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In this issue

2 MAARA grass pollen records broken
Do you want to join a MAARA focus group? MAARA website

3 Money raised for Jacob
Wheeze in preschool children –who is being treated?

4 MAARA funds travel bursary
Epi Pens at school

5 Out and About
Calling all Peanut allergics

6 AIR appeal for new bronchoscope
Training a new aerobiologist

7 *Aspergillus/Penicillium* known aeroallergens
Fond Farewell



IN MEMORY OF JACOB

Jacob's life although very short was a very fulfilled and happy life. He grew up well adjusted, happy, confident, sensitive and much loved. We had always thought that Jacob was a bit of a loner at school. He liked to spend time on his own and could quite happily entertain himself, although he did love to be with his sister Niamh. He loved to build things especially things out of Knex (a bit like mechano), so we thought he might be an architect when he grew up, but then his favourite TV programme was CSI so we thought maybe a forensic scientist. He would often sit with his sister Niamh and help her to read and write he had so much patience probably more than we did. We could not have been further from the truth however, which has been apparent with the response received from Jacob's whole school after his death. They have given myself and my family so much support that sometimes it is overwhelming, to know just how much Jacob was

loved by all his friends and the teachers at St. Mary's. In fact the whole community has been shocked by Jacob's death which was shown by the attendance of people at Jacob's funeral.

Jacob had begun to suffer with his asthma at about the age of 4. It was never really especially bad until probably the last year or two of his life but even then we never imagined for one minute that he could have a fatal attack. He was a very grown up little boy for his age and was very good at handling his asthma. He did find it difficult to do many sports but we found one he loved that didn't really bother him too much, karate. He loved it and became an orange belt just before he died. His death has been exceptionally devastating for us all because it was so sudden and without any warning at all, he had not been suffering from his asthma for at least the two weeks previous. We did not and still do not know too much about asthma and its effects but we learn a little more each

time we speak to experts which does help us to understand a little of why what happened to Jacob happened.

We chose MAARA as our charity because of the fantastic work that they do. We all know that in an ideal world a cure would be the answer but whether or not a cure is out there in the meantime any solution found to help other suffers to live a better quality of life comes a very close second. We believe that if there are any cures or preventions out there to find MAARA will find them.

We would personally like to thank Sue Short and family who raised over £3600. Jacob's after school club the House of Eden who raised £1400 and one of Jacob's closest school pals mum who raised £340.

We will continue to raise money for MAARA and wish them well in their research into asthma and allergies.

Ruth Fleming- Jacob's Mum

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I have now been Chairman of MAARA for about 18 months and I have used the time to have discussions with the majority of those with an interest in asthma and allergies to find out what the future holds for MAARA. I wanted to consult people to see how the charity could best help and support the growth of research and medical practice in the East Midlands and beyond.



From these discussions, the MAARA Executive Committee decided the best way forward for MAARA is: -

1. To supervise and improve the data on the website so that sufferers can have easy access to help and advice when it is most needed.

2. To continue the collection of Derby pollen and spore data so that we keep up to date with the unique long term dataset and to transfer the databank and day to day counting operation to the Respiratory Department at Glenfield Hospital.

3. To form focus groups in Derbyshire and Leicestershire (and we hope Nottinghamshire at a later date) so that anyone who suffers from asthma or an allergy can contribute to an improvement in MAARA research and communication whilst also gaining personally by sharing experiences with others who have similar problems.

4. To support Asthma and Allergy expertise in Derby, discussions are taking place with several interested parties to achieve this objective.

5. To expand and strengthen the Executive committee to cater for a wider cross-section of sufferers who would benefit personally but also take part in the effort to improve the impact of MAARA in the East Midlands

If any of the members would like to join the committee or recommend a friend with suitable interest then the future of MAARA will be assured.

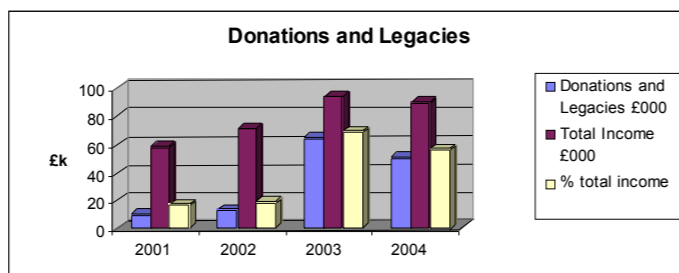
Wendy Millington retired in May after many years of loyal service to MAARA. I would like to thank her for all her efforts and wish her good health and a long and happy retirement.

All the staff at MAARA have worked tremendously hard during the year, which has I think been successful and our thanks, and appreciation for their efforts should be recorded.

Edward Stanger
MAARA Chairman

ANOTHER GOOD FINANCIAL YEAR

After several years where income and expenditure just about matched each other, it is pleasing to report that income has grown in the past two years and the Association can report a surplus on its operating activities.



A significant reason for this is that donations and legacies have grown substantially in the last two years, and have increased as a percentage of overall income. Your donations now account for over 10% of income, whilst legacies and in-memoriam bequests have risen to almost half our total income. We want to thank all those who have remembered MAARA in one way or another, and you can be sure that these funds are put to good use in furthering our battle against asthma and allergy.

So, a big thank-you to you all, keep up the good work with fund-raising and make sure your donations keep coming in!

MAARA Website www.maara.org

Many of you ring us or email after viewing our website. We know you find it very helpful. Those of you allergic to pollen or fungal spores regularly access our site for pollen and spore information and this year even more of you tell us you are looking at our pollen and spore concentrations. The latest pages are updated every weekday for you to get up to date information about pollen and spores in the air and what is happening at MAARA. The grass pollen season is now underway. Access us to see if your symptoms match the pollen and spores in the air. We have also produced an aerobiology brochure contact us if you would like one and also let us know what you would like to see on our website.

MONEY RAISED FOR ASTHMA EQUIPMENT IN MEMORY OF 9 YEAR OLD JACOB FLEMING

A presentation took place on Tuesday 22 March at 12 noon in the Clinical Education Centre at Glenfield Hospital Leicester in memory of Jacob Fleming of School Aycliffe, Co Durham, who died of a severe asthma attack in May 2004 aged 9 years.

Jacob's family and friends took part in the Great North Walk, held a 40th birthday party where money was donated in lieu of presents, as well as a Christmas concert and a "Stars in their Eyes" night. These events raised £4,340.

MAARA Vice Chairman Professor Andy Wardlaw gave a presentation and said: "The more we understand about asthma the more likely we will be able to treat it more effectively in the future."

The money has been used to purchase three indoor air samplers, which will collect

particles to find out what airborne particles including pollen and fungal spores are in patients homes. This information will help to us to find out whether the home environment can contribute to a serious asthma attack. These spore traps will be used to benefit the people of the East Midlands using Institute of Lung Health and MAARA clinical and aerobiological expertise.

Jacob's family and friends including those from Eden Nursery saw all the equipment and discussed the benefits to patients. The doctors, researchers, family and friends all enjoyed being together and investigating how they could work together to help all those with asthma.



Jacob's family and friend's at the presentation

House of Eden - ways of raising money for Jacob

Jacob was a very popular member of House of Eden After School and Holiday Club so they decided to raise in a number of ways.

1. The children filled Smartie tubes with coins (after eating the Smarties).
2. They performed their Christmas Concern for their families but charged them for the privilege
3. The staff and parents organised an adult "Stars in their Eyes" night which was so enjoyable.

Thank you everyone for all you have done.

WHEEZE IN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO IS BEING TREATED?

Professor Mike Silverman, *University of Leicester.*

Compared with the huge research effort into asthma in adults and schoolchildren, relatively little is known about pre-school children. In Leicestershire we have one of the largest research studies into wheezing disorders in that age group. The scale of the problem is enormous. We know that about one third of all hospital admissions for asthma (at all ages) are accounted for by pre-school children. We found that almost one quarter of pre-school children were reported by their parents to have had at least one wheezing episode over the previous 12 months. Almost half of these children had been labelled as "asthma" by their doctors or practice nurses.

The scale of wheezing disorders in young children was driven home by the fact that almost 20% of parents of pre-school children reported that their child had been treated with an inhaler over the previous year. Almost 8% of all children in Leicestershire in the pre-school age range had been given a steroid (preventer) inhaler.

However, when we looked into the factors which were associated with therapy, we received some surprises. Access to therapy was not simply dependent on the severity of wheeze, as might be expected. We found that girls, and children of South Asian origin were less likely to be given treatment with inhaled steroid (preventer) therapy than were boys or white children. This was not simply the case for mild wheezers. We found the same evidence of under treatment of these groups

even in the severest categories of wheezing disease. Further analysis of the research project, provided a partial answer to the observation that girls and South Asian children had less access to appropriate therapy. We found that, other things being equal, when a doctor applies the diagnostic label "Asthma", the chances that preventer therapy will be prescribed increases 10 fold. It seems that, taking all their symptoms and family history into account, doctors are less likely to attach the label "Asthma" to wheezing girls and wheezing children of South Asian origin. Why doctors are less likely to use the diagnostic term "Asthma" in these groups of wheezy children, is at the moment unclear. We are looking into it.

Many of the results of the survey were reassuring, however. The more troublesome the wheeze, the more likely therapy was to be given. For children with purely viral wheeze (triggered only by colds) preventer therapy was much less likely to be given, as is recommended in guidelines.

However there are clearly improvements to be made and special attention needs to be given to the reporting of symptoms by the parents of young girls and children from ethnic minority groups, if they are not to miss out on important therapy. We are currently following these groups of children up, until adult life, to see whether the outcome of their wheezing illnesses is affected by their experiences in early life.



From left to right, Julie Corden, Eva Day, Dr Alex Croom, Professor Andy Wardlaw, and Dr Martin Stern at the presentation.

Records broken 2005 - the highest ever grass pollen counts at Derby MAARA

This has been a very exceptional year for grass pollen in the UK, with the highest counts occurring in Derby. The total June grass pollen count of 7404 was the highest ever recorded since the charity began in 1968.

On Friday 17th June Derby had the highest grass pollen count ever recorded since we started counting in the 1960's - 992 grains per cubic metre of air and on 23rd June there were 908 grains per cubic metre of air. It is a very, very rare occasion to get one daily count of nearly 1000 but to get 2 is unheard of.

The grass pollen count on Friday 17th June in Derby was the highest count recorded anywhere in the UK this year.

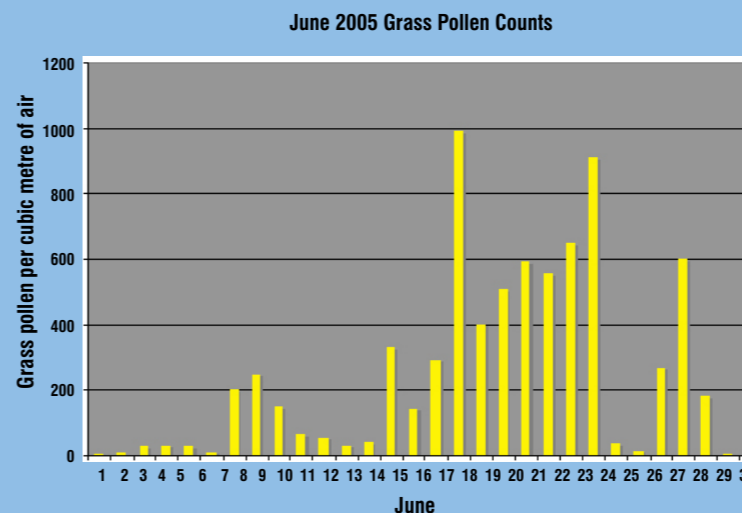
There has never been a summer with so many days of exceptional daily June counts. We have had so many telephone calls and emails from people suffering increased asthma and hayfever symptoms. There have also been many calls from people who have had hay fever for the first time.

I am regularly updating information about pollen and fungal spores on our website -so if you think something in the air is affecting you look on our website.

Tell your friends and colleagues, at present pollen and spore information on the MAARA website www.maara.org is updated every weekday.

All those with Hayfever do take care

Julie Corden



MAARA Supports the Development of Local Allergy Expertise

For those of you who don't know me, I am a doctor based at Glenfield hospital and I have a special interest in drug allergy. I was recently honoured to be awarded a MAARA travel bursary which enabled me to spend time at the world famous 'Asthma and Allergy Centre' at Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore, USA. What follows is a summary of my 'American Experience'.

Baltimore is situated on the east coast of America with New York to the north and Washington to the south. It is not a tourist destination and has significant problems with inner city deprivation. The state of Maryland however is home to some of the wealthiest folk in the country because of its proximity to the capital. These details are important because they set the scene for describing the American health system. It is not until one leaves the UK that one realises the strength of the NHS with its philosophy of treatment being 'free to all at the point of delivery'. In America all care other than emergency treatment is contingent on an insurance policy and this means that patients are self selected and must have guaranteed funding before they are seen. Each patient has their details checked at the reception desk and the tests that are run often depend on the insurance policy. Patients can self refer and may well have been seen by a number of practitioners, had several investigations and been given variable advice, details of which are unavailable.

The asthma and allergy centre at Johns Hopkins is probably the largest in the world. Within the department of allergy alone reside some of the most eminent names in their field. I was fortunate enough to have my visit hosted by Dr Franklin Adkinson, an internationally renowned expert in the area of drug allergy. I had heard him speak on a couple of occasions

and approached him with my project a full year before the visit, so it is fair to say that I was excited. His career spans some 35 years most of which has been spent at Johns Hopkins, but by delightful coincidence he lived in the same building as me at Guys hospital in 1987 when I was a medical student and he was a research fellow.

Over the 5 weeks that I attended his clinic we saw a wide variety of patients with all manner of allergy related problems. The majority would have a drug allergy component and the rest were a mixture, some of which turned out to have no allergic basis (as in the UK).

Certainly drug allergy seems to affect both American and British populations similarly. The American approach to patients, with their greater experience is gratifyingly similar to the British. Increased experience seems to confer the confidence with which to make a diagnosis without embarking on a complicated process (drug challenge), which more often leads to further confusion and anxiety.

There are no drugs (penicillin was but is no longer an exception) for which a 'test-tube' investigation exists to diagnose allergy. The mainstay of positive diagnosis is graded challenge (re-administering a drug to which a patient may have an allergy) and this is clearly not ideal for a number of ethical and scientific reasons.

So what hope is there for patients who arrive in a panic because they have been told that 'the next infection could kill them' or 'surgery could be fatal'? Well there is every hope. Referral to a drug allergy specialist will always result in a pathway being found whether it consists of identification of alternative agents or recommendations for procedural change. Drug allergy is rare but diagnosis of drug allergy by non-allergists is common, and an easy way of 'explaining' symptoms of

toxicity or intolerance. This terminology is not helpful and I would campaign against its use unless appropriate referral follows swiftly in order to prevent patients being 'labelled'. Finally, whilst it is clear that we cannot at present provide a full time drug allergy service (with expert nurses qualified to carry out challenges) manpower is a big factor in the difference in rapidity and quality of service provided here compared with the States.

Epi Pens at School – One or Two?



Back in 2001, a decision was made by the Leicestershire Area Health Authority that their advice to schools would be that, should a child suffer an Anaphylactic reaction, school staff should only be allowed to administer one Epi Pen. Our son, who was prescribed two pens to cover the eventuality of a severe attack, was therefore unable to be left at school without external arrangements to give a second pen if necessary. This basically committed either ourselves, or family and friends to be on call, no more than 10 minutes from school at all times.

There then followed a three year "battle" to get the Health Authority to change their advice to schools involving all levels up to Chief Executive.....but to no avail. This was even more frustrating as it became more apparent that Leicestershire were the only Health Authority in the Midlands that insisted upon a single

I would like to take this opportunity to thank MAARA once more for affording me this wonderful experience and look forward to using my newly acquired knowledge for the good of local allergy sufferers.

Dr Nasreen Khan
Consultant Respiratory Physician
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

pen policy for schools. The situation seemed ridiculous:- teachers joining the school from other areas and trained to give two pens were being re-trained to administer only one; had we chosen to move house into Warwickshire, some 10 miles away, the advice would have been that two pens were acceptable.

The intervention of our MP, David Taylor, finally brought success and in May 2004 Melanie Johnson, the under secretary of state for public health advised that Leicestershire would adopt "the National position" and allow the administration of a second pen.

We are pleased to announce that, one year later, training has now been completed and we are able to leave our son at school, safe in the knowledge that staff are finally allowed to carry out the prescription of his prescribing physician.

Steve Watson

Out and About...



Fungal spore workshop in Poznan Poland

On April 7th I went to Poznan University in Poland to take part in a fungal spore workshop. My trip was funded by the Polish Academy of Sciences. I gave presentations and took fungal spore workshops distributing MAARA leaflets and information. There was great interest in MAARA and my aerobiological research and the students were very keen to learn and very hard working. They were mainly PhD students, lecturers and researchers from prestigious Polish universities but some participants had come from neighbouring countries.

The workshop was scheduled to start on the morning of April 8th but this was the morning of Pope John Paul's funeral –the country was in national mourning and everything stopped so that the Polish people could watch the funeral. I was privileged to be present in Poland at this time and to be taken to the main university building and be with the Polish people at this time. Flags were flying everywhere and candles were lit in the squares, outside the public buildings and churches. After attending with members of the university, a ceremony held in the main university building and watching the funeral on giant screens we travelled to the new biological science building to start the fungal spore workshop in the afternoon.

Not quite how I had imagined my first day at a fungal spore workshop in Poznan but one I shall never forget. My thanks must go to Dr Alicja Stach and her colleagues who organized this workshop; they made me feel so welcome. Alicja and I have been collaborating on research projects for several years now and we hope the collaboration with Poznan University will continue.
Julie Corden

Science Day at Sudbury Hall

On April 16th the University of Derby held a Science day at Sudbury Hall in conjunction with the National Trust, which was a very successful family day out. MAARA had a stand with a microscope slides with pollen to see and a tree trail was organized by the staff at Sudbury Hall to show the children the trees and plants which could cause hay fever. Steve Watson and family put up the MAARA stand with posters, Felicity had organized quizzes, Wendy showed pollen pictures both manned the stall with Julie giving help advice and information on hay fever and the pollen and fungal spores causing allergy. Thanks are due to the University and National Trust staff for their help and support on this day.

Aerobiology and Environmental Health

A Conference on Aerobiology and environmental health was held on April 6th at Derby University organized jointly by Derby University, MAARA and the British Aerobiology Federation to increase awareness of aerobiology and its effect on health.

There were talks on:

- Indoor aeroallergens, pollution and health - Professor Jean Emberlin,
- Asthma –a disease in evolution -Dr Pranab Halder
- Bioaerosols and their assessment-Dr David Griffiths
- Combating Asthma Julie Corden
- The influence of aerobiology on health- Dr Morrow Brown.

MAARA would like to increase awareness of asthma to those in the field of environmental health and this was the first step in that process.

SUPERGRASSES!

Answers may be common or genus names of frequently found grasses.

- 1 Prison Officers' Association
- 2 Mucus in the tubes?
- 3 Not a real cereal
- 4 Decorated animal's appendage
- 5 Tykes' murk
- 6 Not a Cinque Port – but an Ancient Town
- 7 Recline on this unpopular weed
- 8 A bit crooked
- 9 Save – but with an 'f' not an 'r'
- 10 Sounds like the hay fever sufferer's plea: - 'I'll hope 'e cure(s) us!'
- 11 B the Italian city
- 12 End of a chicken's leg

Compiled by Felicity Jackson. Answers at bottom of page.

CALLING ALL PEANUT ALLERGICS - BEWARE OF LURKING LUPINS!!!

I discovered the first case of anaphylaxis caused by lupin flour in Britain last May, confirmed by using the juice from a lupin bud as a skin test. Subsequently I obtained some lupin flour, which I made into a skin test solution. Other cases were soon found by Drs Radcliffe and Scadding in London, and we published a case report in the Lancet in April. Lupin flour is a likely reason for unexplained attacks in peanut allergics who are avoiding peanut with great care. The reason is that peanut shares allergens with all other peas (even mushy ones in my case!)

The Anaphylaxis Campaign has helped to spread the news by warning its members of this undeclared ingredient, which threatens up to half of those allergic to peanut with an attack, which could be fatal. Lupin flour is being added to all sorts of baked goods imported from Europe such as pies, pizzas, flans, buns, onion rings, and pastry cases without any warning unless labelled. Since finding the first case so many products have been

Tree wordsearch

By Felicity Jackson

s	b	i	r	c	h	p	h	c
a	i	o	a	k	a	q	u	a
b	w	z	l	y	z	c	i	t
b	i	s	a	t	e	k	b	k
a	l	d	e	r	l	p	m	i
s	l	x	a	e	m	l	a	n
h	o	v	j	e	o	a	a	l
m	w	s	h	m	d	n	r	h
p	o	l	l	e	n	e	a	c

Look for:

Alder
Ash
Birch
Catkin
Hazel
Oak
Plane
Willow
Pollen
Tree

TRAINING A NEW AEROBIOLOGIST

I have been based at the adult respiratory medicine department at Glenfield hospital, Leicester, since November 2004 and I was very pleased to accept the opportunity of training with MAARA, as part of the association's collaboration with the Institute for Lung Health (ILH). Since my appointment at Glenfield hospital, I have been involved in sputum processing and various research projects within the department and I now hope to provide a valuable link between the services offered at ILH and MAARA. Since commencing my training at MAARA, I have learned much with regard to aeroallergens, pollen differentiation and identification, the preparation of replacement drums for use in the spore traps, and mounting of slides collected twice weekly from the two spore traps at Mickleover, Derby. Although I had only limited knowledge regarding aeroallergens prior to my training at MAARA, I have a keen interest in asthma and allergy and now feel that I am getting to grips with the various

pollen types, their various forms of presentation, and techniques involved in their measurement, much to the credit of the highly experienced MAARA team, consisting of Julie Corden, Felicity Jackson, and Wendy Millington, who retired in May.

Having visited the trap site at Mickleover, I was impressed with the organisation and effectiveness of the long-running techniques employed at MAARA for monitoring pollen and spore types at Derby. I am looking forward to my training in spore identification and helping the MAARA team throughout the busiest time of year, during the daily pollen counts performed at the height of the pollen season, when demand for representative pollen counts is at its greatest. The eventual aim of my training is to participate in the continuation of the collection of aeroallergen data and provision of an invaluable and informative service for asthma and allergy sufferers in the East Midlands.

Abbie Fairs



Abbie about to mount a drum

AIR Appeal to raise money for a bronchoscope

The AIR Appeal, a MAARA/ILH fundraising collaboration was launched 12 months ago to raise money for a bronchoscope and in that time there has been a steady response, as we build up the profile of the fundraising initiative.

The first priority was to raise awareness of the existence of the AIR Appeal amongst patients and within the local community and this was done in a number of ways.

The Leicester Mercury ran a campaign entitled 'Asthma Crisis', featuring patients who suffer from asthma. The public was asked to donate money or to help fundraise on behalf of the AIR Appeal. As a result we received a £120 donation from three children who had asked guests at their christening to donate to the appeal. The Melton Phoenix Lions held a coffee morning and raised £547.

Posters were sent to all the GP surgeries in Leicestershire and will be sent to the Derbyshire surgeries shortly.

Posters were placed in the clinics at Glenfield hospital so that patients are aware of the existence of the appeal.

The Leicester corporate sector was targeted and a large number of brochures were sent out to leading companies within the city.

A number of trusts and foundations were approached and as a result of that we received donations from the Barrie, Shipman and Felicity Wilde Trusts totalling £3,500.

The Jacob Fleming appeal raised money to buy the spore traps for MAARA and also donated £345 to the AIR Appeal.

In February a Race Evening with disco was held in Newtown Linford Village Hall. Around 60 people came along and enjoyed a fun evening of betting and dancing and £312 was raised.

On 18th May the 1st Air Appeal Golf day was held. Fourteen teams took part and the 56 players enjoyed the superb conditions of the Leicestershire Golf Course. The day was very successful with a popular tombola and a raffle with the main prize being dinner for two at Hambleton Hall. Overall £2000 was raised which included a number of additional donations from people who were unable to enter a team. There was great enthusiasm from the players to hold another day in 2006.

These initial 12 months have been a steep learning curve and the response to the appeal from various sectors bears out that we are entering a very crowded market.

Fundraising is a long-term process of building up a profile and events like the Golf Day help us to do this. We shall continue raising funds in 2005 and 2006 when we hope we have purchased a new bronchoscope.

PLEASE NOTE: THE NEXT GOLF DAY IS FRIDAY JUNE 2ND 2006

**The ILH Co-ordinator
Xan Whitfield-Grace
Tel:- 0116 2502581
and e-mail xlw1@le.ac.uk.**

FOND FAREWELL

A brief and heartfelt thank you to all in MAARA for their good wishes and very generous leaving gifts. Thanks to MAARA also for a most enjoyable retirement lunch, which marked the end of a long and happy time of working, albeit part time, for MAARA in Derby - helping Julie to develop and strengthen aerobiology to its present position from where it may soon prove even greater help in the fight against asthma and allergy.

Wendy Millington



A last picture at the microscope Wendy has used for so many years

Wendy came to work for MAARA as an aerobiologist in the afternoons just after the charity was formed. She stayed working for the charity until her son Richard was born.

In 1985 Wendy returned to work for MAARA on two days a week and has worked for the charity ever since. She has been involved in all the aerobiological work at Vernon Street and latterly at Kingsway House, carrying out some of the routine counting and identification as well as being involved in research - many of the MAARA aerobiology papers bear her name.

Wendy has been responsible for producing all the training drawings and has been involved in training on a regular basis. Currently she has been training Abbie from the Institute for Lung Health in the identification of pollen.

Wendy is a keen gardener and botanist having an artistic talent and an eye for detail that has been very valuable at all times but especially when we have presented posters or produced brochures.

We shall all miss her very much and although we know she likes to keep a low profile, we hope she will come and visit us and also help us from time to time when the garden, historical investigations or Hag's Farm are not taking up too much of her time.

She has promised to help with the aerobiology workshop at the BSACI in July and we hope she will enjoy keeping abreast with what is happening at MAARA for a very long time.



Wendy opening one of her presents from MAARA and friends

Aspergillus/Penicillium spores known aeroallergens

Our paper "Long term trends in outdoor *Aspergillus/Penicillium* spore concentrations in Derby, UK from 1970 to 2003 and a comparative study in 1994 and 1996 with the indoor air of two local houses" has recently been proofed and will appear in the next issue of 'Aerobiologia'.

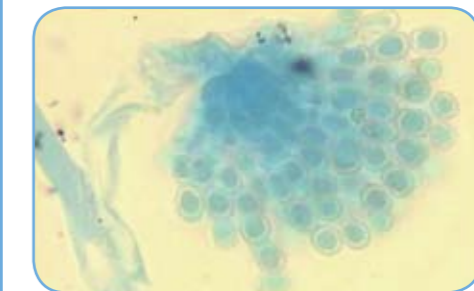
Very little research has been carried out on *Aspergillus/Penicillium* long term spore concentrations in the UK and this paper increases our knowledge in order to help patients exposed to outdoor and indoor concentrations of these spores. We found a more marked increase in outdoor *Aspergillus/Penicillium* in the last thirteen years and also that the spores are present all year round, on a minimum of 342 days per year and often more, which leads to them sometimes being the most abundant spore in the winter when other spores are low. The highest monthly totals are in the

autumn though highest daily counts could be in any month.

Aspergillus/Penicillium spores are also found indoors, as they grow on foodstuffs, vegetable matter, damp furnishings and walls, even in the soil of houseplants, and a comparison of the spores indoors and outdoors at a house detects an indoor source by the presence of elevated spore numbers in the indoor air. We also found that increased household activity led to immediate steep increases in the spores in the air.

A whole range of serious respiratory conditions can be caused by *Aspergillus* or *Penicillium* spores, including allergic asthma, rhinitis and broncho-pulmonary aspergillosis and we hope the paper will be of value to clinicians and their patients.

Wendy Millington



Aspergillus head as seen under the microscope stained with polyvinyl lactophenol

Derby weather station 2004 Keeping a weather eye...

2004 was another warmer than average year, but without any significant summer heat wave, it still ranked as the third mildest year on my records (1984). Only July was cooler than normal.

Winter rainfall was close to the average, and mild with sunshine hours above normal.

Spring rainfall was also close to the average with overall temperatures +1.3deg C above normal.

The summer will be remembered as being rather dull and very wet; July 8th was the lowest July daytime temperature (12.0°C) on my records. August was the wettest of any month on record, over 3 times the normal rainfall. A thunderstorm with torrential rain on the 23rd caused flooding and disruption in Derby City centre and in other parts of the region and a mini tornado reported in the Uttoxeter area. The overnight minimum temperature on the 9th was 20.5°C, the highest on local record (1952).

December, usually noted for foggy days - none were observed, the first time on my records.

David Vince

A Big Thank You

To everyone who gave us donations. Some of you have been patients in the past, are members and benefactors of MAARA, want to help those with asthma and allergy, have lost a dear friend or a member of your family. We are grateful also to the companies, groups and organizations that have chosen to raise funds for MAARA

Donations

Mrs B. M. Wood
Derby Council Employee
Mrs Morton
Mrs Pauline Antill
Mrs M. Becket
Mrs K. Burley
Mrs J. Cam
John Bennington
John Keighery
Focus Do It All
Mr C. Graham
Mrs J. Robinson
Mr Day
Sunnyhill News
Mr & Mrs Mee
Moments Card Shop
J. Rapley
South West Charitable Giving
Mrs J. Stevenson
Mrs O. Green
G. Petrie
A. J. Harding
J.R. Mackley
J.B. Green
M & J Newman
I.F. Milward
R. Saunby
A. P. Spier
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Mr M. Thorne
Mr H. Taberer

Gift Aid

Anyone who is a tax payer and makes a donation to MAARA can fill in a gift aid form, this means that MAARA will be able to claim back tax currently at 28p in the £ on the donation without any cost to the person making the donation. If you would like to complete a gift aid form please contact Eva Day.

In Memoriam Donations

Joan Smart
Mr Calow
Edna Greasley
Dora Allen
Albert Evans
Mr Watford
John Lovegrove
Irene Goodacre
Bernard Rafferty
Probation Service Tamworth
Mrs Jeanette Widdowson
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Carl Routledge
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Betty Lenaghan
Violet Plant
Harold Lane
Elsie Beardmore
Edward Dean
Everald Bowd
George Sentance
Reginald Allen
Sheila Colinese
Patricia Birch
Joyce Morris
Mrs M. Sweeney

Message to all MAARA members

We had a tremendous response to our subscription renewals but we are always looking to increase our membership so if you have friends who suffer with asthma or are interested in supporting an asthma and allergy charity please ask them to contact us.

We never forget our members some of whom have been members for over 30 years and live all over the country and abroad. We love to hear from you and would be delighted if you would join us at our AGM in September.

**Eva Day
Secretary**

Fundraising for MAARA –please help us

You certainly have thought of different ways to raise money for us including - running marathons, auctions, having dressing down days, giving money to MAARA in lieu of birthday presents, having a penny back scheme, holding a beauty evening, serving lunches for us and many more.

If you have any fund raising ideas ring MAARA 01332 362462 we would love to hear from you. Help us to fight asthma and allergies

MAARA Head Office in Derby

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Office Manager
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MAARA in Leicester

Eva Day
Charity and Accounts Information
PO Box 1057
Leicester
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Email eva.day.maara@virgin.net

Also available from MAARA
Credit Card size SOS cards for anaphylaxis patients to carry.
Contact Eva Day if you would like us to send them in the post. SAE appreciated.

CAN YOU HELP MAARA?

I/We enclose a donation to MAARA for research

£□□□□□

I/We enclose a subscription for MAARA membership

£□□□□□

Subscription £5.00 for 1 year, £20.00 for 5 years

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode

Please make cheques/ PO payable to:

**MAARA,
Kingsway House, Kingsway Derby DE22 3HL**

**MAARA
PO Box 1057, Leicester LE 3GZ**

I want MAARA to treat all donations I have made since 6th April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations

Date.....

MAARA AGM

NOTICE is hereby given that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Midlands Asthma and Allergy Research Association will be held in Ward 17 Seminar Room, Glenfield Hospital, Groby Road, Leicester on Tuesday, 13h September 2005 at 7.30 pm.

NOMINATIONS for election of officers or membership of the Executive Committee should be sent to Mrs. Julie Corden at Kingsway House, Kingsway, Derby DE22 3HL by 6th September 2005.

All persons interested in the Association's activities, whether members or not, will be welcome to attend the meeting and join in any discussion, although only paid-up members will be entitled to vote.

Yours sincerely
Edward Stanger