

# Life Sciences Newsletter

Department of Life Sciences

September 2014

[Your Newsletter Archive](#)

## WELCOME TO ALL NEW STAFF

### Administrative

**Olivia Daniel** – Administrator to the Science Director of the Safe Project.

**James Ferguson** – Postgraduate Research and Doctoral Training Programme Administrator.

### Research Assistants

**Dennis Nurnberg**, supervised by Bill Rutherford.

### Research Associates

**David Briggs**, supervised by Erhard Hohenester; **Jennifer Wood**, supervised by Gloria Rudenko; **Patrick Smadbeck**, supervised by Michael Stumpf & **Lamia Mestek Boukhibar**, supervised by Michalis Barkoulas.

### Research Technicians

**Paolo Capriotti**, supervised by Nikolai Windbichler; **Mabilia De Castro Ribeiro**, supervised by Bernadette Byrne; **Phoebe Tickell**, supervised by Patrik Jones; **Shilpi Sheth**, supervised by So Iwata and **Bennett Chukwudi Nwaob**, supervised by Bill Rutherford.

## ATHENA SWAN

DoLS Athena Swan Silver Application will be submitted in April 2015. Once the application is submitted, we continue to hold our Bronze Award until the results come out. However, we can make it clear that an application for the Silver Award has been submitted.

**An inspiring read:** [Parenthood and academia: an impossible balance?](#)

AOC Committee Update: Niki Gounaris has replaced Xiaodong Zhang and John Pinney will replace Rachel McMullan during her period of maternity leave.

**Parents Network:** <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/parentsnetwork>

## TALKS

**Cristina Lo Celso** has been invited to present at the next International Society for Stem Cell Research meeting, the biggest and most important conference in the stem cell field, taking place in June 2015.

**Anita Hall** gave an invited talk, ['Reflections on widening participation from within a highly selective University'](#) as part of the University Perspectives Panel at the Brilliant Club inaugural conference, July 2014, King's College London & gave/will give two talks on Teaching-focused career paths in academia for the Society of Biology and Naturejobs Careers expo (June and September).

**Mustafa Djamgoz** was a plenary speaker at the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine meeting in Istanbul (June, 2014).

**Ville Friman** gave a talk in ISME 15 conference, South-Korea 25th of August, title: “Evolutionary rescue might not prevent species extinctions in multi-species communities”, session “Effect of climate change on microbial community”.

## RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

**Vincent Savolainen** (PI) with **Araujo, Banks Leite, Bell, Burt, Cator, Gill,** and **Woodward** were awarded the Royal Society Wolfson Refurbishment Grant (£193K): *Wolfson Laboratory for Ecological Genomics Synthesis*

**George K. Christophides** has been awarded a 2-year international exchange programme funded jointly by the Sao Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) and Imperial College London.

A Horizon 2020 European Joint Doctorate (EJD) programme has been awarded to **George K. Christophides** and a consortium of scientists from 17 European academic institutions and companies, including Imperial College London, the Technical University of Aachen (GER), the University of Rome, the German Synchrotron facility DESY and the University of Cambridge (UK).

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

**Howard R. Morris**, an Emeritus Professor and biochemist whose work pushed the boundaries of mass spectrometry has been awarded the 2014 Royal Society Royal Medal. Click [here](#) for more information.

**Rachel Vaux** (PhD Student) won one of the two poster awards at the 8th molecular and cellular biology of helminths conference in Hydra, Greece and the poster was titled “The development of a Trypanosoma musculi based in vivo heterologous expression system to investigate parasitic nematode gene function.

## MEDIA/OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

**Cristina Banks-Leite’s** paper “Using ecological thresholds to evaluate the costs and benefits of set-asides in a biodiversity hotspot” was really well received by media - she was interviewed by 10 journalists and our work was featured in more than 30 newspapers and magazines in Brazil and internationally. Click [here](#) to access one of the articles.

**Armand Leroi’s** new book “The Lagoon: how Aristotle Invented Sciences has been published to excellent reviews in media, such as [Nature](#) and [the Guardian](#).

**Kathryn Lagrue’s** (PhD student) piece on "[How HIV co-opts gut bacteria to pose as a familiar infection](#)" – was published in The Conversation.

**Patrik Jones'** study, "Propane made with renewable process for the first time" published in *Nature Communications* was popular with the popular press, including [the Guardian](#) and two blog articles on the article ended up with >65,000 likes and >1,000 comments through Facebook.

"Crystal histories and mysteries revealed" - **Stephen Curry** wrote in [the Guardian](#) about a new and multifaceted gem of a film, titled [The Braggs' Legacy](#), and produced by one of Britain's flashiest scientific facilities, the Diamond Light Source, explores the histories and mysteries of X-ray crystallography.

**Mark Isalan** hosted an A-level student Marcus Francis as part of a Nuffield Research Placement scheme (<http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/nuffield-research-placements>). Marcus learned about mammalian genomic PCR and cloning genes in bacteria.

As part of her placement at The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, **Adriana De Palma** (PhD Student) together with the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology organised an afternoon seminar on the [National Pollinator Strategy](#), taking place on 28 October 2014.

The organising committee of the MAD Competition (Ramon Vilar, **Anita Hall**, John Tisch, Terry Rudolph, Gunnar Pruessner, Rebecca Middleton) reported that 3 student teams have been working hard on their own research projects over the summer as part of the Faculty of Natural Sciences [Make-a-Difference Competition](#), grand final 28 October. Thank you to all those who have helped so far.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Patrik Jones'** article ["An engineered pathway for the biosynthesis of renewable propane"](#) was published in *Nature Communications* on Sept. 02.

**Cristina Banks-Leite's** paper ["Using ecological thresholds to evaluate the costs and benefits of set-aside in a biodiversity hotspot"](#) was published in *Science* on 29 August 2014.

Schaerli, Y., Munteanu, A., Gili, M.L., Sharpe, J. & **Isalan M.** A unified design space of synthetic stripe-forming networks. *Nature Communications* (2014). DOI: 10.1038/ncomms5905

An accepted manuscript, "Predicting chemical environments of bacteria from receptor signaling" by Diana Clausznitzer, **Gabriele Micali**, Silke Neumann, Victor Sourjik, **Robert G. Endres**, will be published in *PLoS Comp Biol*.

## AND FINALLY...

A message from James Andrewes, the Teaching Office Manager: I'm happy to report that the UG Office has been refurbished and will now also host Lucy York (Postgraduate Administrator) and James Ferguson (Postgraduate Research and Doctoral Training Administrator) and will be known as the Life Sciences Teaching Office. Linda Giorgi (Examinations Officer) and Stephen Connolly (Student Liaison) will also move into offices in the same space. We hope that it will be much more welcoming for students and staff alike. We are still located on the second floor of the Sir Ernst Chain Building.



Please drop in and say hello!