

From Desmond Fitzgerald



It was Carlo Patrono who asked me to join the Working Group (yes, it was his fault) and subsequently the Nucleus, soon as Co-Chairman. I remember it was in Birmingham and I was commuting from London, as were many delegates. This was my initiation into the European Society of Cardiology and those memorable Congresses at the end of summer.

On assuming the Chairmanship, the Working Group was relatively small but under the guiding hand of Raffaele De Caterina as Co-Chair, the membership expanded markedly, bringing new blood into the group. To encourage greater participation, we established a Fellowship in Coronary Thrombosis, in which young scientists could compete for 2 years of funding, providing time away from clinical responsibilities to perform basic or clinical research. This was supported by an unrestricted grant from Merck and Company, who also supported a Young Investigator Award in Thrombosis, which still runs today.

Another development was Atherothrombosis 2000, a scientific meeting that was held in Lisbon. We had planned to have Fado, Portuguese folk singing centred on the loss of lovers and family, that makes Irish ballads seem quite cheerful in comparison. This was cancelled in favour of a family of dancers with occasional (and alarming) leaps, clashes of clubs and tossing about of children. Having expressed severe disappointment, the organisers (the team of Denise Bottiglieri) hunted down one of the most talented Fado singer straight from another venue, to bring the meeting to a wonderful conclusion. The Atherothrombosis meeting has been repeated under the Chairmanship of Lina Badimon and continues to act as a forum for those interested in thrombosis and platelets to present their work in a small group setting.

What I remember most are the Nucleus Meetings, held in London, Pisa and Dublin, when we dreamed up new ways of building the Working Group within the ESC. Perhaps the ESC was aware of these efforts, perhaps not, but I very much appreciated the dedication of the members of the Nucleus. I will also remember the training courses ably established and continued by Steen Dalby Kristensen and Raffaele De Caterina in Nice. These are key to translating the knowledge developed in research to clinical practice, in helping young cardiologists to appreciate how fundamental knowledge of disease mechanisms impacts in a practical way on the management of patients. Actually, truth be told, they were also great fun for speakers and audience. I remember John Martin's talk on platelets, delivered with much passion and few slides, always the way of a good lecture (never confound a good story with data!).

The Working Group continues to develop through the hard work of new members and continued support of those who lead so many of the initiatives. We all brought different skills, of influence and persuasion, of humour and charm, of innovation and invention, of clear vision and insight. Perhaps most of all we believe very much in what we do, as scientists, clinicians and teachers. Or maybe 200 joules now and again just gives us that little extra buzz.

Desmond Fitzgerald
Chairperson 1998-2000