

My last Airwaves

This is my final Airwaves feature and *Thorax* issue as Editor. I started writing the regular monthly *Thorax* page in February 2003 and missed a few mainly when we had other events in the journal or changed publishing formats. I hope you have enjoyed these short summaries of *Thorax* papers that I chose quite randomly from each month's table of contents and aiming to have a good mix of topics. The best papers to summarise were always the ones with focused objectives and well analysed and clearly presented results. We also published some excellent editorials from our first issue in January 2003 and I tried to highlight the key messages in as many of these as possible. I added figures from Papers, Images, Case reports and Pulmonary Puzzles.

Thorax editorials in this issue

I hope that you have noticed that we wanted to do something different for the last edition and there is a special cover showing old and new versions. We asked our associate editors to write editorials on some of the key papers that they handled during their time with the journal and how these have influenced clinical practice.

Richard Hubbard and David Baldwin discuss some of the reasons why lung cancer diagnosis is delayed and how we can do better so that survival is improved. Ian Town and Mark Fitzgerald review the many papers on asthma topics we published and how they have contributed to improved understanding and control of the disease. Ian Hall and David Lomas review papers into genetics of COPD and asthma and emphasise the importance of studies with large sample sizes. John Fleetham discusses cardiovascular risk factors in patients with obstructive sleep apnoea and this was a topic that attracted considerable submissions and publications. Submissions were also very high for

papers on a wide range of COPD topics and John Hurst and Peter Calverley review some of these including diagnosis and screening, epidemiology, imaging, exacerbations and interventional studies. We published a number of papers on non-invasive ventilation in patients with stable hypercapnic COPD and Bernd Schoenhofer discusses the results and implications. Lastly Angshu Bhowmik and Jenni Quint review the Lung Alert feature started in 2003 and *Thorax* has published nearly 400 Alerts written by our more junior readers. Angshu Bhowmik and I have also recorded a final *Thorax* podcast.

Thank you to my research group and collaborators

Not many clinicians and academics have the privilege of editing a major international specialist journal and it is immensely satisfying to see increasing submissions from all over the world and a rising impact factor. However there is always a down side and one of the most difficult decisions I took at the start of the editorship was not to submit any original papers on which I was an author to *Thorax* while I was editor. This obviously also affected my COPD research group and collaborators and to them all I am immensely grateful for their support, patience and understanding during all this time.

After *Thorax*: COPD exacerbations and...

Some of you have already asked me as to how I intend to fill my time after *Thorax*. I will have much more time to devote to the topic of COPD exacerbations about which I am really passionate and want to explore even deeper their pathophysiological mechanisms and novel therapies. However I will also have more time for my other interests such as tennis and



Figure 1 Alstromeria (also known as the Peruvian Lily) Princess Sophia.

skiing and for the first time since the winter of 2002, in February I will be able to enjoy the après ski and not have to hurry back to the hotel after the day's skiing to switch on the laptop and deal with papers and queries in the *Thorax* system. I am also a very keen gardener and this summer the wonderful weather in London has suited my plants. I would like to leave you with images of two of my favourite plants from my garden: the tall yellow Alstromeria Princess Sophia (*see figure 1*) and also the red Monarda (Bergamot) Cambridge Scarlet (*see figure 2*). Bergamot is a great plant with a fantastic scent and on looking up its properties some claim that it can reduce colds? So here is a new intervention for COPD exacerbations!



Figure 2 Monarda (also known as Bergamot) Cambridge Scarlet.