

# ABCD Autumn meeting report, Brighton

Russell Drummond



*"Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty. I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well."*

Theodore Roosevelt

Having a life transformed with type 1 diabetes is acknowledged universally by staff working in this speciality. Without diabetes, the depth of impact is impossible to truly digest and people who have displayed the diligence, fortitude and resilience to make the impossible possible are not only inspirational but educational. Knowing what Roddy had achieved, using advanced device therapy, but most of all sheer determination made him an attractive speaker at our biannual ABCD conference in Brighton last autumn. Not only was he an eloquent and adept speaker, but he used his spare time whilst at the meeting to meet other people with diabetes to give them advice and peer support. Having not completed the Arctic Marathon on his previous attempt, I was delighted – as I am sure you are too – to read about the success of this quite ordinary Scotsman from Inverness who, despite type 1 diabetes, has once more achieved the extra-ordinary.

## No limits: Arctic Marathon completed by an athlete with type 1 diabetes

Presented by Roddy Riddle to our ABCD Autumn meeting in Brighton

I was diagnosed at the age of 40, which was 9 years ago, after leading a very active life as an ex-international cyclist. The week I was diagnosed my wife Lynn got a home self-testing kit for type 1 diabetes. I did the test on the Monday and it was positive. I had a dilemma as I had a ticket for the UEFA Cup Final to watch Rangers; I knew if I went to the doctor she wouldn't allow me to travel to Manchester so I decided to 'wing it' and made an appointment the day after the game. I was sent straight to Raigmore hospital the next day for tests and was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes with a blood glucose (BG) level of 45.6 mmol/L.

I am fortunate to use an insulin pump which assists me managing my glucose levels during sport. When I do the silly events I do, I use continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) to help keep my BG levels where I like them to be.

I returned to this year's 350-mile 6633 Arctic Ultra Marathon as I felt I let my family, friends and the whole diabetes community down by failing to finish in 2016. I was on the start line better prepared and with a lot more respect for what was ahead of me. Two days before the start my CGM receiver decided to pack in, but I could still get trend arrows of BG on my phone app. However, 4 days into the race my phone decided it didn't like –40



degrees and packed in too, so it was back to 'old school' BG testing. This provided its own issues: getting blood from my fingers in the cold and then the strips wouldn't read in my BG meter because they were so cold, so I had to improvise by putting them down my private parts to warm up. My back-up insulin, which was wrapped in a down jacket inside my pulk (sledge with wheels), completely froze every day so, when I needed to redo my insulin pump, I had to defrost it in warm water. It worked as my BG levels remained good.

I went there to finish unfinished business, and to come away in second place in 6 days 21 hours – which is one of the fastest ever times – was a complete bonus.

Correspondence: Dr Russell Drummond  
Email: [Russell.Drummond@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Russell.Drummond@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15277/bjd.2017.130>  
*Br J Diabetes* 2017; **17**:78