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Department of Life Sciences Newsletter

May 2018

Newsletter Archive

Staff Information

Health & Wellbeing

Safety



Allison Hunter (Technical Operations Manager) recently hosted 35th University



Congratulations to Professor Iain Colin Prentice on his election as one of the

Bioscience Manager Association Conference (18-20 April) here at Imperial. The conference focused on providing updates on technical, operational and scientific issues for bioscience managers. They visited the Crick Institute, Natural History Museum labs, DoLS, Medicine and Bioengineering labs and had a tour of the Houses of Parliament sponsored by two MPs. Some spare spaces were also offered to DoLS staff for the HoP tour. The Provost kindly presented the Royal Society of Biology Higher Education Bioscience Technician of the Year Award, funded by UBMA, during the conference. [Click here](#) to find out more.



A new study has cast doubt on leading theory for how tiny creatures have evolved for tens of millions of years - without ever having sex. [Professor Tim Barraclough](#), from the Department of Life Science at Imperial, said: "We have been building up this story of how these creatures manage to change based on their remarkable ability to survive desiccation." "However, when we open up

fifty 2018 Fellows of the Royal Society. Professor Prentice holds the AXA Chair in Biosphere and Climate Impacts at the Silwood Park campus of the Department of Life Sciences. He is renowned for his research into how plants and ecosystems interact with their environment on a large scale. Professor Prentice applies eco-evolutionary optimality concepts to develop and test new quantitative theories for plant and ecosystem function and land-atmosphere exchanges of energy, water and carbon dioxide, with the goal of more robust and reliable numerical modelling of land processes in the Earth System.



Freshwater fish diversity is harmed as much by selective logging in rainforests as they are by complete deforestation, according to a new study. Researchers had expected the level of damage would rise depending on the amount of logging and were surprised to discover the impact of removing relatively few trees. Lead author Clare Wilkinson, from

the investigation to other sexless species of bdelloid that do not dry out, we find that the story does not play out. We thought we were understanding more about these creatures, but this is a spanner in the works.” [Click here](#) to find out more.

the Department of Life Sciences at Imperial, said: “That such a small change can impact fish biodiversity is shocking and worrying. We expected to see a gradient from least affected in the selectively logged areas, to heavily impacted for the streams in oil palm plantations. Instead, we saw almost the same level of fish biodiversity loss in all altered environments.” [Click here](#) to find out more.



World Malaria Day - 25 April

Last October saw the launch of the [Imperial College Network of Excellence in Malaria](#) – an interdisciplinary network of researchers united in the common aim of malaria eradication. To bring this diverse group together, the Network has been set up with the aim of combining scientific insights, technological innovations and evaluations of impact. [Prof Jake Baum](#) from Department of Life Sciences, and co-founder of the Network, said: “At Imperial, we have a unique breadth of expertise from bench to bedside, parasite to vector. Working together, alongside our global partners, we believe the network can help realise the goal of an eventual world eradication of malaria.”

Welcome to New Staff

Research Associate

Ross Coron (Gloria Rudenko), Craig Wilkinson (Thomas Meier), Carolina Simoes da Silva Pereira (Marc Dionne)

Research Associates in Atlantic Salmon Ecology (Guy Woodward)

Hannah Lewis, Doris Pichler, Katrin Layer-Dobra

Research Fellow (British Council Rutherford Fellowship)

Tufail Basir (Martin Buck)

Research Fellow (Sir Henry Dale Fellowship)

Calvin Tiengwe (Gloria Rudenko)

Teaching Fellow in Quantitative Life Sciences

Virginia Fairclough

Research Technician

Mong Sing Lai (Thomas Meier)

Publications

Dautant A, Meier T, Hahn A, Tribouillard-Tanvier D, di Rago JP, Kucharczyk R. [ATP Synthase Diseases of Mitochondrial Genetic Origin](#). Front Physiol. 2018 Apr 4;9:329.

Sena Lab - [Light Sheet Fluorescence Microscopy Optimized for Long-Term Imaging of Arabidopsis Root Development](#) is now out in the volume "[Root Development](#)", part of the series "[Methods in Molecular Biology](#)": [Methods Mol Biol](#). 2018;1761:145-163. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4939-7747-5_11. Pubmed id: 29525955

Sena Lab - work on using light-sheet microscopy to image cellular dynamics in roots has been extensively described in a feature article titled "[Rooted in Physics](#)", in the April 2018 issue of Physics World, the official magazine of the Institute of Physics.

Rowan J. Schley, Manuel de la Estrella, Oscar Alejandro Pérez-Escobar, Anne Bruneau, Timothy Barraclough, Félix Forest, Bente Klitgård, Is Amazonia a 'museum'

for Neotropical trees? The evolution of the Brownea clade (Detarioideae, Leguminosae), Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution, Volume 126, 2018, Pages 279-292, ISSN 1055-7903, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ympev.2018.04.029>.

Grants

Mike Sternberg, together with colleagues at Goldsmiths College, have been awarded a BBSRC Follow-on-Fund grant for £250k (FEC) to promote protein docking games BioBlox3D and BioBlox2d for the educational sector.

Murray Selkirk has been awarded £535,000 over 3 years from the BBSRC for a grant entitled 'Cholinergic control of innate and adaptive immunity to gastrointestinal parasites'

Giorgio Gilestro has been awarded a BBSRC grant for the value of £480k - 'The ninna nanna gene: an insight into an archetypal circuit integrating circadian and homeostatic drive to regulate sleep'.

Colin Prentice has been officially awarded an ERC Advanced Grant, for the project "Re-inventing Ecosystem And Land-surface Models (REALM). The project is almost €2.5M spread over five years, starting in October this year.

Matt Child's group have been awarded a grant by the Wellcome Trust to support junior researcher attendance at a meeting that Matt is co-organizing with a group at the Crick. £2500 towards travel and accommodation bursaries for PhD students to be able to attend Toxo-UK 2018.

Outreach

Maruf Ali presented a talk at "[Protein Homeostasis in Health and Disease](#)" meeting in Cold Spring Harbour, USA.

Tony Southall has been appointed to the Wellcome Trust Basic Science Interview Committee.

Alexandre Leary and **Sophie Gilbert** (Bozkurt Lab) gave talks at a 'Scientists in

Schools' education event for secondary schools. This programme has been designed to enthuse more pre-A level students into STEM by bringing science and industry leaders into schools for discussion and debate. Find out more [here](#).



Academic Away Day - Friday 13th April

Kew Gardens

Thanks to those who attended the Away Day at Kew. We have received good feedback from the event and hope to arrange an Away Day on a yearly basis.

2018 Postgraduate Research Day Winners

2nd year posters

TWO overall Poster presentation winners (in no particular order):

Dimitrios Katsanos

Amira Hassan

Runners-up – poster presentation (in no particular order):

Ana Dos Ramos Rodrigues

Christopher S Adam

3rd year presentations

TWO overall Presentation winners (in no particular order):

Guled Osman

Natalie Scholes

Runners-up (in no particular order):

Barnabas Walker

Sonia Rebollo Ramirez

Best Lay Summary

Hannah Norman

Prizes for Excellence

Congratulations to all those from Life Sciences who have been awarded Prizes for Excellence in the following categories...

Excellence in Health and Safety - Postdoc:

Poh-Choo Pang

Teaching:

Derek Huntley

Patrik Jones

Giorgio Gilestro

The Support of Teaching and Learning:

Clare Wilkinson

Saul Moore

Andawai Miao

Mike Sternberg

Jennifer Bennett

Spencer Cockerell

Linda Giorgi

The prize giving event will take place on 6th June.



Suggestion Box

The Department is committed to becoming a place to work and study that is inclusive and supportive.

We want to enable everyone in the department to help us in achieving that goal.

A reminder that in September 2017 the DoLS Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee launched an online suggestion box to enable staff and students to make suggestions or raise issues relating to **gender balance, diversity and inclusion**, please visit our [online suggestion box](#).

The form is secure and allows comments to be made anonymously.



Thanks to all those who attended Active Bystander training on Wednesday 9th May.

The training aims to empower staff to challenge poor behaviours, and bring about cultural change through the reinforcement of messages defining the boundaries of unacceptable behaviour.

We have had some great feedback from the session:

'Very nice session, especially being so short. For once one does not feel like the half a day could have been condensed in 20 minutes!'

'I haven't had a chance to put the new skills to test yet, but I believe that it has

given me confidence and assurance not to be a passive bystander in the future.'

'I found it useful, especially the practical tips of how to respond in such situations'

To find out more about Active Bystander training [click here](#).

If you are interested in attending Active Bystander training, please register your interest via this [doodle poll](#).

Active Bystander training will take place at Silwood Park on Monday 21st May, 2-3pm in Room 1.01 Hamilton Building. Please contact [Emma Proctor](#) if you would like a place.



Alom Shaha: How to be your child's first science teacher

Doing hands-on activities with children is the best way to get them exploring the world around them and thinking like future scientists and engineers. However, many parents lack confidence in doing science with their children, compared with reading, writing or drawing – even sometimes when they are scientists or engineers themselves! Teacher and author of 'Mr Shaha's Recipes for Wonder' Alom Shaha will talk about his own introduction to science and show how any parent can help their children to really learn from their curiosity about the world – so they can take the step from "wow!" to "how?". Alom is a thoroughly engaging speaker.

[Click here](#) for more info on how to sign up.

HoD Citizenship Awards

Throughout 2018 we will be showcasing staff who were presented with a HoD Citizenship Award at the end of 2017.

For the month of May we have **Serophena Morgan....**



I am the 2nd year Biochemistry laboratory technician and I liaise with the lecturers about their practical classes and then I prepare them. My role, however, is not limited to Biochemistry as I also do a Biology practical and some for Bioengineering Department. I do enjoy my role as I talk and interact with the students as well as co-operating with the lecturers so that the learning environment is a positive one.



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