

“Betjeman’s” Ode to the BSUG

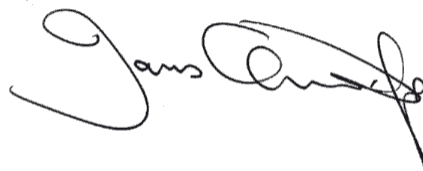
- 1 The BSUG! The BSUG!
There’s nowhere this evening that I’d rather be!
It might have been nice to be in the same room
But I’m perfectly happy to meet you on Zoom.
- 2 My connection is working, which makes me feel blest,
And please rest assured, I *am* properly dressed:
I’ve tied my bow tie with impeccable taste
And my formal attire doesn’t stop at the waist.
- 3 Some people on Zoom seem the suavest of charmers
While under the table they’re wearing pyjamas
Or apparel that’s even more unorthodox,
Like Mickey Mouse slippers or luminous socks,
- 4 Or slim-fitting Levi’s – which we “hip” grand-dads
Can now purchase with built-in incontinence pads
(Or so I’ve been told) – but tonight you should know
That from shoulders to ankles I’m pure Savile Row.
- 5 Yes, I firmly believe one should dress with propriety
When meeting a national learned society
Whose prestige and tradition are second to none,
And whose history dates back to 2001.
- 6 Which seems rather recent to wrinklies like me
Who remember the old days of mixed O&G,
When subspecialty expertise just wasn’t there
And all most of us did was anterior repair.
- 7 Detrusor dysfunction was ill-understood:
I don’t think our advice did our patients much good –
“Lose weight! This new diet sheet may be of use,
And be sure to drink plenty of cranberry juice!”
- 8 But a few of our colleagues were keen to display
Special knowledge they’d gained from the US of A,
Where an op. to stop ladies from wetting their pants

Had been published by Marshall, Marchetti and Krantz.

- 9 They gained global fame for their clever invention,
Which was rapidly followed by colposuspension.
Fresh hope for our patients was starting to dawn!
Here, a new specialism was about to be born.
- 10 The birth would take place where the tourists now dwell,
In a building renamed as “The Lanesborough Hotel”,
Where the prices are high and the decor is gorgeous.
In the Seventies, though, it was still called “St George’s”.
- 11 The birth there was smooth with no puffin’ and pantin’,
Under the guidance of Stuart L. Stanton.
He brought forth a new specialty – still very tiny –
And gave it a name: it was called “Urogynae”.
- 12 1974 was the year, you will find –
A year when urology’s stars were aligned.
Eurovision was won by the song “Waterloo”
(And ABBA went on to do rather well too).
- 13 Fast-forwarding now to the 21st century,
Eurovision has many an embarrassing entry,
But urogynae has flourished, as all here can see,
Thanks to the work of the BSUG.
- 14 Next year is your old-fashioned coming of age,
But this year your 20th takes centre stage
As we toast the remarkable things that you’ve done
Since you started, way back in 2001.
- 15 Before that there was RUGS, but it wasn’t the same,
And “BUGS” would have been an unfortunate name.
But BSUG sounded perfectly right,
And its story’s well told on your splendid website.
- 16 How the President said: “It’s high time that the College
Had experts to propagate up-to-date knowledge:

Ideally a woman with get-up-and-go ...” So
He naturally turned to Miss Linda Cardozo.

- 17 Professor Vik Kullar was there at the start,
And Bob Freeman, who played such a crucial part.
I do hope that Robert could hear us applaud
The Society’s lifetime achievement award.
- 18 That was a high point of this, the first day
Of an update with such a wide range on display:
From the State of the Art to pessary checks;
From Covid-19 to middle-aged sex.
- 19 Sacrospinous fixation! We all watched in wonder
As Chris Maher – appropriately – spoke from “Down Under”.
Gosh! So much to take in, to consider and think:
Thank goodness this session’s a chance for a drink!
- 20 We’ve just had some magic, and shortly – hey presto! –
There’ll be toasts and the BSUG Manifesto,
So I shall make sure that I stick to my time,
And I’m just coming up to my very last rhyme.
- 21 What a pleasure it’s been to meet old and new friends!
But this is the point where the poetry ends.
So it’s “Tarra from Yorkshire”, and goodnight from me,
And good health to you all in the BSUG.



18th November 2021

James Owen Drife

*with thanks to the late Sir John Betjeman
Poet Laureate, 1972-1984*