

BACCN Conference 2016, a Regional Advisor Perspective

Sunday 18 September, the weather in the South West is crisp and clear as I board my train. Destination Glasgow, reason, my first ever BACCN Conference.

I couldn't contain my excitement; even my seven hour train journey could not dampen my spirits. I passed the time with my homemade picnic and a few hours of Greys Anatomy and before I knew it.....

When I finally arrived at the Technology and Innovation Centre at Strathclyde University the mood was high and initial feedback following the Masterclass and Regional get-together was good. Time for a sneaky peek around the venue.

As the next few hours passed, I mingled with delegates and soaked up the Scottish atmosphere, made even more special by our bagpiper, the perfect touch to kick off the BACCN Conference, 2016.

Monday morning arrived and I decided that the 5km run was not for me. After a leisurely breakfast I made my way to the venue, feeling a little apprehensive about the day ahead. In all honesty, nothing could have prepared me for the day ahead.

I remember how privileged I felt to be sat amongst some of the best healthcare professionals in the country, who'd all come together to share their knowledge about all things critical care.

Over the two day conference, particular names stood out for me. Our Keynote Speakers Janice Rattray and Kathleen Vollman in particular stole the show for me on day one and I found myself reflecting on my own practice. 'That's common sense' I thought but as simple as it seemed, the evidence presented still suggested shortfalls and I'm sure I wasn't the only one having a reflective moment.

Later in the day, Karin Gerber and I chaired the poster sessions. I found this extremely fascinating and I gained an insight into what's going on in critical care units around the country. There truly are some great innovations.

The first day went by in a flash and before I knew it, it was time to prepare for the Regional Drinks Reception hosted by Cheryl Phillips and I, with support from Karin Gerber and Ann Price; Ann has recently been appointed onto the National Board and replaces Karin as a Regional advisor.

The drinks event was the perfect opportunity to thank our Regional committees for all their hard work over the last 12 months; it was also a great way to start the evening's festivities – The Gala Dinner. The event saw the Central South Region retain their title of 'Committee of the Year' although they batted off some stiff competition; Wales, you were pipped to the post. Congratulations must be extended to our other award winners as well – you help to make the BACCN what it is. Thank you.

We also wished farewell to Catherine Plowright, who has left the National Board after many years. A figurehead for critical care nursing, Catherine will be sorely missed.

It was however a fantastic evening and to the tune of a local Ceilidh band, everyone danced the night away into the 'wee small' hours. I am just thankful that I took a spare pair of flat shoes.

Day two kicked off and our Conference Director Colette was still in extremely high spirits when she introduced the first Keynote Speaker of the day, Dr Carl Waldmann. For those of you who didn't know, Dr Waldmann is the club Dr for Leyton Orient FC. I also discovered that he served in the Royal Air Force, although a number of years before me; such a small world.

I had the privilege of 'solo' chairing the Patient and Family Experiences sessions later in the day, an opportunity which I valued greatly and it helped me to fully appreciate the role of National Board Members at Conference.

So, nothing could have prepared me for the Closing Panel: Perspectives on Sepsis. A session delivered to a packed main auditorium which began in silence. A time to reflect and think about Sepsis and its relentlessness; a time to think about its victims – mums, dads, sons and daughters, Sepsis doesn't care. Karin Gerber's poignant discussion, delivered with such passion, led on to an extremely detailed and very emotional account from a Sepsis Survivor – Tim Collins.

I was sat at the very front with my back to the auditorium but I think I can say with confidence that there were probably very few dry eyes in the house.

Despite his experience, Tim clearly continues to live his life to the fullest. He has a beautiful family and it is a pleasure to work alongside him on the National Board.

On that note, I shall conclude. The BACCN Conference 2016 was amazing and I was extremely proud to have been a part of it.

Bring on London 17!

Sarah J Clarke

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BACCN National Board