belonging that it offers.

There are an enormous number of roles within and allied to BAUS and I genuinely believe that there is a role for everyone who would wish to have a role. As a member organisation BAUS can only ever be as strong as its collective members so I would encourage everyone and anyone who would like to get involved in any capacity to get in touch, we are all part of the same family, and I believe we all have something to give and of course to gain.

### **And finally, if you have any spare time – perhaps unlikely over the next two years – what do you do to relax?**

I go to sleep every night!

Many thanks for your time!

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