

SUMMER 2023

FINAL PRINT EDITION

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 2

# COMMUNICATING VOICE



The journal of the British Voice Association





**SUMMER 2023**  
VOLUME 23, ISSUE 2

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## Events



**Quiet Courage**  
Finding a way through the distress of voice loss

the british voice association

Saturday, 23 September 2023 | 11:00 – 17:30 BST



**Amplified Vocalist**  
Beyond the Boundaries  
for the

A study day for microphone singers, singing teachers and vocal clinicians

the british voice association

Sunday, 8 October 2023 | 10:15 – 17:00 BST



**follow the science**  
Latest evidence-based research  
for voice practitioners and clinicians

the british voice association

Friday 24 November 2023 | 10:00 – 17:15 GST



Geraldine McElearney

## Editor's letter, Summer 2023

Welcome to this very late-summer issue of *Communicating Voice*. It will be the final edition of the newsletter to be published in print; from now on, it will be online-only. Moving away from the printed format will allow more frequent publication and more flexibility about how much content can be included. It will be published via the BVA website, currently undergoing a rebuild and due to launch later in autumn; watch out for more details.

There are some readers who prefer to read from hard copy (I'm probably one of them!) but the overwhelming majority of members access the digital version only. From an economic point of view and taking into consideration the importance of publishing in an accessible format, this feels like a better use of the BVA's resources. If the change causes you any problems, please do get in touch with me at [editor@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk) and we will find a solution!

In this issue, there are reviews of two recent fantastic events. The Voice Clinics Forum, held in April at St Thomas' Hospital, headlined by the brilliant Dr James Thomas and focusing on advanced laryngeal diagnostics, was a wonderful opportunity to hear from some of the foremost voices in laryngology from beyond the UK. SLT and former BVA President, Kate Young, reports on page 6.

On June 3rd-4th, an equally international line-up of singing teaching specialists gathered in the beautiful surroundings of the Church of St Agnes and St Anne in

the City of London, aka the VOCES8 Centre, for two days of the most wonderfully diverse range of sessions on multiple aspects of singing voice. The event was a joint initiative between AOTOS, the UK singing teachers' body, and their US counterparts, NATS, with additional support from the BVA and EVTA. Past-President Louise Gibbs gave one of the keynote addresses, and Chair of Education, Rebecca Moseley-Morgan, presented her research on teaching the older female singer. SLT Elissa Finn attended and writes for us on page 8.

There's one further review in this issue, appearing many months after the event it relates to. On page 4, Neil Winscom writes about 'I Am My Voice', the event held last September at Goodenough House, London WC1. If you didn't make it to this, you missed a great day! Due to an editorial oversight (read, editor's blunder), Neil's review didn't appear in a more timely manner. Apologies to the author and the day's organisers alike.

Lastly, in May, Council was delighted to appoint a new BVA administrator. Our wonderful **Jackie Ellis**, known to so many members from her long years of service, has decided to hang up her BVA pen and enjoy a less manic working life. Over the past couple of months and for another few weeks, Jackie has been handing over to Philip Burgess. Just as Jackie created the administrator role when the BVA was a much younger organisation, so too will Philip evolve the job to meet our changing and future needs. A highly experienced freelance administration professional, he tells us a little more about himself on page 12.

This last printed version of CV cannot pass without my expressing my huge thanks to Jackie for so many years of wonderful work. She has been at the heart of the BVA for years and done so much to keep the wheels turning. As editor of this publication, I'm especially grateful for her laser-like proof-reading skills, without which I don't know what I shall do! Jackie - thank you so much.

When *Communicating Voice* is online, I will be as keen as ever to hear from readers, so please do consider contributing something or sending feedback and suggestions/requests/complaints to me at [editor@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk](mailto:editor@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk)

See you online!

Gerry

# I Am My Voice

## the Art & Science of Vocal Identity

**Sunday 4th September, 2022**  
Goodenough College, London WC1

Reviewed by Neil Winscom



Much as I have appreciated the efforts of the BVA to keep events going remotely over the last few strange years, the AGM and study day was a very welcome return to an 'in-person' event, the first since 2020.

I was looking forward very much to the contributions from the study day experts and, in particular, to the first speaker of the day, who is a fellow engineer. I am one of very few engineers in the BVA and it is only occasionally that topics arise which promise to bend the multidisciplinary ambit of the BVA somewhat more in my direction! Professor Trevor Cox spoke with great authority and experience, reminding us of many aspects of voice recognition and assessment that we carry out on a daily basis, either subconsciously or consciously and, in particular, how preconceptions, past experience and stereotyping play a significant role in our perceptions.

This was illustrated with many examples, such as:

- the well-known duet performance of 'Barcelona' by Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballé, wherein they used different vocal techniques and technology to achieve similar dynamism;
- reactions, invited by the *'Radio Times'*, to early radio broadcasts of recitals of *'The Pickwick Papers'*, wherein listeners ascribed all sorts of imagined physical characteristics to the heard voices such as "Det Sgt Williams was big and burly, with straight brownish hair, blue eyes, clean-shaven with a pink face." Really?!
- the modern-day, incorrect expectations of pitch to denote sexual orientation;
- the ability of modern technology to emulate real voices convincingly.

Regarding the last of these, Prof Cox played a couple of highly amusing but faked clips of 'Kim Kardashian' and

'Donald Trump', the former exhibiting so much vocal fry that the words were unintelligible! Whilst this amazing technology is helping sufferers of motor neurone disease, for example, to convey their words with familiar accents, it is also, perhaps, moving in potentially troubling directions, allowing convincing but faked statements to be made – and conversely, facilitating plausible deniability.

Prof Cox also spoke of accents more generally and how people's voices adjust to these, even assimilating sounds of different ethnic origins – citing the phenomenon of 'Multicultural London English', which originated decades ago but is now so prevalent today.

What should we conclude from all of this? That we should, perhaps, think twice before assuming anything about a speaker or singer, regarding their background, ethnicity, location, intelligence, education, social class and so on.

Having a scientific background, I always find the contributions to BVA events from ENT surgeons to be of interest and so it was with the second speaker, Mr Chadwan Al Yaghchi. We were treated to a fascinating account of historical and current techniques, regarding surgery to feminise the voices of patients who had transitioned in gender from male to female. Mr Al Yaghchi explained that, by far, the most dominant perceptual vocal indicator of gender (in adults) was the normal pitch, although the resonances of the vocal tract also play a part.

As a benchmark, a normal pitch of <165Hz is perceived as male and >165Hz, female. However, with the average pitch ranges of 107-120Hz for men and 189-224Hz for women, the challenge is to raise the pitch by perhaps 50Hz or more, depending on the aspirations of the patient. This can be achieved in a number of ways,

essentially modifying either the length, bulk or tension of the cords, or a combination thereof. Mr Al Yaghchi's preferred approach (generally) is to use a combination of anterior web glottoplasty, to shorten the vibrating segments of the cords, and laser-assisted voice adjustment, involving the vaporisation of the upper surface of the folds. This is then followed by sessions of speech therapy, to re-educate the body in using the modified mechanism.

Mr Al Yaghchi reported very high success rates, in a field where the outcomes can be somewhat unpredictable. However, he did issue a stark warning – this type of surgery is contraindicated for singers (who wish to continue singing) and even other professionals who need to project their voices; the patients who undergo this treatment are usually doing it to rectify some other, overriding need.

The theme of treating patients in a transgender context continued after lunch, when Ms Christella Antoni described seven cases involving therapy both before and after transgender surgery. Each one presented a very different personal context and illustrated something of the range of problems that Ms Antoni is asked to tackle.

She described the case of a 14 year-old boy who was suffering from resistant puberphonia and, whilst the treatment was successful and afterwards, the patient

expressed a greater social ease, the process was challenging, simply because communicating with a teenager can be challenging! Another client had a partner who was about to transition from male to female and this had clearly created some anxiety for that client. Together with other stressful events in the client's life, these were suspected by Ms Antoni to be triggers for the aphonia from which she was suffering, rather than its being an outcome of some cancer surgery that the client had undergone some time earlier. In a different case, the patient was seeking a guarantee that, post-surgery, her voice would sound feminine, whereas in yet another case, the patient was seeking an androgynous facility, wanting neither a masculine nor feminine sound to dominate.

These cases exemplified something that Ms Antoni alluded to at the beginning of her presentation: that for each patient, their internal and external landscapes and their intersections are individual, and the same approach cannot be used for everybody. However, she did conclude with a universal notion – that the remedy for both client and clinician is to make people feel comfortable, socially.

The final session of the day was presented by Professor Cleveland Watkiss, who modestly introduced himself as a vocal improviser and actor but of course is so much more than that. He explained how he feels breathing from his feet upwards, to allow free movement throughout his body and also expressed his philosophical take on the origins of our creativity.

Just to demonstrate the power of the right frame of mind and expressive freedom, he began by sampling and looping some improvised beatboxing and melodic riffs and before long, there was a really complex and imaginative, fat sound. But this was just the warm-up – the main act was us! Following his instruction, we all loosened up with some improvised body movement and sang, in parts, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in canon, a number of lines that Prof Watkiss invented on the spot. The sound was great and it was a glorious way to end the day.

**Neil Winscom** is a freelance Chartered Engineer, with a specialism in communications-related electronic and software engineering. He has a particular interest in audio and voice communication.

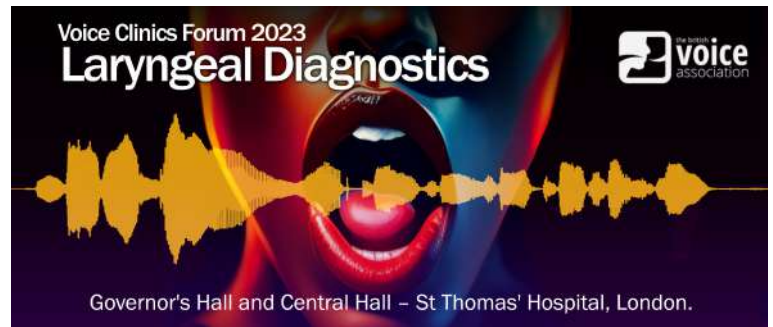


# Laryngeal Diagnostics

## Voice Clinic Forum 2023

Thursday 20th April, 2023

Guys and St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1



## Reviewed by Kate Young

The annual Voice Clinics Forum was held in April this year as a face-to-face event at Guys and St Thomas' Hospital London. The theme for this year's meeting was 'Laryngeal Diagnostics'. We were privileged to have international key speakers: Dr James Thomas, MD Laryngologist from Portland, Oregon, USA, Professor Ahmed Geneid, Laryngologist and Phoniatician, Helsinki, Finland, and Professor Youri Maryn, Speech & Language Therapist, Bruges, Belgium.

Starting the day with networking in the beautiful Governor's Hall at St Thomas' was followed by the welcome, given by the BVA's host, Tori Burnay. Dr James Thomas presented the first session, discussing high-definition examination of the larynx and setting out the clinical process and the science behind the equipment. His thorough coverage of the topic compared the quality, costs and uses of various scope types, directing us to his website for further information.

Professor Ahmed Geneid followed with a detailed discussion of both in-office and in-theatre assessment of the artistic voice, with excellent examples and good points for discussion with the audience in the subsequent panel.

The second session of the programme saw Dr Thomas present 'Secrets of Neurology', with a clearly organised series of video and picture examples of different neurological presentations found on nasendoscopy with stroboscopy. Of particular note was the detailed examination of an example illustrating 'fixation' vs 'paresis' of a vocal fold, which was very clearly demonstrated with interesting laryngeal video images.

The third session after lunch was a free paper session, with three excellent presentations, all providing opportunities for interesting discussion. They were:

1. '12 Years of Reinke's Oedema Management in the Lewisham Voice Clinic' presented by Ibaad Alvi.
2. 'Patient and Voice Therapist Satisfaction with Telehealth Services' delivered by Laura Thomas.
3. 'Singing and Sounding. An investigation of singing and wind instrument teacher perspectives on the use of the vocal tract' presented by Frith Trezevant.

The afternoon programme then provided comprehensive discussion regarding voice quality, analysis and perception of voice in a series of disorder presentations. Dr Thomas discussed 'Hearing a Voice Disorder' and led the audience through a process of tasks to elicit a suitable voice sample; listening, observing features of the acoustic presentation, and how to link this to finding how the voice quality is produced in the larynx while performing nasendoscopy.

Professor Youri Maryn provided a clear discussion of the complex topic AVQI (Acoustic Voice Quality Index) for measuring dysphonia severity. He closed with 'Diversity in the acoustic output of voice pathologies', setting out the full breadth of diagnostics used within the assessment, diagnosis, and in monitoring outcomes of voice disorders and their management.

In all, a wonderfully interesting and useful day to explore the depth of laryngeal diagnostics in practice in our places of work, from some of the leading experts in voice. It was only made better by the opportunity to network and see colleagues once again.

**Kate Young** is Advanced Practitioner, Speech & Language Therapist Voice/Head and Neck in the University Hospitals of Derby & Burton Foundation Trust.



*Dr James Thomas*



*Ahmed Geneid*



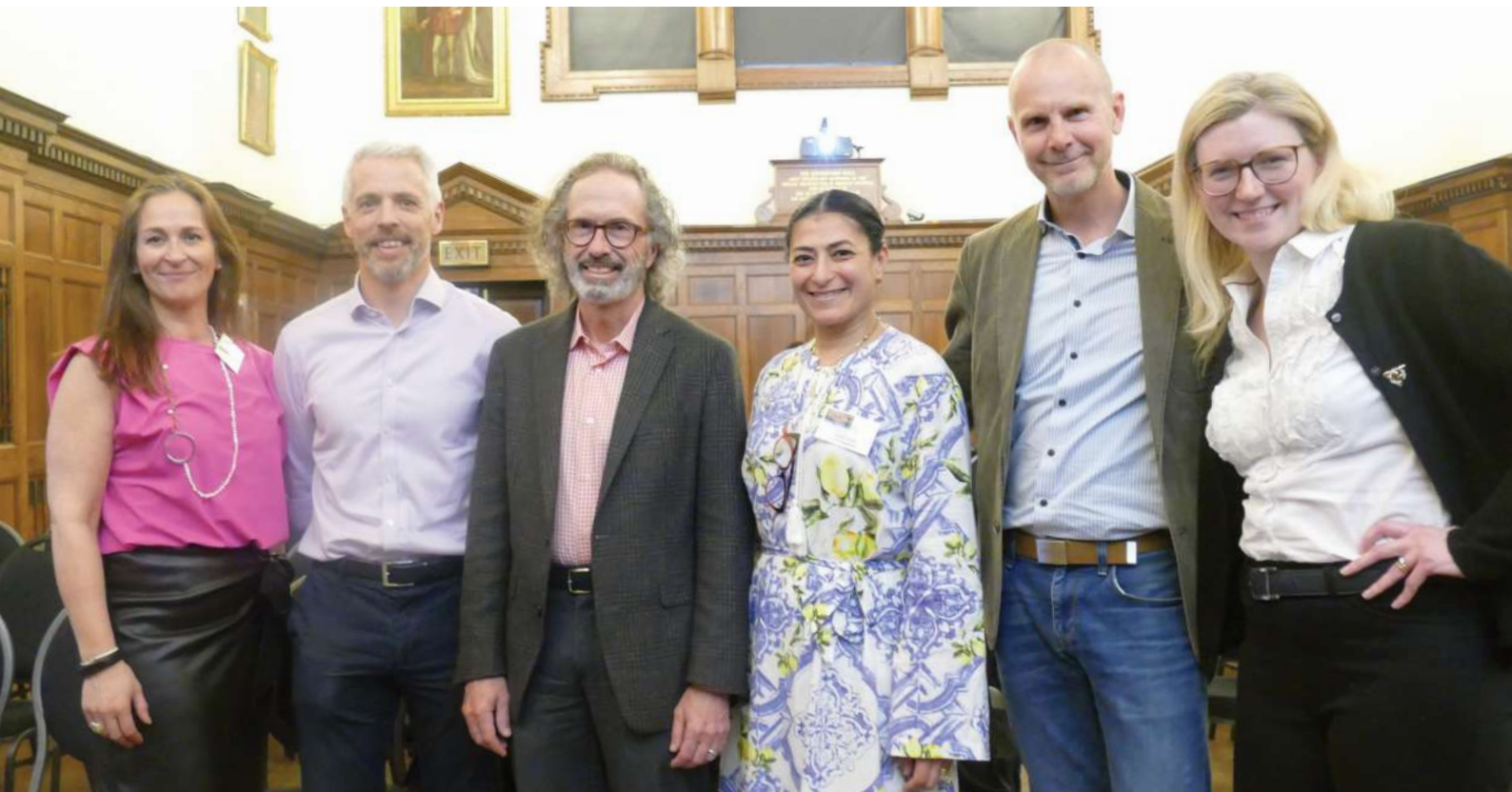
*Prof Youri Maryn*



*Frith Trezevant*



*Audience Questions*



*Tori Burnay, Nick Gibbins, James Thomas, Rehab Awad, Youri Maryn, Natalie Watson*

# Global Connections

## The Wisdom Among Us

**Saturday June 3rd-Sunday June 4th, 2023**

VOCES8 Centre, St Anne & St Agnes Church, London EC2

### Reviewed by Elissa Finn

The Association of Teachers of Singing (AOTOS) summer conference 'Global Connections: The Wisdom Among Us' was a celebration of singing teaching and music education. A unique collaboration with the National Association of Teachers of Singing, European Voice Teachers Association and the British Voice Association, the conference was an insightful and joyful weekend connecting with voice colleagues including singing teachers, researchers, performers, and health professionals. For me personally, the conference spoke to the multifaceted aspects of voice in the world of performance, coaching and health care. While my background is originally in contemporary voice performance, now working as a speech and language therapist, I never cease to be inspired by the breadth of knowledge singing and music teachers have obtained through practical experience, intuition, and research.

The weekend started with 'Tongue Training' with Anne-Marie Speed, detailing the impact tongue tension can have on singers and some practical exercises. I thoroughly enjoyed Miriam Allan's abstract presentation about supporting students with Special and Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the singing studio to enhance the accessibility of lessons. My personal takeaway was how I might continually reflect on accommodating individualisation and maintain a person-centred focus by working to the strengths of the client in front of me. Louise Gibbs' presentation of 'Advancing Individuality' on Sunday morning further spoke to this theme, and included a vocal warmup, which was particularly helpful for those of us feeling a bit 'dusty' from the reception at The Lord Raglan on Saturday night. There were also engaging presentations about building student resilience and facilitating growth, encouraging peak performance flow, exploration of the psychology of optimism and importantly getting back to 'why we sing' in the abstracts section.

Much needed discussion about teaching students across the lifespan and with various physical differences, including a presentation from Janet Munro



*Elissa Finn*

on coaching hypermobile students piqued my interest, as I feel this is an under-represented population in the pedagogical and clinical speech and language therapy voice literature. The BVA's Rebecca Moseley-Morgan presented with US colleagues about the science and practice of working with singers in their midlife and beyond. Having attended the BVA event 'Sing Stronger for Longer' earlier this year, the continuation of discussion around working with singers later in life highlighted the joys and pedagogical considerations of teaching this cohort.

There were panels including science informed voice pedagogy and pedagogical implications of voice acoustics, which had speakers from the UK, US, and Germany, including Graham Welch and Ken Bozeman. A personal highlight was the vocal health panel with colleagues from the UK, USA, and India. I was struck by Jenevora Williams' suggestion that teachers and clinicians might consider the 'why' behind clients' actions and consider the 'whole person' who steps into the teaching or voice rehabilitation studio. While we may not always agree with the vocal behaviours our clients make, maintaining a person-centred approach means being inclusive, providing an accessible service, and the value of having a biopsychosocial lens which inherently acknowledges the complexity of being human.

Of course, there was beautiful singing, with masterclasses from Sir Thomas Allen, and Gillayne Kayes and Jeremy Fisher. I couldn't help but tear up listening to the stunning performances of original contemporary music, and a moving cover of Callum Scott's 'Dancing on my own'. Thank you to the organisers of the conference, who highlighted the absolute joy and wonder of sharing our voice through song, coaching, and caring for others. To sing is an absolute privilege.

***Elissa Finn*** is a Speech and Language Therapist in London.





Audience.

All photographs by Janet Shell & Christopher Goldsack, courtesy of AOTOS.



Diana Allan



Edwin Pitt-Mansfield



Martin Ashley



Karen Brunssen



Gillyanne Kayes



Jeremy Fisher



Louise Gibbs



Declan Costello



Rebecca Moseley-Morgan



Richard Edgar-Wilson



Sir Thomas Allen



Graham Welch

# BVA Strategy

Over the past couple of years, and particularly since emerging from the pandemic, there's been quite a bit of change within the BVA. We've been in existence for over 30 years, for much of that time, run with incredible dedication and generosity by some of the most expert and highly-regarded people working in the field of voice.

Times marches on and inevitably, new faces and voices start to emerge; gradually, organisations evolve, as does the world around them. The ubiquity of the internet in particular has had a tremendous impact on how we learn, collaborate and communicate – even more so since Covid.

The fantastic group of volunteers who run the BVA: our Council, Education, and Communications Working Parties, agreed that the time had come to look at the purpose, objectives and work of the organisation – the space we occupy in the voice world, what we offer to our members and the wider public, and how we do it. On a sunny Saturday in May, we came together at the London dance venue The Place, to do just that.

The BVA's purpose was confirmed as existing "for the relief of those suffering from voice disorders and in particular: to promote and encourage research.....

to disseminate information and advice in the acoustic, physical and psychological principles of voice production..... to disseminate information relating to vocal health in those who rely on their voice professionally."

Our challenge is to find the best ways to keep doing this in a world that has seen monumental technological change since we were established, continued scientific progress in voice health, and in a market where there are other organisations providing some of the same services. The BVA's point of difference is our perspective – this remains at the heart of what we do.

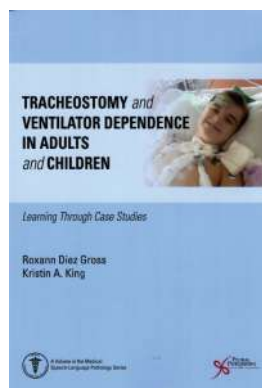
In the coming months and years, we'll be renewing our focus on serving both public and professional users of our services, ensuring we are delivering value to our membership, supporting our volunteers and strengthening further our relationships with other organisations in the field of voice, both in the UK and overseas. If you would like to be involved in taking the BVA forward, please consider volunteering some of your time and skills.

Email [president@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk](mailto:president@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk) for more information.



*Jennifer Langton-Sneyd, Tiffany Munroe-Gray, Abi Simpson*

# Tracheostomy and Ventilator Dependence in Adults and Children



## LEARNING THROUGH CASE STUDIES

Roxann Diez Gross, Kristin A. King

Plural Publishing, San Diego, CA, 2023

Paperback 271 pages, ISBN13: 978-1-63550-389-0

## Reviewed by Emily Davies-Veric

*Tracheostomy and Ventilator Dependence in Adults and Children: Learning Through Case Studies*, is the fourth book of the Medical Speech–Language Pathology Series. 38 case studies are examined across all ages and aetiologies.

The book starts with a brief overview of the fundamental relationship between respiratory function and tracheostomy tubes, alongside ventilator basics. Each chapter provides an introduction and overview to set the scene for the upcoming case studies in the chapter. The chapters through the book link together to show the intervention and involvement an SLP/T may have at all stages of a patient's journey with their tracheostomy management.

Case studies include in-depth clinical history taking, information gathering, and a working clinical hypothesis supported by relevant evidence. The thought processes, actions and learning of clinicians, alongside the wider multidisciplinary team (MDT), are discussed, with specific information included to support the management routes for these specific cases. This provides a valuable insight into the thoughts and steps taken when managing a patient with tracheostomy.

The use of images to illustrate findings is widespread throughout the chapters, enabling the reader to visualise what they may be seeing in their caseload. The images used include clinical photographs of tracheostomy tube placement, different types of tubes and the tracheostomy user in real life scenarios.

Endoscopic views of the trachea and larynx are incorporated throughout the case studies, particularly relevant in the case studies relating to appropriate tube selection and tracheal stenosis.

Additional images used include chest x-rays, CT imaging and videofluoroscopy.

Establishing phonation and verbal communication is explored in depth in chapter three. The case studies in this chapter investigate the clinical steps taken to support the safe use of

speaking valves/one-way valves if possible. I found these discussions particularly reassuring with similar steps mirrored in my own practice. I have subsequently adopted the term 'risk speaking' as a way to potentially describe ventilator leak speech in the context of complex management. Some of the cases also discuss the interactions with patients and their carers regarding goal setting, and active troubleshooting to find dynamic solutions, to balance clinical risk vs the desire to communicate verbally. This links to previous chapters regarding the use of the correct tracheostomy tube for the needs of your patient, eg talking tracheostomy tubes.

In chapter four, the evaluation and treatment of swallowing is discussed with FEES images demonstrating findings. Common themes such as secretion management, oral care and dysphagia therapy are documented, with step by step interventions included which may be reminiscent of clinical care that you have provided with your own caseload.

Throughout the chapters of the book, there is a consistent theme that patient-centred care and active troubleshooting regarding the most suitable tracheostomy tube and current management plan needs to take place. This can not occur in silo, and the multi-team approach needed to comprehensively manage the communication, swallowing and respiratory needs of a patient is emphasised.

The inclusion of diagrams and tables of information regarding the products available is extremely useful as a resource.

Overall, due to the comprehensive overview at the start of each chapter, and the evidenced and structured case studies from a variety of clinical caseloads, I would recommend this book for those at the start of their tracheostomy competencies or those experienced in the clinical field. I would also recommend it to non-SLTs who work closely with tracheostomy, such as physiotherapists and specialist nurses to fully incorporate a collaborative approach to tracheostomy care.

**Emily Davies-Veric** is an Advanced Practitioner Speech and Language Therapist – Critical Care and Tracheostomy, at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton



Emily Davies-Veric



# Philip Burgess

CV interrupted our new administrator, Philip Burgess, to find out a little bit about him ...

I'm delighted to have joined the BVA. It has been a very busy first three months - getting up to speed with systems and procedures, building relationships with new colleagues, attending meetings of the various BVA committees, and becoming familiar with the exciting and fascinating programme of work and events that this association offers.

I've been working in association management for 30 years and have a passion for it. I've richly enjoyed being engaged in strategic and business planning, research, project, event and stakeholder management, government relations and much more, to advance the causes of different associations.

Born and raised in Cardiff, after leaving school I graduated in Environmental Science in the mid-1980s and started my career in the water industry in London. Then a year-long career break to do the global travel thing in my early 20s before returning to London where, a few years later, I found myself managing the secretariat of a range of technical committees for the water industry's chartered professional body. Next, it was on to the water industry's trade association where I managed a multi-million pound national programme of research on one-voice issues. At the turn of the millennium, I accepted an offer to establish and lead the UK association for authorities with statutory responsibility for the management, maintenance and operation of navigable inland waterways and continue this role on a part-time basis.

Since 2013 I have been self-employed and operate as a freelance contractor from my home of more than 20 years on the North Yorkshire/Teesside border, close to the North York Moors.

## What attracted you to the role? Had you heard of the association?

Although I had not heard of the BVA, I was attracted by the niche and enthusiastic sense of culture and community that the association serves; I felt this was a role to which my skills

and experience would be suited, and in which I could be a catalyst for change and growth. The very strong element of volunteer input was appealing as I'm motivated by engaging with new networks. Also, the purpose of promoting and protecting voice health and use is not lost on me as I have always had a keen personal interest in the performing arts.

## What's your new role in the BVA?

My fundamental role is to deliver the many 'back office' tasks involved in running the BVA. It's a varied role, providing both day-to-day support to the various volunteer officers, committees and working groups that carry out the association's activities, and a first point of contact for members and external enquiries.

However, it is recognised that there is a need for the role to broaden on a strategic level and I am keen to do that. My first impressions are that hard work is needed to ensure the association's procedures and activities are delivered most effectively and efficiently by making best use of IT and communications tools, building successful collaborations with other stakeholder bodies, and focusing on smarter coordination of activities.

## Other than administrating for the nation's associations, what do you like to do?

I love hillwalking and belong to a couple of clubs that set some tough challenge hikes in various parts of the UK. My other favourite pastimes are going to the cinema and theatre, wine appreciation, and family occasions.

## Favourite film/tv show/piece of music/album/book/poem?

The most recent film I saw was 'Barbenheimer'. That is to say, a double-bill of Barbie and Oppenheimer, on the same day! Both great films, although I rather wish I had seen them the other way around as I went to bed that night with Armageddon on my mind!

The most recent book I read was a thriller, 'Winter in Madrid' by CJ Sansom - I have a nerdy fascination with the Spanish Civil War and the Franco era.

My musical tastes are eclectic - Bach, Beatles, Beyoncé, and beyond.

## Sporting allegiances?

I'll shout for Wales at any sport - even tiddlywinks - especially if it's against England!

## Dream dinner party guests

Confining it to those still living, how about: Michael Palin, Barack & Michelle Obama, Mike Brearley, Anthony Hopkins, Jamie Cullum & Sophie Dahl, and of course, Shirley Bassey!

## Dream travel destination?

I've been fortunate to have travelled a lot through my life, with work and for pleasure, but would love to visit Patagonia one day, when time and funds allow.