

114th American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Annual Meeting and OTO EXPO 2010

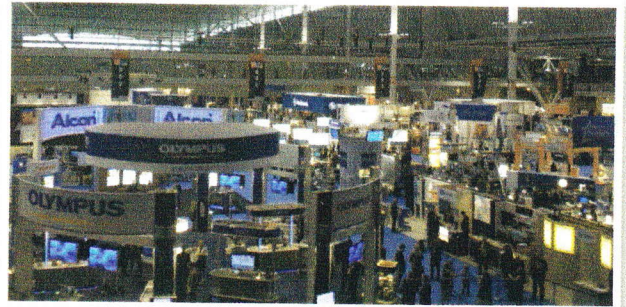
Date: September 26th-29th, 2010. **Venue:** Convention Centre, Boston, MA, USA. **Report by:** George Garas BSc(Hons), MBBS(Dist), MRCS(Eng), Core Trainee 2 in Otorhinolaryngology and Head & Neck Surgery, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, London, UK.

This year's American Academy meeting in Boston, MA was impeccable. Keynote speakers included worldwide known Head & Neck Surgery experts such as Prof Ashok Shaha from Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital who lectured on the difficult neck and difficult thyroid and Prof Robin Cotton from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre who gave an excellent instruction course on the paediatric airway. The meeting thoroughly covered all aspects of otorhinolaryngology – head & neck surgery but a particular emphasis was placed on robotic technology and its applications in our specialty. Indeed, robotics seemed to be the theme of the 2010 meeting. A special symposium entitled 'A new paradigm in head and neck surgery: the present and future of da Vinci surgery' was held by Intuitive Surgical® in the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel. This was attended by hundreds of otorhinolaryngologists – head & neck surgeons from all over the world and chaired by Prof Gregory Weinstein from the University of Pennsylvania; the pioneer of transoral robotic surgery who gave an outstanding lecture entitled 'Establishing a transoral robotic surgery (TORS) programme'. Prof Weinstein is the first in the world to have developed such a programme and invited surgeons from all continents interested in performing TORS to attend. Moreover, the advantages of TORS in comparison to currently existing surgical and non-surgical therapeutic modalities for certain oropharyngeal cancers were discussed.

Many British otorhinolaryngologists gave excellent presentations, but the one by the research team of our own, Mr Neil Tolley from St Mary's Hospital, London entitled 'Robotic assisted parathyroidectomy' generated particular interest. It involved the description of a new scarless-in-the-neck technique for the management of selected cases of primary hyperparathyroidism using the da Vinci® surgical robot. The presentation attracted a large audience and finished by the moderators giving their congratulations for 'this truly novel technique'.

Web: www.entnet.org

Next year's meeting will be held in San Francisco, CA, USA from September 11th-14th, 2011.



Dr J Regan Thomas Takes Up Position as AAO President

During the 114th meeting, Dr Ronald Kupersmith handed over the presidential reigns to Dr J Regan Thomas, Francis Lederer Professor and Head of Otolaryngology, University of Illinois at the Chicago College of Medicine. Dr Thomas will now hold the position of president until this September's meeting in San Francisco, California. Dr Thomas is Past President of the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

Laryngology and Voice Surgery Meeting

Date: September 24th-25th, 2010. **Venue:** The Harvard Club of Boston.

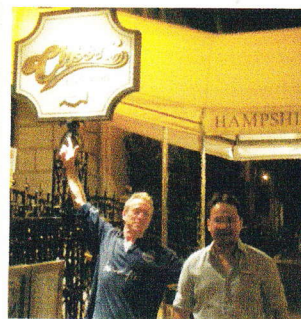
Report by: Mr Nick Gibbins, ENT SpR, Great Ormond Street Hospital, London, UK.

The Laryngology and Voice Surgery course was held in the plush surroundings of the Harvard Club of Boston and included talks from the cutting edge of laryngology, some associated specialties and engineering.

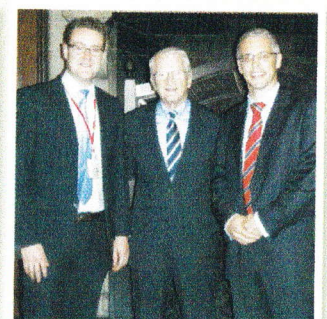
The homegrown faculty included Prof Marsha Moses who shook everyone awake at 7.15am with her talk about the angiogenesis of tumours, its inhibition and non-invasive detection of breast and prostate cancer using urinary MMP-2 and -9 measurements followed by Prof Rox Anderson, a dermatologist, who described the pioneering fractional laser treatments for hypertrophic scars and vascular skin lesions.

The level of excellence and range of the lecturers was profound. One hundred and fifty delegates from 25 countries had the opportunity to hear Robin Cotton from Cincinnati discuss the progression of the surgical management of subglottic stenosis over the last 50 years and the direction in which he thought the future might be.

We also heard from Marshall Stone who performed the first laryngeal transplant, Prof Eugene Myers (the guest of honour) on the role of the modern head and neck surgeon in the presence of improving chemoradiotherapy techniques, and Prof Roger Crumley on laryngeal reinnervation. Prof Robert Langer, from MIT who has over 800 patents and 1,100 articles to his name, described some of the breakthroughs he and his team have made over the last 30 years including avastin and its delivery system.



Meredydd Harries and Duncan Wong at a local watering hole.



Guest of honour Prof Eugene Myers with Jason Fleming (L) and Nick Gibbins (R).

He brought the curtain down with some stunning videos; mice and rhesus monkeys, who had had their spinal cords severed and subsequently regenerated, running on a treadmill!

Lastly, Prof Steve Zeitels described his work in seeking the Holy Grail of phoniatic surgeons – the regeneration of the damaged superficial lamina propria. These studies show some early promise however the overriding feeling that I took away from this meeting was one of invigoration and optimism, and of the sense that with the right set-up, the right funding and the right team the sky really is the limit.