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Welcome to the MRC’s Post-Doc Symposium 2014!

Given that you might only read one more paragraph of this intro...

...whatever happens over the next three days make sure that you maximise the opportunity to network – everyone here has the potential to go all the way in the world of biomedical science and some will! Use LinkedIn and Research Gate to keep in touch.

We hope you will be intrigued and stimulated by the practical workshops and inspiring talks and start thinking about planning your next career steps: it’s well known that having the MRC on your CV will stand you in good stead for the rest of your life.

The MRC help ‘crew’ is easily identifiable by their t-shirts and their contact details are at page 4. They enjoy meeting you and love to help, so please... just ask.

Lastly this is the foreword to a booklet that includes the main programme of events, biographies of the speakers, maps and other information – enjoy looking through it and thank you for joining the inaugural MRC Post-Doc Symposium 2014.

Ted Smith
Group HR Director, MRC
Contact information

Møller Centre
Møller Centre
Storey’s Way
Cambridge
CB3 0DE
Tel: +44 (0)1223 465500

Churchill College
Churchill College
University of Cambridge
Storey’s Way
Cambridge
CB3 0DS
Tel: +44 (0)1223 336000

MRC Delivery Team on site
Jeroen Stam
Tel: 07747 630997
email: Jeroen.stam@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

Linda Holliday
Tel: 07826 533506
email: linda.holliday@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

Julie Williams
Tel: 0787 3344345
email: Julie.williams@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

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Maps

Key

(70) Overflow parking

(60) Grass bank

(60) Main car park

(67)-20s Study centre overflow

(25) Road parking

(15) No. 64 parking
Møller Centre

Main Reception

Main Restaurant

MAIN BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR

STUDY CENTRE

Patio Area

Refreshment Area

Main Building and Car Park

Fitness Centre

Patio Area

Patio Area

Toilets

Refreshment Area

Toilets

Suite 1

Suite 2

Business Centre

Toilets
MRC speakers and agenda

Monday 8 September

Opening & Welcome
Ted Smith (MRC HR Director)
Jim Smith (MRC Deputy CEO)

Plenary session:
The Post Doc Journey
Laurens Kruidener and Chun-wa Chung (GSK)
Kathy Niakan – PLT, NIMR,
Sylvia Corronchano – Investigator Scientist, MGU
Anne Willis – Unit Director Toxicology
Steve Brown – Director MRC Harwell

Q&A session
Chaired by Jim Smith

Workshops on:
Journal Writing
Anke Sparman: Associate Editor Nature
Translation & Technology Transfer
Dave Tapolczay: CEO, MRC Technology
Career Planning
Anita Edmonds: Penna

Speed networking

Dinner at the MOLLER Centre
Tuesday 9 September

Plenary session:
The Post Doc Journey
----------------------------------------
Richard Henderson: Former Director LMB

Workshops on:
Grant applications
----------------------------------------
Dave Crosby: Programme Manager, MRC
Career planning
----------------------------------------
Anita Edmonds: Penna
Fellowship applications
----------------------------------------
Julia Dickinson: Programme Manager, MRC
Simon Johnston: MRC Fellow
Monika Gullerova: MRC CDA Fellow
Nick Gilbert: Senior Fellow
Simon Hollingsworth: MCMB Fellow
Shaun Cowley: Senior Fellow
Alan Robinson: Strategic Skills Fellow

Success for All
----------------------------------------
Ele Zeggini: Sanger Institute &
Catherine Sandler: Sandler Consulting

Lab Leadership
----------------------------------------
Alan Bate: Bray Leino

Drinks Reception and Dinner
at Murray Edwards College
----------------------------------------
Speaker Kevin Fong

Wednesday 10 September

Plenary session:
How the MRC Funds Research
----------------------------------------
Julia Dickinson: Programme Manager

Sir John Savill: My life in science
----------------------------------------
Sir John Savill (CEO) & Ted Smith

An interview with Ted Smith

Workshops on:
Translation & Technology Transfer
----------------------------------------
Howard Marriage: Francis Crick Institute
Success for All
----------------------------------------
Rebecca Simmons: Head of VC Office, Cambridge and Rob Barkworth: Pearn Kandola

Lab Leadership
----------------------------------------
Alan Bate: Bray Leino

De-brief & prizes
----------------------------------------
Ted Smith & Jim Smith
Biographies

Professor Sir John Savill BA, MBChB, PhD, FRCP, FRCPE, FASN, FMedSci, FRSE, FRS, a clinician scientist from Edinburgh, took up the position as chief executive and deputy chair of the Medical Research Council (MRC) on 1 October 2010. He was a member of the MRC Council from 2002 to 2008 and chaired two MRC Research Boards during this period.

Between 2008 and 2010 John worked part-time as the chief scientist for the Scottish Government Health Directorates. He was knighted in the 2008 New Year’s Honours List for services to clinical science.

John started his research career with a degree in Physiological Sciences from Oxford University in 1978, followed by degrees in Medicine at the University of Sheffield in 1981. He received a PhD from the University of London in 1989.

After junior hospital appointments in Sheffield, Nottingham and London, he spent seven years in the Department of Medicine at Hammersmith Hospital with spells as an MRC clinical training fellow and Wellcome Trust senior clinical research fellow.

In 1993, he moved to the chair of Medicine, at the University of Nottingham, then in 1998 became professor of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, where he was the first director of the University of Edinburgh/MRC Centre for Inflammation Research, directing a group interested in the molecular cell biology of renal inflammation.

In 2002, John was appointed as the first vice-principal and head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, University of Edinburgh. He retains an ongoing, research active involvement with the University of Edinburgh part-time throughout his appointment as MRC chief executive.

Sir John Savill
Jim Smith is Deputy Chief Executive and Chief of Strategy at the Medical Research Council as well as Director of the MRC’s National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Francis Crick Institute.

Jim obtained his PhD from the Middlesex Hospital Medical School in 1979, where he studied the development of the chick limb under the supervision of Professor Lewis Wolpert. He did postdoctoral work with Chuck Stiles (Harvard Medical School) and with Jonathan Slack (Imperial Cancer Research Fund) before establishing an independent research group at the NIMR in 1984, rising to become Head of the Genes and Cellular Control ‘Supergroup.’ In 2000 Jim moved to Cambridge University to become Director of the Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Gurdon Institute before returning to NIMR in 2009 as Director. From 2011 to 2014, Jim was also Director of Research and a member of the Executive Team of the Francis Crick Institute. On becoming Deputy Chief Executive and Chief of Strategy at the MRC he relinquished these roles and became a member of the Board of Trustees of the Crick.

He studies the molecular basis of mesoderm formation, focusing particularly on mesoderm-inducing factors, on the genes that they activate, and on the functions of those downstream genes. He is particularly interested in the T-box transcription factors and the roles they play in development and in stem cell differentiation. His work will inform attempts to drive stem cells along particular developmental pathways. He has published over 200 peer-reviewed papers and has supervised 20 PhD students.

Jim was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1993 and was made a Founder Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences in 1998. He is also a member of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO), a member of the Academia Europaea, and an Honorary Fellow of Christ’s College Cambridge. He was awarded the Scientific Medal of the Zoological Society in 1989, the EMBO medal in 1994, the Feldberg Foundation Award in 2000, and the Waddington Medal of the British Society for Developmental Biology (BSDB) in 2013. Jim has served on numerous funding bodies and scientific advisory boards and for many years he was Editor-in-Chief of Development.
Ted is a senior Human Resources Director with extensive US/European and Board level experience in business strategy and development, culture change, team leadership, mergers and acquisitions.

In addition to 14 years as an HR Director and VP HR with Glaxo, GlaxoWellcome and finally GlaxoSmithKline, Ted has also worked as President of Leicester Polytechnic Students Union, Trainee Personnel Officer at Wycombe District Council, Personnel Officer with AC Nielsen Marketing Research, Personnel & Training Manager at Audits of Great Britain and as HR Director for Vernalis plc (formerly named British Biotech and RiboTargets).

Ted joined the Medical Research Council in 2009 as Group HR Director and sits on the MRC Management Board and attends Council.

Ted Smith
BSc (Hons),
FRSA, MCIPD

After completing my MSc in Medical Biology (Utrecht University, The Netherlands) and my (compulsory) Military Service (National Institute of Health, The Netherlands), I started my PhD in Gastrointestinal Inflammation (Leiden University, The Netherlands) at the age of 26. Here I worked, in a hospital environment, on a research project on intestinal mucosal oxidative enzymes in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), focusing on primary diseased tissue use. After 5 years, and with a few papers under the belt, I moved to London to join the Research Centre of Gastroenterology (QMUL) as a postdoctoral research fellow. I continued my focus on IBD, albeit from a more mechanistic standpoint, and drove various research projects around a central theme of intestinal epithelial modulation of innate immune responses. Five years and a couple of good quality publications later, the opportunity arose to join the pharmaceutical industry (GSK) which, after some hesitation, I took. I haven’t looked back. Building on my IBD expertise, I was initially involved in establishing a new IBD R&D group and I helped set up numerous in vitro and in vivo systems to support various drug discovery efforts, some of which I led.

Over the following years, my responsibilities grew, leading groups as well as matrix teams. I was programme leader for several innovative immuno-epigenetic drug discovery programmes, which involved internal as well as external (academic and public consortia) partnerships, delivering (now publically available) first-in-class inhibitor tools and publications in top scientific journals.

I currently head up the biology efforts of a newly established Discovery R&D unit, where we aim to develop a new small molecule treatment modality by harnessing cellular protein regulation mechanisms via the ubiquitin-proteasome pathway. This highly exploratory technology is of great interest because it has the potential to impact on so-called undruggable proteins and to reduce cellular levels of disease-causing proteins across a wide range of disease areas and pathologies, reaching well beyond my earlier career focus on gut inflammation. Much of the work in my unit is conducted through close research collaborations with academic leaders, biotechnology companies, contract organisations and other R&D units across GSK.

Laurens Kruidenier
With an interest in both chemistry and physics I studied for a BA in Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge. Continuing within the chemistry department at Cambridge I completed a PhD in NMR techniques development, before joining Glaxo (GSK) as a postdoctoral researcher. Here I was involved in establishing heteronuclear NMR methods to determine protein structures and study ligand binding and dynamics. My role was made permanent and evolved to leading the small protein NMR group, then being part of groups that allowed me to expand my skills into other techniques involved in hit identification and mode-of-action studies.

Having provided a broad spectrum of biophysics (NMR, SPR, ITC, fluorescence) and crystallographic support to program teams, I currently lead the UK biophysical and structural biology group at GSK’s major European research site in Stevenage. The group supports X-ray crystallography and biophysical studies from HTS hit triage and mode-of-action analysis to fragment screening across a wide range of therapeutic areas and drug modalities (e.g. small molecule, biopharmaceuticals, vaccines).

My recent personal research focus has been in the field of epigenetics, where in addition to crystallographic support on many of these targets I have co-led drug discovery programs focused on bromodomains. External to GSK my activities have included teaching on MSc courses, being an industrial supervisor to CASE PhD students, representing GSK on EU grants and serving on the BBSRC Biomolecular Science committee.

Kathy Niakan obtained a B.Sc. in Cell and Molecular Biology and a B.A. in English from the University of Washington, USA. She was inspired to pursue molecular biology and genetics following undergraduate research experience in the laboratory of Professor Wendy Raskind, with the support of a Mary Gates Research Scholarship. She obtained her PhD at University of California, Los Angeles, USA with Professor Edward McCabe where she researched stem cell and developmental biology and was supported by a National Institutes of Health Pre-doctoral Training Grant, Paul D. Boyer Fellowship and a Chancellor’s Dissertation Year Fellowship.

She was a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Professor Kevin Eggan at Harvard University where she gained experience working with human and mouse pluripotent stem cells and focused on understanding human embryogenesis and the regulation of pluripotency. She then moved to the University of Cambridge as a Centre for Trophoblast Research Next Generation Fellow at the Anne McLaren Laboratory for Regenerative Medicine where she continued to investigate the molecular basis of early cell fate decisions in humans and mice. Kathy will be moving to the NIMR as an independent group leader in May 2013 to further investigate the mechanisms of lineage specification in human embryos and stem cells.
Professor Anne Willis graduated in 1984 with a degree in Biochemistry from the University of Kent and obtained a PhD in Biochemistry in 1987 from University of London while working in the Imperial Cancer Research Fund laboratories (now CRUK) on DNA repair with Dr Tomas Lindahl. She then moved to Cambridge to work with Professor Richard Perham in the Department of Biochemistry where she also held a Junior Research Fellowship and then a College Lectureship at Churchill College Cambridge. She was appointed to her first independent position in 1992 as a Lecturer in the Biochemistry Department at the University of Leicester, progressing to a Reader in 2002 and a Professor in 2004. In 2004, she moved to Nottingham to take up the position of Director of Cancer Research Nottingham and Chair of Cancer Cell Biology. During this time she built up a large team of researchers working on various aspects of post-transcriptional control of gene expression. In 2009 Professor Willis was awarded a five-year BBSRC Professorial Fellowship to research into post-transcriptional control of gene expression following exposure of cells to agents that cause genotoxic stress. In particular, research initiated by the Willis laboratory has identified a new network that regulates translation following exposure of cells to UVB light. Interestingly, similar pathways are also activated following exposure to chemotoxic agents. In 2010 Professor Willis was appointed as Director of the MRC Toxicology Unit that is based in Leicester. The mission of the Unit is to deliver field-changing mechanistic insights into toxicology and disease.

Steve Brown is Director of the Medical Research Council's Mammalian Genetics Unit at Harwell, Oxfordshire, UK. He did his PhD at Cambridge University in genetics and before he joined the MRC, he was Professor of Genetics at Imperial College, London. His research interests cover mouse functional genomics, including the use of mouse mutagenesis and phenotyping approaches to study the genetic basis of disease and to develop pre-clinical disease models. A particular focus has been the use of mouse models to study the molecular basis of genetic deafness. He has initiated a substantial research effort in the genetics of otitis media or glue ear, a common cause of hearing loss in children, employing mouse models to elaborate the key genetic pathways involved and develop novel therapeutic strategies.
I started my scientific career at the C.I.B.-CSIC research centre in Madrid, Spain under the supervision of Dr de la Rosa. My PhD research focussed on the study of the degenerative process of the retina, specifically using mouse models of Retinosis pigmentaria. I started my current postdoc over 7 years ago at MRC-Harwell which is an international reference centre for mouse genetics. In there I have continued with the study of degenerative diseases of both the nervous (Huntington, Parkinson) and muscular (Periodic paralysis) systems using mouse models for all those diseases. I am recently being transferred to a permanent position at the MRC-Harwell, as an Investigator Scientist (PostDoc), taking on a new project on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

Sylvia Corronchano

Anke Sparmann is an associate editor at Nature Structural & Molecular Biology, with a background in signal transduction and chromatin & transcription. After starting her editorial career at The EMBO Journal, she joined Nature Structural & Molecular Biology after a brief interlude at Nature Communications. During her post-doctoral work, completed before her move to publishing, she focused on analyzing dynamic changes of Polycomb-complex composition during neural stem cell differentiation in the group of Maarten van Lohuizen at the Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI) in Amsterdam. Anke obtained her PhD for her study on the role of Ras-induced Interleukin-8 expression in tumor growth and angiogenesis in the laboratory of Dafna Bar-Sagi at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, USA.

Anke Sparmann
Dr Richard Henderson graduated in physics from Edinburgh University in 1966 then switched to molecular biology. He went as a Ph.D. student to the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB) where he joined the team led by David Blow that worked out the atomic structure of the enzyme chymotrypsin, one of the first few protein structures to be determined using X-ray crystallography. He then went as a Helen Hay Whitney postdoctoral fellow to Yale University and developed an interest in the structure of membrane proteins, working for three years on voltage dependent ion channels. Returning to LMB in 1973, he began to collaborate with Nigel Unwin and together they developed electron microscopy into a tool for the direct determination of the structure of proteins, and applied it to the light-driven proton pump bacteriorhodopsin from Halobacteria, which was the first membrane protein to have its 3D structure analysed. The map showed that the structure consisted of a bundle of seven transmembrane α-helices, at the centre of which the chromophore retinal was embedded. During the next 15 years, he worked to solve a number of the technical and conceptual problems that limited the attainable resolution of electron crystallography and by 1990, he and his colleagues had succeeded in obtaining the first atomic structure of the membrane protein, bacteriorhodopsin, by using electron microscopy and diffraction. Subsequent analysis of the structure of some of its photochemical intermediates has helped to understand how bacteriorhodopsin and other closely related family members function. Since 1995, he has worked on the development of single particle electron cryomicroscopy, which is now delivering on its early promise of determining atomic structures of large protein assemblies without crystallisation. With Chris Tate, he also helped to develop the idea of conformational thermostabilisation of membrane proteins, many of which are intrinsically unstable once removed from their normal lipid bilayer environment. This approach uses systematic mutagenesis to make particular conformations of intractable membrane proteins much more stable so that they can be crystallised and their structure determined. The most notable successes of this approach have been the atomic structure determinations of three G-protein coupled receptors (GPCRs) at LMB, alongside the setting up of a structure-based drug design company Heptares Therapeutics, working on many other GPCRs.

He was Joint-Head of the Division of Structural Studies at LMB from 1986 until 2000, and Director from 1996 until 2006, succeeding Sir Aaron Klug. Since 2006, he has returned to full-time scientific research in LMB. His current interest is the improvement of single particle electron cryomicroscopy including the development of better electron detectors. He is a member of EMBO, a fellow of the Royal Society, a fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and a Foreign Associate of the US National Academy of Sciences. He received the William Bate Hardy Prize of Cambridge Philosophical Society, Ernst-Ruska prize for electron microscopy (with Unwin), Rosenstiel Award (with Unwin), Louis Jeantet Award, and Gregori Aminoff prize for Crystallography from Royal Swedish Academy (with Unwin). Finally, in Cambridge, he is a member of Darwin College (emeritus) and Corpus Christi College (honorary).
Howard has worked with the Crick on building strategy and practical aspects of translation since Feb 2013. With University of Edinburgh since 2006 on delivering multiple translational projects many with MRC DPFS and CiC funding where he is particularly interested in delivering translation to outcome from early research ideas and concepts and is presently working on a range of device, diagnostics and medical informatics projects. Howard has technical, scientific, commercial, IP and company formation experience of the many aspects of drug discovery, diagnostics, devices and research enabling tools. Beechams/Wellcome 1973–78, Genzyme 1985–98, Cyclacel 1998–2004. Since 2004 Howard has maintained a Portfolio of University, government, private company, and angel investment activities. Governance jobs including Dundee University Court 2005–13, Roslin Institute/Foundation 2001–14. His company activity highlights over the last ten years include GT Biologics (probiotics for gut diseases), NeurocentRx Pharma (treatments for chronic pain), Aquila BioMedical (drug discovery services), Symbiosis Pharmaceutical Services (sterile fill finish of injectable drugs), Dundee Cell Products (research reagents & quantitative proteomics).
Overview
Anita commenced her career in business development and marketing, initially in the world of medical devices and subsequently in consultancy before moving into consultancy herself as an Associate and freelance consultant in 1999. She has been an associate with Penna for the last thirteen years working on numerous change and engagement projects including leading Tesco’s award winning Women in leadership programme.

MBA Qualified and MBTI and StrenghtScope Accredited Anita has spent the last ten years specialising in HR projects including design, development and delivery of management development training programmes and assessment and development centres.

HR and Consultancy experience
- Management development training design and delivery. Clients have included: Tesco, RBS, RCM, ABN Amro, Ing, the Royal Mail, Prosidian, NERC, The Society of Petroleum Engineers and British Airways.

- Behavioural and technical assessor for £2 million culture change project for BAA. Involved assessing internal and external applicants for a wide range of technical roles resulting from a major change project. Required to work with, and challenge where appropriate, existing staff to help reinforce the required behaviours for the new organisation.

- Design and facilitation of ‘Future Managers’ workshops as part of a fast track talent development programme at ADAS environmental consultancy.

- Worked on the cultural aspects of introducing modernised learning within the Department of Work and Pensions.

- Involved in three year project with Standard Life monitoring, via Exit Interviews, the reasons behind individual’s decisions to leave the organisation. Undertook the interviews, prepared reports for the senior management team including recommendations. Designed and wrote follow up questionnaire to encourage high performers to return to the organisation.

Other Qualifications and experience:
Anita has played a key role within Penna in the design of career management services including the new suite of BeMore programmes and the online portal.
Julia is responsible for managing MRC's portfolio of Clinical Fellowships. After a PhD in chemistry she held a postdoctoral research position at Clemson University in the USA, then joined the Institute of Physics Publishing in Bristol, UK, where she managed a number of physics journals. She joined MRC in 2010 and has worked across a number of Boards and Panels, including the Infections & Immunity Board, Neuroscience & Mental Health Board, and Population and Systems Medicine Board. She joined the Capacity, Skills and Infrastructure team as a Programme Manager in February 2013, working with the Clinical Training and Career Development Panel.

I did my undergraduate studies in molecular biology at the Natural Sciences Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. My thesis Testing of gene therapy with retroviral vector expressing bacterial cytosine deaminase gene has been done at the Institute of Experimental Oncology of Slovak Academy of Science and won the Dean Prize for the best undergraduate thesis.

I obtained PhD degree from Medical University of Vienna in Austria. My research focused on an RNA recognition motif containing cyclophilin, which plays a role at the interplay of transcription and pre-mRNA processing.

Since 2006, I was a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Nick Proudfoot’s lab at Sir William Dunn School of Pathology. My main research interest was in transcription termination. In particular, how is regulated transcription termination of convergent genes. I was also interested in RNAi and its role in gene expression regulation. Part of my work I did in Mitsuhiro Yanagida’s lab at Kyoto University and in Danesh Moazed’s lab at Harvard Medical School, Harvard University.

My work in Nick Proudfoot’s lab resulted in several publications, including Cell, Genes and Development and Nature Structural and Molecular Biology and also L’Oreal/UNESCO woman in science UK and Ireland 2011 award.

In 2012 I was awarded MRC Career Development Award and since 2013 I am a group leader. My lab has currently 7 members and our major research interest continues to focus on gene expression regulation by transcriptional gene silencing in normal and breast cancer cells.
Simon Johnston

Simon studied Biochemistry at the University of Birmingham before completing a PhD in Cell Biology with Prof. Laura Machesky (Beatson Institute) studying the actin cytoskeleton and the role of the Arp2/3 complex in filopodia formation and function. During post-doctoral studies with Prof. Robin May he developed an interest in host-pathogen interactions and macrophage biology. Simon studied two of the major presentations of macrophage parasitism by the human fungal pathogen Cryptococcus, intracellular proliferation and non-lytic expulsion. While in Prof. May’s laboratory he independently developed a zebrafish model of cryptococcosis to study these phenomena in vivo. In 2012 Simon was awarded a MRC Career Development Award Fellowship to study host Cryptococcus interactions in vivo and moved to the University of Sheffield to take up this fellowship and establish his research group. Simon’s lab studies the cell biology of macrophages and how their behavior influences health and disease, especially during infections such as cryptococcal meningitis, pneumococcal pneumonia, Staphylococcal aureus and candidemia. Recently, Simon was awarded the inaugural Krebs Institute fellowship for the use of quantitative image analysis in infection and immunity. He is a member of the Wellcome Trust Strategic Award in Medical Mycology and Fungal Immunology and sits on their management board. Simon has a strong interest in gender equality and is a member of the Silver award winning Sheffield Medical School Athena SWAN team, the Faculty of Medicine representative on the University Gender Equality Committee and has sat on the Equality Challenge Unit’s Athena SWAN assessment panels.

Nick Gilbert

Throughout my PhD I was trained in classical biochemistry and biophysical techniques to investigate the packaging of DNA in mammalian cells, which gave me a deep understanding of the fundamental structural organisation of chromatin fibres. Afterwards during my postdoctoral training with Professor Wendy Bickmore at the MRC Human Genetics Unit I applied these approaches to study higher order chromatin structure and nuclear organisation and developed a sucrose gradient based sedimentation technique, in conjunction with genomic microarrays, to map chromatin fibre structure genome wide. In 2006 I started my own lab at the Edinburgh Cancer Research Centre with a fellowship from the Wellcome Trust where I then developed a technique to map the chromatin fibre structure of the active and inactive X chromosomes using SNP arrays and related this to large scale levels of chromatin organisation. This work led me to develop a new molecule for mapping DNA structure: to achieve this I worked in the chemistry department for six months and learnt the basics of organic synthesis. Recently I moved my lab to the MRC Human Genetics Unit where I have an MRC Senior fellowship. My lab is now focused on investigating DNA topology across the human genome and how it can affect gene transcription, chromosomal instability and fragile site formation.
Simon is Executive Director, Innovative Medicines Oncology at AstraZeneca, responsible for development and delivery of AstraZeneca’s portfolio of Stratified Medicine Studies, partnered Stratified Medicine initiatives (National, European, US, Asia) and basket studies, and Senior Project Director in Oncology Early Clinical Development. He has >20 years experience in drug and therapeutics development across industry (AstraZeneca, Roche/Genentech) and academic (Faculty Senior Lecturer/Lecturer Molecular Medicine, University College London; King’s College) careers focused in clinical and translational science, and personalised healthcare in oncology, inflammation and cardio-/vascular fields. He has broad clinical development experience, varied commercial experience (industry, biotech, commercialised own IP), is Visiting Professor (Division Cancer Studies, King’s College London), Fellow Royal College Pathologists, and serves on National review panels (MRC MCMB, CRUK Stratified Medicines, KCL/UCL CCIC).

My career has been focussed on trying to understand how a cell switch genes ‘on’ and ‘off’ at the transcriptional level. Mammalian cells have ~20,000 genes and roughly a third of these will be active in any given cell type. As a PhD student at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (now part of CRUK) I studied how the oestrogen receptor activates genes in response to hormone, as part of Malcolm Parker’s lab. This was a hugely influential part of my career. It was a very good lab scientifically and socially and the ICRF at that time was buzzing with great scientists. Interestingly, most of the lab-heads at the institute had spent a post-doctoral period in the USA (including my supervisor) and we were strongly encouraged to do the same. And so along with most of my friends we applied for jobs in the States. I had four different job offers, but chose to work for Robert Eisenman at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. I really enjoyed the project (working on the co-repressor protein Sin3A) and I especially enjoyed the Pacific Northwest. I learned a great deal and published a few papers, but after five years overseas – which including getting married and having two daughters – I decided it was time to come back to the UK. At that time Alan Bradley had recently become director of the Sanger Institute, he had a reputation for being one of best mouse geneticists around and I wanted to build on the knock-out mouse work that I’d done in Seattle. A year or so after joining the Bradley lab I wrote for an MRC career development award (CDA), which enables experienced postdocs to get their first academic position. I was ultimately successful and was able to start my own group (myself, a technician and a PhD student) at the University of Leicester, working on the histone deacetylase (HDAC) family, principally, the highly related class-1 HDACs, HDAC1 and 2. The CDA was hugely important for many reasons, it paid for the science of course, but as a fellow it enabled me to spend all my time in the lab pushing the science, which is a luxury that few new lecturers are afforded. The five-year funding period also gives a young investigator time to establish themselves in their field. I was able to setup the lab, generate new transgenic cell lines and mice for HDAC1/2 and publish our work in some slightly better than average journals. Momentum is a key to any career, and I was fortunate to be able to build on the work from my CDA and turn this into a senior non-clinical fellowship in 2012.
I run the computational biology group at the MRC Mitochondrial Biology Unit having joined the Unit in 2003. Principal research questions include identifying mitochondrial disease genes from next generation sequencing of patients, and modelling the mechanisms of mitochondrial dysfunction in disease.

Major research techniques include the structural and sequence studies of DNA and proteins, drug screening, molecular dynamics simulations, and computational modelling.

Prior to being at the MRC MBU at Oxford University I studied chemistry as an undergraduate and computational chemistry for my doctorate, during which I did molecular dynamics simulations of lipid bilayers and biological membranes. My first job was at GlaxoWellcome where I developed software for the docking of small molecules to proteins. Later, I joined the European Molecular Biology Laboratory’s European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI) where I developed and applied visualization, data analysis and data integration techniques for large-scale genomics and post-genomics data. I also contributed to the development of international standards for these data, including the MIAME standard for microarray data. I later became the Leader of the Industry Programme, which liaised with the pharmaceutical industry about their requirements for public genomic data, and provided applied research and training. After a 12-month sabbatical at the University of Cambridge Department of Genetics, I returned to the EBI to lead the eScience and Grid computing initiative.

Ele’s work aims to help elucidate the genetic determinants of complex human traits by using next-generation association studies to identify novel disease loci.

Ele obtained a BSc in Biochemistry from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) in 1999 and a PhD in Immunogenetics of Juvenile Arthritis from the arc Epidermoligy Unit, University of Manchester, in 2003. She then undertook a brief statistical genetics post doc, focusing on rheumatic disorders, at the Centre for Integrated Genomic and Medical Research, University of Manchester, before moving to the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, University of Oxford, to work on the genetics of type 2 diabetes.

In 2006, Ele was awarded a Wellcome Trust Research Career Development Fellowship to examine design, analysis and interpretation issues in large-scale association studies. She joined the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute Faculty in November 2008 and leads the Analytical Genomics of Complex Traits group. Ele’s scientific interests focus on the genetics of complex traits, primarily cardiometabolic and musculoskeletal phenotypes, and on addressing relevant statistical genetics issues.
Catherine has worked in the field of leadership development for over 20 years and is one of the UK’s most experienced executive coaches. Since 1997 she has specialised in work with senior individuals at Board and Director level in the business and not-for-profit sectors. She is known for using an in-depth psychological approach in a highly practical way to help leaders achieve sustainable behavioural change.

Alongside her coaching practice, Catherine has taught at London Business School, INSEAD in Paris and the Tavistock Clinic. Her qualifications include a diploma in counselling and a doctorate from Oxford University. In 2011 Catherine’s book Executive Coaching, was published by Open University Press. She has written extensively for a range of professional journals on topics including the role of the leader in turbulent times and bullying at work. She speaks regularly on these and related areas in the UK and abroad.

Catherine has a particular interest in the development of female leaders. Since 2008 she and her colleagues have run innovative workshops for senior and high-potential women designed to build confidence, communication skills and the ability to handle conflict. These programmes have helped many participants transform their professional impact and accelerate their careers.

Rebecca Simmons read Human Sciences at Hertford College, Oxford, and Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. She subsequently carried out research into the prevention of diabetes and obtained her PhD from the MRC Epidemiology Unit, at Wolfson College, Cambridge. Rebecca spent a further seven years at the Epidemiology Unit, working her way up from Career Development Fellow, to Investigator Scientist, and then Deputy Group Leader. Her main research interest was the prevention of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In particular, she focused on population screening for chronic disease and whether it is beneficial to find and treat people early. During her research career, Rebecca took part in WHO expert consultations on the metabolic syndrome and screening for diabetes, and completed sabbaticals in Geneva, Hong Kong and Copenhagen. She has over eighty research articles in peer reviewed journals. Her work on a diabetes screening trial (ADDITION-Cambridge), was published in the Lancet, and won the British Medical Journal Research Paper of the Year Award (2013). Rebecca also enjoyed teaching and ran supervisions in epidemiology and biostatistics for Cambridge medical and veterinary students and lectured on the MPhil Epidemiology course.

More recently, Rebecca has moved from research into a senior administrative position at the University of Cambridge, where she heads up the Vice-Chancellor’s Office. “After ten years in the research sector, I took an honest appraisal of my skills. I realised that the bits of academic research that I was naturally good at, and found most rewarding, were communication, team building and running complex projects. I never seemed to come up with my own original research questions. My group leader provided these and I executed the work and got the paper published. The next step in my academic career would have been group leader but I felt that I did not have the scientific vision to lead my own group. At the same time, I felt that some of my inter-personal skills were not being fully utilised or stretched in academia. As such, I looked for a senior role in the public sector (health or education) that would play to my natural strengths and skills. I see my move away from academia as a positive one and while I feel sad to leave research and my colleagues, I am looking forward to a new challenge in a new sector.”
Rob joined Pearn Kandola in 2004. He has a degree in Psychology from the University of Plymouth and an MSc in Occupational Psychology from the University of Sheffield. A Graduate member of the British Psychological Society, Rob holds a Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing (Levels A and B) and is currently working towards achieving chartered status as a Business Psychologist.

At Pearn Kandola, Rob has worked as a diversity specialist with a range of national and multinational organisations. He has worked on projects to embed diversity into organisations and likes to focus on the practical benefits to businesses. Rob has led many diversity interventions in organisations including diversity skills and awareness training, review of diversity strategies and the implementation of equality duties in the public sector.

Dr David Tapolczay has 28 years experience of R&D management; his past roles include joint worldwide head of chemistry for Zeneca agrochemicals and senior manager of chemical development for Glaxo. He was responsible for the rapid growth of Cambridge Discovery Chemistry and was a key figure in two successful sales of the company initially to Oxford Molecular and then Millennium Pharmaceuticals. Post this last acquisition David was VP of Pharmaceutical Sciences with responsibility for over 230 scientists. On leaving Millennium David was a founder of Pharmorphix Ltd which was acquired by Sigma Aldrich Fine Chemicals in August 2006. He has also been involved with the start up of 5 companies all of which are still trading and one of which has been AIM listed. He was most recently VP of Technology Development for GSK pharmaceuticals and is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Medical Research Council Technology Group (MRCT).

David has an international reputation in the pharmaceutical industry as well as an outstanding academic track record with a considerable number of patents and publications. He was a visiting Professor at Sussex University and has previously held the position of visiting lecturer at Nottingham, Reading and Durham Universities and a member of both the Technical Opportunities Panel and the User Panel of the EPSRC. In addition he is a non executive director for several biotech companies.
David Crosby began life as a baby, before going on to study Pharmacology at the University of Bristol. He completed a PhD in Pharmacology, involving platelet cell signalling, also at Bristol, before lecturing in Clinical Pharmacology. He left academia to work in industry, for BOC medical gases Innovation and Development department, as the Head of Clinical Information, identifying and evaluating new clinical development opportunities. He then moved on to the MRC, where he now leads a life of great contentment and high adventure, formerly looking after cardiovascular and respiratory research, and now as the programme manager responsible for MRC’s portfolio and strategy in methodology research and experimental medicine, and the strategic skills fellowships. He has worked with numerous funding Boards and Panels, and now feels he has a fair idea of what they look for (mostly).

Alan Bate

Personal Outline
Alan is totally committed to people development and the achievement of personal potential. With a proven record of success in Public Sector management, and 28 years of experience in the design and delivery of Management Development Programmes in both Public and Private Sector organisations. His approach to training design, delivery and facilitation is centred on real world and practical solutions that make a real difference to individual and organisational performance. Alan’s focus is upon experiential training with immediate, practical and pragmatic benefits.

Relevant Career Credentials
Principal Training Consultant – Bray Leino BroadSkill since 1997
Principal Training Consultant involved in the design, development and delivery of bespoke training and development solutions for Public and Private Sector clients. Contributed to the development of tenders and acted as lead consultant for new contracts. Managed the roll-out of Competency Based Performance Management Programme, including event design and briefing of training consultant team. Monitoring of consultant performance. Currently working closely with NERC having designed and delivered the Leadership and Action Learning elements of the Growing Future Leaders programme.

Qualifications / Licences / Memberships
• Certificate in Training and Development
• Diploma in Training Management
• Licenced in Team Management Systems
• Member of Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
Delegate contact list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email address</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalbir Dhiraj</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dd158@leicester.ac.uk">dd158@leicester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Toxicology, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Lee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ben.lee@csc.mrc.ac.uk">ben.lee@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudi Prihandoko</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rp32@leicester.ac.uk">rp32@leicester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Toxicology, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marek Tyl</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marek.tyl@csc.mrc.ac.uk">marek.tyl@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susann Lehmann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:si4106@leicester.ac.uk">si4106@leicester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Toxicology, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janina Baumbach</td>
<td><a href="mailto:baumbach@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">baumbach@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Letts</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jal205@mrc-mbu.cam.ac.uk">jal205@mrc-mbu.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>MBU, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Asante</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dasante@har.mrc.ac.uk">dasante@har.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Harwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Ferreira</td>
<td><a href="mailto:claudiaf@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">claudiaf@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Fox</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jf211@leicester.ac.uk">jf211@leicester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Toxicology, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginie F. Rhein</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vfr22@mrc-mbu.cam.ac.uk">vfr22@mrc-mbu.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>MBU, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luca Tordella</td>
<td><a href="mailto:luca.tordella@csc.mrc.ac.uk">luca.tordella@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxane Simeone</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rsimeon@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">rsimeon@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Wheeler</td>
<td><a href="mailto:grah@mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk">grah@mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>MBU, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Guerrero</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ana.guerrero@csc.mrc.ac.uk">ana.guerrero@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marieke Aarts</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.aarts@csc.mrc.ac.uk">m.aarts@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Halliday</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mh282@leicester.ac.uk">mh282@leicester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Toxicology, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiuju Li</td>
<td><a href="mailto:qiuju.li@manchester.ac.uk">qiuju.li@manchester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>MRC Biostatistic Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Tozer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:atozer@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">atozer@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinaida Perova</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zperova@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">zperova@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhen Zhong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zzhong@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">zzhong@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilie Doucet</td>
<td><a href="mailto:emilie.doucet@csc.mrc.ac.uk">emilie.doucet@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie Ann Bradley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sb656@leicester.ac.uk">sb656@leicester.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Toxicology, Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esmeralda Parra-Peralbo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:esmeralda.parra-peralbo@csc.mrc.ac.uk">esmeralda.parra-peralbo@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Ordonez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pordone@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">pordone@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Otto JP Kyriileis</td>
<td><a href="mailto:okyriel@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">okyriel@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Ismail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mismail@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">mismail@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ede A. Rancz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:erancz@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">erancz@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleksej Zeleznjak</td>
<td><a href="mailto:azelezn@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">azelezn@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Groom</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hgroom@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">hgroom@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Lin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alin@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">alin@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali Gill</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kgill@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">kgill@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Herrero</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eeherrer@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">eeherrer@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stefanie Gehrig</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sgehrig@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">sgehrig@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Cheung</td>
<td><a href="mailto:acheung@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">acheung@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madushi Wanaguru</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mwanag@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">mwanag@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tossell, Kyoko</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kyoko.tossell@csc.mrc.ac.uk">kyoko.tossell@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Solscheid</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csolsch@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">csolsch@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Unit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vickie Braithwaite</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Vickie.Braithwaite@mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk">Vickie.Braithwaite@mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>HNR Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Vancraenenbroeck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rvancra@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">rvancra@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexey Amunts</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amunts@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">amunts@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalia Sanches de Groot</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nsdgroot@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">nsdgroot@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Torrent</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mtorrent@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">mtorrent@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Toste Rego</td>
<td><a href="mailto:regoa@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">regoa@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion Ouedraogo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mouedrao@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">mouedrao@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sreenivas Chavali</td>
<td><a href="mailto:schavali@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">schavali@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Vidoni</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sv@mrc-mbu.cam.ac.uk">sv@mrc-mbu.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>MBU, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Young</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jyoung@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">jyoung@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Berger</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Joel.Berger@ihr.mrc.ac.uk">Joel.Berger@ihr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>IHR, Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvia Corrochano</td>
<td><a href="mailto:S.Corrochano@har.mrc.ac.uk">S.Corrochano@har.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Harwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leifu Chang</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lchang@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">lchang@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Roberts</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Lee.Roberts@mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk">Lee.Roberts@mrc-hnr.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>HMR, Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debnath Ghosal</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dghosal@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk">dghosal@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>LMB, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaolin Xiao</td>
<td><a href="mailto:xiaolin.xiao@csc.mrc.ac.uk">xiaolin.xiao@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soza Ried, Jorge E</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jorge.ried@csc.mrc.ac.uk">jorge.ried@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marianne Yon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.yon@har.mrc.ac.uk">m.yon@har.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Harwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneha Anand</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.anand@har.mrc.ac.uk">s.anand@har.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Harwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Blank</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Helen.Blank@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk">Helen.Blank@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CBU, Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anno Steinacher</td>
<td><a href="mailto:as2441@cam.ac.uk">as2441@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>MRC Biostatistic Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlad Seitani</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vlad.seitan@csc.mrc.ac.uk">vlad.seitan@csc.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>CSC, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elahe Radmaneshfar</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Elahe.Radmaneshfar@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">Elahe.Radmaneshfar@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Garcez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgarcez@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">pgarcez@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Fets</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lfets@nimr.mrc.ac.uk">lfets@nimr.mrc.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>NIMR, London</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes