

European Laryngological Society (ELS) meets British Laryngological Association (BLA)

IN CONVERSATION WITH DECLAN COSTELLO AND RICARD SIMO

The meeting of the European Laryngological Society in May is being held in London, and is co-hosted by the British Laryngological Association. The President of the ELS, **Ricard Simo**, and the Secretary of the BLA, **Declan Costello**, exchanged thoughts about the conference.



Declan Costello, MA, MBBS, FRCS(ORL-HNS),

Consultant Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, UK.

E: declan.costello@uhb.nhs.uk

Ricard Simo, LMS, FRCS(Glas), FRCS (ORLHNS), PhD

Consultant Otorhinolaryngologist Head and Neck Surgeon, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust, London, UK.

E: ricardsimo1@icloud.com

[Declan Costello] Tell me about the ELS – how many members does it have? How is it structured? What are its aims?

[Ricard Simo] The ELS was founded in 1995 on the initiative of Professors Kleinssaser, Serafini and Luboinski. The society is dedicated to the promotion of knowledge, research, scientific and technical development in all fields of laryngology. It holds a scientific meeting every two years, several workshops and regularly publishes research, reviews and position papers. The society has over 300 members not only from Europe but all around the globe. It has a presidential council and scientific council and multiple committees in all areas of laryngology – from laryngeal cancer, phonosurgery, nomenclature, voice and neurolaryngology amongst others.

[DC] Why did you choose London for the 2018 conference?

[RS] Traditionally, the society has ensured that all European countries and regions are fairly represented and the meeting goes to all corners of Europe. The first meeting was in Germany in 1996 and has then been to Rome, Paris, Brussels, Lisbon, Nottingham, Barcelona, Vienna, Helsinki, Antalya and Genoa, two years ago. It happened that I was member of the scientific council and had just had the initiative to create the larynx cancer committee; I was then nominated as President as it was felt that the meeting should go back to a Northern European country, and London appeared a very attractive proposition. It was a case of being in the right place, at the right time.

[DC] What are the main themes of the 2018 conference?

[RS] The society meetings have always been very successful and all aspects of laryngology well represented. I was keen to ensure that proportion and balance were preserved, so I asked all the relevant

committees to propose themes for the round tables. The meeting has also been organised in conjunction with the BLA, and the American Laryngological Association (ALA) and American Broncho-Esophagological Association (ABEA) have been active collaborators so they have also proposed themes. As the meeting is being held in the UK, it was also agreed that all other organisations and societies involved in the management of laryngeal disorders should have an active role, so we have asked the British Voice Association (BVA), ENT-UK Head and Neck Society, the British Association of Head and Neck Oncologists (BAHNO), The Difficult Airway Society and British Association for Paediatric Otolaryngology (BAPO) for their input. As President and as a head and neck thyroid surgeon, I also felt that having a discussion of the management of the recurrent laryngeal nerve and voice after thyroid surgery would be a good idea so we have a round table on this topic. The other themes include phonosurgery, neurolaryngology, molecular biology, swallowing, new techniques and HPV amongst others. As this has been a truly multidisciplinary approach, I think the programme appears to be one of the most comprehensive that the ELS has had.

[DC] What are the most innovative aspects of the London meeting?

[RS] As in most meetings we will have keynote lectures, round tables, instructional courses and oral and poster presentations. However as I have said, we have ensured that all scientific partners of the meeting and especially the BLA, ALA, ABEA, BVA, ENT-UK Head and Neck Society, BAHNO, the Difficult Airway Society and BAPO are well represented. For the first time we have four oral presentation prizes which include the BLA – David Howard Prize, the Young Laryngologist – Kleinssaser Prize, the Oncology – Patrick Bradley Prize and the Neurolaryngology Prize which I believe will

“We are delighted that the BLA are co-hosts with the ELS of this year’s meeting.”



Figure 1. Ceremonial gavel given to the British Laryngological Association (BLA) by the American Laryngological Association (ALA).

be a huge incentive for young laryngologists to attend and actively participate in the meeting. We also have a number of round table-video sessions which I am sure will prove very popular.

[DC] Who are the key international speakers?

[RS] The international faculty is really impressive and vast. The international keynote speakers include Dana Thomson, Dinnesh Chhetri and Michael Hinni from the USA; Jennifer Anderson from Canada; Hege Clemm from Norway; and Fred Dikkers from the Netherlands. Other relevant speakers include Peak Woo, Craig Zalvan, Greg Postma, Michael Benningher, Cesare Piazza, Mark Remacle, Jean-Paul Marie, Elisabeth Sjogren, Thassos Hantzakos and a long list of very relevant personalities in the laryngeal world.

[DC] Who are the key British speakers?

[RS] Again, the British faculty is really impressive and the keynote lecturers are Janet Wilson, Patrick Bradley, Neil Weir, Vin Paleri, Martin Birchall and Neil Tolley. As stated all the relevant societies and associations are well represented so we have Paul Pracy, Hisham Mehanna, Kate Heathcote, James O'Hara, Iain Nixon and another very long list. You are also speaking!

[DC] And I'm very much looking forward to it! What social events have you lined up?

[RS] London has an 'up' factor and will attract people from all over the world. So far we have had registrations from South Africa,



Figure 2. Albert Merati, a fellow contributor to this edition, presents the ceremonial gavel from the ALA to BLA President, David Howard.

Turkey, India, China, Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, Colombia and many other countries. We have chosen the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre as a venue which is in front of the Houses of Parliament and that is an attraction in its own right. We will therefore have the opening day's reception on the top floor of the conference centre with views of the Houses of Parliament. We have also arranged a dinner on a boat cruise on the River Thames. We hope the weather is sympathetic to us.

[RS] So... Let's talk about the BLA! What's the background of the organisation?

[DC] The BLA is a relatively young organisation, formed in 2012. Our American colleagues set up the American Laryngological Association in 1879, so we felt that it was time for us to have our own group! Indeed, the ALA kindly gave us a ceremonial gavel for use at our meetings (Figure 1-2).

The idea for the BLA was the brainchild of Guri Sandhu and David Howard, and grew out of a feeling that we wanted a forum that encouraged partnerships between surgeons (and other clinicians) and researchers, and promoted good practice. We now have over 300 members from around the world. At our inaugural meeting in 2012, we were very honoured to have a talk from the late Professor Stephen Hawking, who had medical care under laryngologists for several years.

We have a council with representation from around the UK, and, critically, we have co-opted members to the council from other allied organisations: BVA, and the

BAPO. In addition, we have a permanent representation of a speech therapist on the council.

[RS] Tell me about your regular meetings.

[DC] We run regular courses and meetings throughout the year, which cover a spread of topics, from 'Assessment and diagnosis in the voice clinic' to 'Back to basics' and other areas of interest, such as 'Emergency airways'. Every two years, we run our flagship 'Cutting Edge Laryngology' conference, which brings together some of the leading figures from around the world; this has proved immensely popular in the past.

[RS] How are the BLA involved in the ELS meeting this year?

[DC] We are delighted that the BLA are co-hosts with the ELS of this year's meeting. There will be numerous sessions run specifically by the BLA. In particular, we are looking forward to presenting the annual David Howard Prize for an oral presentation. The winners will be announced at the BLA short paper session at the ELS. The BLA also has an Isshiki Award for outstanding contribution to laryngology; past winners have included Abdullah Sani, Frederik Dikkers and Guri Sandhu. And our Laryngograph Trust Prize is an award for the most innovative paper in any area of laryngology. In presenting these awards, the BLA is keen to promote innovation and development.

The ELS and the BLA very much look forward to seeing you in London in May!