

## British Laryngological Association Annual Meeting

**Date:** December 5th, 2012. **Venue:** Royal Society of Medicine, London, UK.

**Report by:** Miss Tawakir Kamani, Speciality Registrar Year 6 in ENT, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, UK, and Mr Dedan Costello, Consultant ENT Surgeon, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, UK.

The first annual meeting of the British Laryngological Association was held in London. Professor David Howard, President of the BLA, opened the meeting, outlining the aims and aspirations of the group. Professor Hans Mahieu (Netherlands) gave a fascinating talk entitled 'Arytenoid Resection as a Phonosurgical Procedure and Surgical Treatment for Aspiration'. This was followed by inspiring discussions on innovation and research by Professor Martin Birchall and Mr Guri Sandhu. Sue Jones then passed on her experience of advances in laryngology from the point of view of a speech and language therapist.

Seminars on training, research, innovation and implementation, national audit, joint projects with SLT and the relationship of the BLA with other key organisations generated much discussion. The paucity of laryngology training in the current otolaryngology curriculum was highlighted: opinions differed as to how to enhance this training – more fellowships in the UK were suggested as a starting

point. Further discussion centred on the relationship between clinicians and the pharmaceutical and medical equipment industries; there was general consensus that more active discussion would help to promote advances for patients' benefits.

For many of the delegates, the highlight of the meeting was Professor Stephen Hawking, who spoke frankly about his experience of being a patient with intractable aspiration and facing the decision to have a laryngectomy. He explained how a chance meeting with David Howard on a plane journey led to his eventual life-saving surgery. It was a true privilege to hear such an eminent figure speaking.

Professor Albert Merati (Washington, USA) congratulated the association and gave an account of his experience working with the ALA. With over 100 delegates, the meeting was well attended and a huge success. The next meeting of the BLA is the Laryngology 2013 meeting in London, 17-19 June, 2013.

*Web:* <http://2013.laryngologyconference.com/>



Prof Stephen Hawking addresses BLA conference delegates.



Prof Albert Merrati presenting Prof Howard with a gavel.