

BSMM News

Autumn 2006



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Welcome to the Autumn 2006 BSMM Newsletter. You will see from the Newsletter that the BSMM continues to be very active in supporting its members to attend educational and training events, and that Society membership continues to grow. Please note that final details of the forthcoming BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting (March 2007), including the final programme and registration details, as well as invitations for nominations for President and Honorary Membership, will be sent out over the next few weeks.

Dick Hobson, BSMM Hon. Secretary

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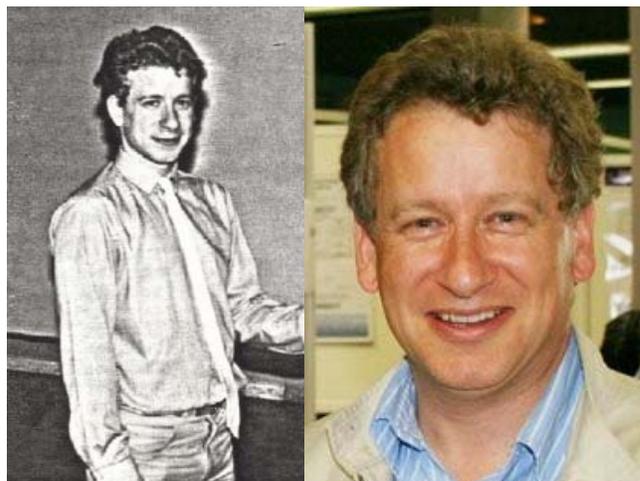
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BSMM 2007 Foundation Lecturer – Professor Neil Gow

The 2007 BSMM Foundation Lecturer will be Professor Neil Gow. This is considered especially appropriate as 2007 marks the 20th anniversary of Professor Gow both joining the Society and being awarded the BSM Award.

Neil Gow graduated from Edinburgh University with B.Sc. (Hons) in Biological Sciences in 1979 and a Ph.D. in fungal physiology at Aberdeen in 1983 working with Graham Gooday. He then spent a brief period as a postdoctoral fellow in Denver, Colorado with Franklin Harold before returning to Aberdeen to be appointed as a lecturer in 1984. Professor Gow was appointed to a personal chair in Microbiology in 1995. He has received awards from the British Society for Medical Mycology, the British Mycological Society (Berkeley Award) and

Society for General Microbiology (Fleming Award) as well as the Pfizer Industrial Award and the Saltire Society Scottish Science Award for his work on fungal pathogens of both humans and plants. He is a founding member of the Aberdeen Fungal Group that includes Prof Alistair Brown, Professor Frank Odds, Dr Donna MacCallum and Dr Carol Munro and a total research staff of around 30 scientists. This constitutes the largest academic centre for Medical Mycology in the UK.



Professor Neil Gow collecting his BSM Award in 1987 (left) and in 2006 (right).

Professor Gow is the immediate past president of the British Mycological Society and a former chairman of the Infection and Immunity panel of the Wellcome Trust and is a Vice-President of ISHAM. He also sits on the Sanger Genome Institute Pathogen Sequencing Advisory Committee and on the council of the Biosciences Federation, which represents some 80,000 biologists in the UK. He has had several editorial roles in the past and is currently senior editor of the journal *Fungal Genetics and Biology*, which is the highest impact fungal-specialist journal worldwide, as well as a highlight advisor for *Nature Reviews Microbiology*. He is a fellow of the Institute of Biology and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and was elected as a Fellow of the American Association of Microbiologists in 2004. Professor Gow is interested in the growth, morphogenesis and pathogenesis of the human fungal pathogen *Candida albicans* and, in the past also worked

extensively on the interactions between zoospore plant pathogens and their hosts. He has specific interests in the molecular genetics of cell wall biosynthesis in fungi and the directional growth responses of fungal cells as well as the virulence properties of medically important fungal species. In recent years he has focussed mainly on the genetics of glycosylation and the fungus-host interaction, and on chitin synthesis and hyphal orientation responses. He has published some 200 papers and reviews in these areas, and these topics will form the basis of his Foundation lecture.

8th *Candida* and Candidiasis Conference, Denver Colorado 13th-17th March 2006

I attended and presented a poster at the 8th Conference on *Candida* and Candidiasis, which was held in Denver Colorado, with the generous financial assistance provided by a BSMM Travel Grant.

The meeting was held in conjunction with the first ever Dimorphic Fungal Pathogen meeting. The five-day conference program was built around a strong framework of talks combining straight science with clinical sessions and applied research. Holding several parallel sessions, including a 'Genomic Workshop' and 'Outside the Box' series encouraged communication and interaction between conferences, reflected in the strong showing from both meetings.

The *Candida* and Candidiasis meeting took a direct route through environmental sensing and response in the yeast, with the entirety of the first day being dedicated to this topic. Speakers taking the podium included Dr. Lorenz (University of Texas Health Science Centre), speaking about acetate metabolism during *Candida albicans*/macrophage interaction, Dr. Davis (University of Minnesota), describing the regulation of pH responsive genes by Rim101 and Dr. Mühlshlegel (University of Kent) revealing new insights into the sensing and metabolism of CO₂ in *C. albicans*.

The conference then moved to discuss epidemiology and evolution, with a terrific talk from Dr. Fitzpatrick (Conway Institute), and Prof. Odds (University of Aberdeen) spoke with his customary aplomb.

Host responses and disease models, the interaction of *C. albicans* in host niches and microbial communities produced a fine series of molecular biology and proteomics talks. Anti-candidal agents was the topic of the 6th session, followed by back to back sittings on cell wall and surface investigations featuring research from Dr. Poulain's group in Lille and Lois Hoyer at the University of Illinois. Notably, in this session, Prof.

Gow, the forthcoming BSMM Foundation Lecturer, eloquently dissected the structure of the fungal cell wall, and described factors therein able to elicit an immune response in host cells.

The traditional conference banquet and subsequent disco provided a refreshing break from the scientific talks and allowed participants to let their hair down and socialise in a friendly atmosphere. The party spread out into Denver's clubs and there was ample opportunity to sample the local beer. Denver is the home of Coors beer and the bars made sure you knew about it!

The last day of the conference was a double session on cell type and shape with several enlightening talks dealing with white-opaque switching and the regulation of morphogenetic switching.

The conference ended with a farewell lunch and a look forward to the next meeting. I really appreciated the opportunity to take part in this meeting, and feel that it has impacted strongly on my graduate program. It has allowed a broader understanding of the field, thus strengthening my core knowledge and will aid me greatly in the preparation of my PhD thesis.

Chirag Sheth, BSMM Travel Grant Recipient

16th ISHAM Congress, Paris, 25th-29th June 2006

The 16th Congress of the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology (ISHAM) took place from 25th-29th June at the Palais de Congress, Paris. The location for this tri-annual meeting was just a short distance from the Arc de Triomphe, and was easily accessible to the many and varied attractions of the French capital.

The scientific programme was organized into three daily sessions, during each of which four separate symposia ran concurrently. The range of mycological topics covered was impressive, with 44 separate symposia to choose from, and over 750 posters on display throughout the conference. Three keynote lectures were delivered on each of the first three evenings, and several informal workshops or discussion groups took place during the meeting.

My own area of interest, the dermatophytes, was well represented, with sessions on epidemiology, molecular taxonomy and post-genomic developments. The dermatophytes finally seem to be coming of age, with reports on standardized methods for antifungal sensitivity testing; the first example of gene inactivation in dermatophytes and exciting developments in genomic profiling and gene expression (Colin Jackson).

The role of fungal biofilms attracted some attention, with an entire session dedicated to this increasingly topical subject. A wide range of presentations examined the molecular determinants of these complex structures, expanding our limited knowledge of *Candida albicans* and *Aspergillus fumigatus* biofilms. A series of posters throughout the meeting also addressed this subject area (Gordon Ramage).

Minor negatives were the lack of lunch provision (in Paris, of all places) and the rather haphazard arrangement of the poster sessions and the oral presentation document. However, the gala dinner at the Moulin Rouge more than made up for this (particularly for the males!). Overall, an excellent five days in a truly wonderful city.

Colin Jackson and Gordon Ramage, BSMM Travel Grant Recipients

Molecular Mycology: Current Approaches to Fungal Pathogenesis. Woods Hole 8th-25th August 2006

I am extremely grateful to the BSMM for the award of a Travel Grant to attend the Molecular Mycology Course at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole. The course directors Prof. John E. Edwards Jr., Dr. Aaron Mitchell and Prof. Paul Magee have put together an incredibly informative and expansive 3 week program which greatly increased my knowledge in a wide variety of topics, including *Candida*, *Cryptococcus* and *Aspergillus* investigations. The course was enhanced by the faculty that included Dr. Judith Rhodes, Dr. Ted White (who will be speaking at next year's BSMM Annual Meeting), Dr. Scott Filler and Dr. Joe Heitman, each of whom gave seminars and laboratory tutorials in their area of expertise. This gave me the opportunity to ask many questions and really benefit from first hand knowledge and experience. I particularly enjoyed the camaraderie of my fellow course members and the chance to meet so many people, all interested in related fields. The evenings were a great chance to get to know everyone, especially on the bowling night. We even managed a day trip to Martha's Vineyard for a touch of R & R! The final day was a celebration of the course having been running for 10 years, and course alumni were invited back to speak on their research. This was very motivating as so many previous students were now running their own labs and had published in *Science* and *Nature*. This course is a unique experience to learn from some of the top minds in the field and I would thoroughly encourage current students and post-docs to apply next year.

Suzy Turnbull, BSMM Travel Grant Recipient

BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting 2007

The 2007 BSMM Annual Meeting will be held at Devonshire Hall, in the University of Leeds, from 18th-20th March 2007. There will be sessions on antifungal agents, epidemiology, antifungal immunity, and molecular mycology, including presentations by a number of top UK and international speakers. The 2007 BSMM Foundation Lecture will be delivered by Professor Neil Gow from Aberdeen, and the meeting will include a ISHAM-funded Glyn Evans Lecture, presented by Professor Ted White of the Seattle Biomedical Research Institute. Submission of offered papers and posters by BSMM members at all levels is encouraged, and these may include fungal case reports. The Annual Dinner will be held at the Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds (www.thackraymuseum.org/), and will include the opportunity to roam the museum. For further information, please contact the Local Organiser (contact details below) or see the BSMM website (www.bsmm.org).

Dick Hobson, Local Organiser

BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting 2008

The 2008 BSMM Annual Meeting will be held in Norwich. The provisional dates for your diary are 30th March-1st April 2008. Further details will be made available as conference planning gets fully underway.

Silke Schelenz, Local Organiser

BSMM Travel Grant Deadlines

The next deadlines for receipt of applications for BSMM Travel Grant Applications are:

- 16th September 2006
- 19th January 2007
- 18th May 2007

For details of the application process and eligibility criteria, see www.bsmm.org

BSMM membership

The BSMM now has 301 members, and would like to welcome the following members who have joined the Society since production of the last Newsletter: Estelle Mogensen (Canterbury), Judith Feeney (Brighton), Kalani Mortimer (Nottingham), Rashmi Gupta (Warrington), Amir Golbang (Cambridge) Jayaram Kaliyamurthy (Tiruchrappalli, India), Stephen Decelis (Bikara, Malta) and Kristel Smith (Carlisle).

The UK Clinical Mycology Network

The UKCMN was started up in 2005 with a Steering Group consisting of representatives from three regional centres (Leeds, London and Manchester) and the HPA Mycology Reference Laboratory (Bristol). The overall aim of the Network is to promote quality in the provision of Medical Mycology services throughout the UK. To achieve this the Network aims to provide a central point of management for the UK-wide coordination of Medical Mycology service delivery, including surveillance, medical and laboratory training, diagnostic development and translational research. The UKCMN Steering Group would now like to widen the network, and encourages laboratories that provide a clinical mycology service to become UKCMN centres to raise their level of service.

Membership of the UKCMN is free, and is open to centres that provide clinical mycology services at any of the levels defined by the Network. These are specified on the UKCMN web pages, which can be found at http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/fungal_infections/ukcmn.htm. Membership will entitle representatives of centres to attend the UKCMN annual meeting, to receive UKCMN publications and other output, to be able to declare affiliation with the UKCMN and to use the UKCMN logo on their communications alongside their stated level of service. Members who join at regional centre level (and above) will also be able to have representation on the Steering Group if they wish.



The inaugural Steering Group of the UKCMN. From left: David Denning, Liz Johnson, Dick Hobson and Chris Kibbler (Chair)

The first UKCMN annual meeting will be on the afternoon of Tuesday 20 March 2007, immediately after the BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting. RCPATH CPD accreditation is being applied for. The programme will be available via the UKCMN web pages as soon as it has been finalised.

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If you are interested in joining the UKCMN and/or also in attending the inaugural meeting, or if you have any other enquiries about the UKCMN, please email Claire Swales at claire.swales@hpa.org.uk.

Chris Kibbler, Chair, UKCMN Steering Group

Forthcoming meetings

Federation of Infection Societies 2006
November 29th-December 1st 2006, Cardiff, UK
 Details: www.britishinfectionsociety.org

Focus on Fungal Infections 17
March 7th-9th 2007, San Diego, California
 Details: www.imedex.com/calendars/infectiousdisease.asp

2007 BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting
March 18th-20th 2007, Devonshire Hall, Leeds
 Details: www.bsmm.org

United Kingdom Clinical Mycology Network (UKCMN)
Inaugural Annual Meeting
March 20th 2007, Devonshire Hall, Leeds
 Details (when available):
www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/fungal_infections/ukcmn.htm

Society For General Microbiology 160th Meeting
March 26th-29th 2007, Manchester, UK
 Details: www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings

Annual Conference of the Association for General and Applied Microbiology
April 1st- 4th 2007, Osnabrück, Germany
 Details: www.vaam.de

3rd Trends in Medical Mycology (TIMM)
October 28th-31st 2007, Torino, Italy
 Details: www.TIMM2007.org

3rd Advances Against Aspergillosis
January 16th-19th 2008, Miami Beach, Florida, USA
 Details: www.AAA2008.org

2008 BSMM Annual Scientific Meeting
30th March-1st April 2008, Norwich, UK
 Details to follow

Items for the BSMM Newsletter

No cartoon in this edition of the Newsletter, the UKCMN Steering Group photo will have to do instead. Apologies if you have sent me something for this edition that has not been included. However, don't be downhearted, it might appear in the next edition. Items for publication in the BSMM Newsletter should be sent to the General Secretary, Dick Hobson, at richard.hobson@leedsth.nhs.uk