Tragic death of rugby's Ken Macaulay confirmed a day after charity cycle ends

Just one day after completing a marathon high profile 1,000 mile plus cycle in aid of four charities, Ken Macaulay has died, aged 66.

It is believed the former Scotland rugby internationalist suffered a cardiac arrest just hours after returning to his old club Gala where the pedalathon began three weeks earlier.

Gala Rugby Club said in a statement: "It is with a heavy heart that Gala Rugby announce the passing of Ken Macaulay.

"Ken just yesterday finished his 3-week long nationwide cycle raising nearly twelve-thousand pounds for Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, My Name'5 Doddie Foundation, Murrayfield Injured Players Foundation and Prostate Scotland.

"Everyone at Gala Rugby would like to send their condolences to Pat, Richard and Joanna — and the rest of Ken's family — at this tough time."

Ken said in advance that the plan to visit every club or pitch at which he had played was as a thank you to a game which had given him so much.

Nothing appeared to rate more highly with the former banker than the retrospective Scotland cap awarded earlier this year.

As a consequence of playing against a French XV in 1980 during a tour match Ken was awarded cap number 1215 when the list of teams against whom Scotland gave caps was recently expanded.

Initially £1,215 was the sum he aimed to raise but such was the response from the rugby community Ken's Just Giving page was today highlighted donations worth £11,830.

Many of the great and good of Scottish Rugby turned out to accompany the ex-second row forward on legs of a cycle which he described as being "out of my comfort zone."

He also stated "I am no spring chicken" but today's revelation will devastate the rugby community and beyond.

Earlier today Ken had posted: "Sorry, folks, for the rather brief update last night but things were pretty hectic when I arrived at Netherdale for the conclusion of my adventure!
"It was a long cycle yesterday, over 70 miles, most of it in to a headwind but it was also another day of warm welcomes and great company – at one stage there were 14 of us on the road and we also were being escorted by the Doddie Tractor for part of the way!

"I will update further with proper thanks and acknowledgements but in the meantime please keep spreading the word – there's still plenty of time to donate. Thank you."

Before setting out, Ken said: "I was very fortunate to be one of the beneficiaries of the SRU's retrospective cap initiative earlier this year and this has got me thinking that I would like to give something back, as a thank you for being included in this process but also as a token of appreciation for everything that rugby has given me over many years.

"I am going to try and visit every rugby club/pitch in Scotland on which I played during a career that spanned 30 seasons of league rugby. Some of the grounds don't exist anymore and maybe some of the clubs have disappeared, but by

my reckoning there are still 76 places to visit!!

"I intend to travel to all these clubs — from one to another in a clockwise direction, starting and ending at Netherdale, Galashiels — a journey of just over 1000 miles — by bike!

"This will take me well out of my comfort zone in three ways: I am no longer a spring chicken, I cast a larger shadow than is necessary and I haven't ever really done any meaningful cycling, but it's too far to run and to go by motorised transport wouldn't be much of a challenge!!"

Ken Macaulay at Edinburgh Northern just a few days ago