

**The 1,350th Meeting of the Brighton and Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 in the Audrey Emerton Building:**

The President Dr. Margaret Price introduced Dr Paul Ransom, Emergency Physician BSUH.

Dr Ransom started off by introducing the Halo Trust, an anti-landmine clearance charity with which he has been involved since 1999. The Halo Trust is a charity whose motto is 'let's make that land safe' is a UK based non-governmental organisation. Work with this charity provided an opportunity to work at several war torn countries.

A brief introduction on the different types of mines was highlighted with their potential for damage. UN exploded devices also pose dangers which are also cleared by the Trust. It also operates an amnesty of weapons so that they are safely stockpiled until subsequently destroyed. It is also involved in a mines awareness programme.

Efforts to limit use of anti-personnel weapons have been in place since 1997 but USA and China are not signatories to anti-mine treaty. Abkhazia is clear and Georgia nearly clear and so is Mozambique effectively cleared. Unfortunately several countries still have a land mine problem.

Landmines are used for several military logistics such as defensive purposes but probably more importantly affecting morale and draining supporting resources. Their clearance requires lot of political negotiation. Examples of mined countries such as Eritrea, Afghanistan and Georgia were highlighted.

Dr Ransom's work is predominantly educational in teaching 'paramedic deminers' in basic care of victims until they are transferred to a hospital. Other educational activities are about basic hygiene particularly in remote areas. Local hospital assessments happen regularly to help out in ensuring optimal care. Dr Ransom enjoys most observing the significant progress in his 'trainees' after a teaching programme. Graphic examples were highlighted of simulated incidents as part of the training programmes.

Personal reflection of Dr Ransom's involvement with this Trust were presented and included: Work being complimentary to the NHS work, as well as a learning and teaching experience plus travel to obscure yet beautiful places. Examples of countries which benefited from Dr Ransom's contribution through the Halo Trust were presented.

The talk ended by a demonstration video shot in Arkazia (which is now cleared of mines). This video highlighted the work of the Halo Trust, demonstrating a classic example of a practical scenario covering how to deal with a landmine incident, rendering the site safe, triaging casualties, organising their on site treatment and subsequent transfer to a local hospital.

