

# BACO: evolution and modernisation

BY TIM WOOLFORD

Chairing the local organising committee is no small task, but it has a personal connection for **Tim Woolford**, as he tells us.

I attended my first BACO in Manchester as a registrar, and have attended every one since. In July, more than 20 years later I am chairing the local organising committee when BACO returns to Manchester. A timely opportunity for me to reflect upon the many changes which have taken place to our triennial meeting over the years.

In common with all great institutions which remain relevant, BACO has evolved and modernised. In my view this was essential with an ever increasing number of courses and meetings to compete with, and should be an ongoing process. We have seen a transformation over the years, not least of which is the size of the conference with now well over 1000 delegates requiring a major conference centre. BACO 2018 will take place at Manchester Central Conference Centre in the heart of the city, which is an excellent modern venue.

Many of the changes to BACO have mirrored the evolution of our specialty with increased sub-specialisation, expanded clinical practice and multi-disciplinary working. A good example of this is the rise of my own area of clinical interest, facial plastic and reconstructive surgery. In the early years this had a very low profile however facial plastic surgery now has equal status with other fields of ENT with an international faculty and always a large audience.

BACO is no longer a conference only for ENT surgeons with multidisciplinary working illustrated by invited speakers from other surgical and allied specialties. There is now a programme to interest specialist nurses, speech therapists and audiology colleagues. Most recently medical students have attended, and in Manchester for the first time we will be inviting local sixth form students to our conference – hopefully inspiring the next generation of doctors and surgeons. For BACO 2018, the modern, multidisciplinary approach of ENT surgery is clearly reflected by the theme of the academic programme ‘Innovation and collaboration’, featuring many world class speakers.

In recent conferences great efforts have



been made to provide practical hands on training with the introduction of the popular clinical skills centre, the scale of which is unique to our conference. In Manchester the clinical skills centre will again be situated centrally within the trade show. Having seen the plans I can confirm this is even more ambitious with ‘state of the art’ simulation and skills teaching from an expert faculty. Live cadaveric surgical demonstrations have also become a very popular feature of BACO, and this is being expanded in Manchester – a ‘course within a conference’.

Despite the success of BACO and popularity for UK ENT surgeons, rather few international delegates have attended over the years. For BACO 2018 in Manchester we aim to address this, welcoming many more international guests to the great city of Manchester. Indeed BACO has been re-branded as ‘BACO International’ with our guest countries for 2018 being India and Brazil. When I travel anywhere in the world, and people learn I am from Manchester there is always great interest in our Premiership football clubs which are truly a global brand. We have a social event and tour planned at Old Trafford – the iconic home of Manchester United, which I’m sure will appeal to our international guests, and hopefully many from the UK.

Keeping to the theme of social events, we have decided on a radical update for Manchester to make these far less formal and more inclusive. The Master’s reception and traditional formal banquet are being replaced, and I can promise something

completely different – the ‘BACO party night’. In keeping with the international theme of BACO 2018 this will have street food from around the world and should be a lively old night with an excellent soul band and music till the early hours. All are welcome!

So BACO has changed greatly over the years and in Manchester we aim to build on what has been successful in recent years and continue to modernise to make the conference relevant and appealing. I do hope you will join us for BACO International 2018.

AUTHOR



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