

Member Newsletter

Issue 8— August 2015

New Building (Project Capella)



The new building remains on track to be operational in May 2018., with main construction works due to begin in November this year, subject to approval.

The project is approaching the end of RIBA Stage 3 (Developed Design). The design development has extended to all aspects of the building, ranging from the external appearance, selection of materials, landscaping and through to the internal arrangement of spaces and their inter-relationships. The detailed internal layout has progressed well during Stage 3, creating spaces which allow for communal breakout, meetings and collaboration, to complement detailed designs for laboratory and write up spaces. During August and September the design team will work with the end users to

finalize furniture, equipment, services layouts and room finishes.

The Capella Design Team would like to extend their thanks to all the SCI members who have contributed to the development of the new building.

1st Translational Workshop

The first SCI Translational Workshop took place on the 8th of June with over 30 attendees. The Workshop brought together PIs from across Cambridge, to share knowledge and identify common interests which may show promise for future translational collaborations. Look out for more workshops in the new academic year.

Translational Admin Assistant

Gillian Currie is our new Administrative Assistant for Translational Research. She will be an important link between the Addenbrooke's and Gleeson sites, splitting her time between the two.



Returning Carers scheme

The University's Returning Carers Scheme offers funds to assist returning carers in building up their research profiles and other academic activity after a period away from work. **Isabelle Nett**, a postdoc in the Smith lab, was recently awarded some of these funds to support her research following two periods of maternity leave during her postdoctoral studies.

Dr Nett says *"the activity funded by this work allows me to explore new techniques, broadening my research impact and supporting future funding applications. It will also allow me to work within normal working hours, giving me more time to look after my children."*



Visit the SCI website and Intranet for further information on SCI activities and to access members-only information.

SAVE THE DATE: SCI Retreat, 25-26 Feb 2016

Thora Káradóttir



Ragnhildur Thóra Káradóttir has received both the Allen Distinguished Investigator Award (ADI) and the Lister Institute Research Prize Fellowship, which were each awarded to only five researchers this year.

Her \$1.3m ADI award is designed to support novel, creative and ambitious early-stage research with the potential to reinvent entire fields, and will fund a cutting-edge interdisciplinary project to identify the role of white matter in Alzheimer's disease progression for the first time.

Dr Karadottir says that *"the ADI award provides the funds for an interdisciplinary project that otherwise would never have been possible. It brings together six labs all with unique expertise, and thus expands our science into new directions."*

The Lister Fellowship is a one-off award of £200,000. to support and nurture future leaders of biomedical research. *"I am delighted to be awarded this prize,"* adds Káradóttir. *"It will allow me to safeguard and advance a recent surgical method in my lab, generating demyelinating lesions, and adding significant momentum to a new research direction."*

Tony Green



Tony Green has been granted a Wellcome Trust Senior Investigators Award for work on CALR mutations and human myeloproliferative neoplasms.

Myeloproliferative neoplasms are pre-leukaemic diseases in which abnormal bone marrow stem cells produce too many mature blood cells. These disorders are associated with increased thrombosis and the development of overt leukaemia.

"We have recently shown that many myeloproliferative neoplasm patients develop a mutation in the CALR gene. However CALR has not previously been linked to any malignancy and the molecular consequences of these mutations are completely unclear. This award will allow us to study how such mutations perturb normal blood cell formation and give rise to a myeloproliferative neoplasm."

Roger Barker



Roger Barker was one of five Cambridge researchers elected to the Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences this year. The new Fellows were formally admitted to the

Academy at a ceremony on Wednesday, 1st July .

Professor Ludovic Vallier

Please join us in congratulating **Ludovic Vallier** on his promotion to Professor. *The Vallier lab is based in the LRM and works on mechanisms controlling differentiation of pluripotent stem cells into definitive endoderm.*



Henry Dale fellowships



Elisa Laurenti

Two of SCI's newest Group Leaders have been awarded Wellcome Trust Sir Henry Dale Fellowships to support their research. **Elisa Laurenti** is about to celebrate her first anniversary at SCI and **Joo-Hyeon Lee** will be joining us from Harvard in the new year.



Joo-Hyeon Lee

Public Engagement Snapshot

Over the past months, we have been sharing our research with the public in a variety of engaging ways ...

A Pint of Stem Cell Science

Stanley Strawbridge and a team of SCI volunteers ran a great 'Pint of Science' festival in pubs all around the city. **Jenny Nichols**, **Michaela Frye** & **Robin Franklin** discussed "What stem cells can do for you" at the Pantons Arms.



Tour of the Institute



16 members of the public attended our 'See Inside the Stem Cell Institute' tour. Austin Smith introduced guests to the Institute and they enjoyed a guided tour of our facilities,

"The staff were excellent at explaining their work and their enthusiasm was very obvious"

Thanks to: **Agata Kurowski**, **Andy Riddell**, **Chibez Agley**, **George Wylde**, **Helen Skelton**, **Jenny Nichols**, **Mariya Rostovskaya**, **Nicholas Bredenkamp**, **Peter Humphreys**, **Sarah Gharbi** & **Tuzer Kalkan**.

Public-friendly Content

Thank you to **Sam Myers**, **Thora Karatoddir** and **Jenny Nichols** who helped to create public-friendly stem cell banners for The PluriMes Project.

Schools Outreach

Christine Watson led several mini-experiments for excited young pupils at Oxhey Wood Primary School in Watford. They even had the chance to experiment with dry ice!



Jeanne Estabel spoke at Soham Village College about her scientific and administrative career path.

SCI researchers are frequently approached by local schools and asked to take part in careers days or science fairs. Let us know if you are participating and visit Philippa in the Admin office or email sciepo@stemcells.cam.ac.uk for ideas and materials.

Work Experience

A-level student, **Pavel Rahman**, enjoyed a week of work experience in the **Frye** lab. He thanked the team for their support and added:

"During my time here, I have been able to see that research is something I could be passionate about and enjoy on a day to day basis – it has made me really consider academia beyond university."

Nuffield Research Placements

On the 20th of July, we welcomed three A-Level students, selected by the Nuffield Foundation, to undertake 4-week supervised research projects.



Aisha Sayeed, **Toby Vernon-Wood** and **Oliver Carpenter** have joined the **Nichols**, **Smith** and **Hendrich** labs. Thank you to everybody who has volunteered to support their placements.

Public Talks & Interviews

Robin Franklin gave the introductory talk at a musical fundraising event for Multiple Sclerosis Society, Cambridge.

As Guest Speaker at the Cancer Research UK 'Relay for Life' event in Bury St Edmunds, **David Kent** spoke to a group of survivors about how cancers evolve.

Austin Smith gave an interview to 'Development' about his career to date and current research interests.

ISSCR

Alessandro Bertero led the SCI's interactive activities at the ISSCR meeting in Stockholm in collaboration with EuroStemCell.



The 'Race to Myelinate' game was used to help members of the public learn about stem cells and the ageing brain.



This month's engagement star is **Jenny Nichols** for her enthusiastic support and involvement in 4 public engagement activities.

Public Engagement News & Events

Public Engagement Champion



Dr David Kent has been appointed as the Institute's first Public Engagement Champion and Chair of the Public Engagement Steering Committee. The Committee, which includes Postdoc and PhD representatives, will meet once a term to ensure that public engagement training and events meet the needs of all SCI members. David brings more than 10 years of science outreach experience, including his work with the Let's Talk Science Partnership in Canada and as a regular contributor to science blogs 'Signals' and 'The Black Hole'. He will be encouraging all SCI group leaders to partake in public engagement activities and to support their students and postdoctoral fellows to do the same.

Coming up

Public Speaking & Presenting Your Research Masterclass for Women in STEMM

Tuesday 22nd September, 9:00 - 17:00, The Pitt Building

The SCI was recently awarded an Athena SWAN Bronze Award in recognition of the support we provide for female researchers. In celebration, we have partnered with the University of Cambridge Public Engagement Office to offer a practical public speaking masterclass for female researchers.

Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, presenter of the iconic BBC astronomy series "The Sky at Night", will be training delegates alongside award-winning science TV producers, Screenhouse, and top international voice coach Victoria Pritchard. Delegates will have the chance to develop their communication skills through 4 practical exercises, 3 of them on camera.

Thanks to generous grant funding, we are able to offer 7 course places to SCI researchers, free of charge (usual delegate price £245).

TO APPLY for a place on the course, please visit: www.tiny.cc/STEMM



Science Writing Workshops

With David Kent

Friday 12th August, 5pm

David will be running a series of writing workshops over the summer. The first of the series will focus on how to write for non-scientific audiences. The group will meet in the canteen meeting room at the Gleeson building - refreshments will be provided.

If you plan to attend, please email us at sciepo@stemcells.cam.ac.uk

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Science Uncovered at the Natural History Museum

Friday 25th September, 3pm - 10.30pm

The SCI will be bringing several hands-on activities to this unique and hugely popular event in London. Members of the public have the opportunity to meet expert researchers at interactive stands around the museum.

If you would like to volunteer for this event, please contact Philippa: sciepo@stemcells.cam.ac.uk