The first edition of *Comprehensive Electrocardiology* was published in 1989, when e-mail was still in its infancy (!!!), and it was never envisaged at that time that a new edition would be prepared. It is probably fair to say that the majority of physicians would have regarded electrocardiography in particular as having reached its maximum usefulness with little additional information to be obtained therefrom. The intervening 20 years have shown how untrue this was.

An update to the book is long overdue. Sadly, some of our former contributors have died since the first edition was published and it is with regret that I note the passing of Philippe Coumel, Rudolph van Dam, Karel den Dulk, Ramesh Gulrajani, Kenici Harumi, John Milliken, Jos Willems and Christoph Zywietz. Where relevant, their contributions continue to be acknowledged but in some cases, chapters have been completely rewritten by new contributors. On the other hand, eight completely new chapters have been added and the appendices restructured.

The publisher felt it would be opportune to produce separate paperback versions of each of the four volumes of the second edition of *Comprehensive Electrocardiology* – hence this book entitled *Specialized Aspects of Electrocardiography*.

In some ways, it is inconceivable what has taken place in the field of electrocardiology since the first edition. New ECG patterns have been recognised and linked with sudden death, new prognostic indices have been developed and evaluated, the ECG has assumed a pivotal role in the treatment of an acute coronary syndrome and among many other things, automated ECG interpretation is now commonplace. Significant advances have been made in the field of mathematical modeling and a solution to the inverse problem is now applied in routine clinical use. Electrophysiological studies have taken giant steps over the past 20 years and biventricular pacing is a relatively recent innovation. Electrocardiology has certainly not stood still in the last 20 years. Of course there have been parallel advances in imaging techniques but the ECG still retains a unique position in the armamentarium of the physician, let alone the cardiologist.

For this edition, my previous co-editor, Professor T.D. Veitch Lawrie, decided to step aside and I wish to congratulate him on reaching his 91st birthday in September 2011. However, I am pleased that other very eminent individuals agreed to assist with the editing of the book, namely Adriaan van Oosterom, Olle Pahlm, Paul Kligfield, Michiel Janse and John Camm. In the nature of things, some of these co-editors undertook much more work than others. For this book, I particularly have to acknowledge the support of Olle Pahlm. Without his support, this revised version of the material in the first edition would not have been possible.

Locally, I am very much indebted to my secretary Pamela Armstrong for a huge contribution in checking and subediting every chapter which went out from my office to the publisher. This was a Herculean task carried out with great aplomb. I would also like to thank Ms. Julie Kennedy for her contribution to a variety of tasks associated with preparing selected chapters, including enhancements to the English presentation on occasions.

I also wish to thank the publishers Springer for their considerable support throughout. Grant Weston initially commissioned the book and I am grateful to him for his confidence in supporting the preparation of a new edition. Jennifer Carlson and her team in New York also assisted significantly. I am also indebted to Mr. R. Samuel Devanand and his team at SPi Global, in India, for production of the paperback edition.

I again must thank my long suffering wife Irene who has had to fight to gain access to our home PC every night over these past few years!

*Comprehensive Electrocardiology* aims to bring together truly comprehensive information about the field and *Basic Electrocardiology* provides a strong theoretical foundation to the principles of electrocardiography. A book can never be completely up to date given the speed of publication of research findings over the internet these days but hopefully this publication will continue to be of significant use to readers for many years to come. *Basic Electrocardiology*, together with the other three paperback versions of the other volumes of *Comprehensive Electrocardiology*, contains much information that should be of use both to the practising clinician and the experienced researcher.
Now that this huge effort has been completed and the book is available electronically, it should be much easier to produce the next edition...!!

Peter Macfarlane
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Autumn
Specialized Aspects of ECG
Macfarlane, P.W.; van Oosterom, A.; Janse, M.; Kligfield, P.; Camm, J.; Pahlm, O. (Eds.)
2012, XII, 828 p. 291 illus., Softcover