

# BSMM News

November 2008



## Introduction

Welcome to the autumn 2008 issue of the BSMM newsletter. There are several exciting announcements in this issue: special rates for students and trainees at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the first graduation of the BSMM & UCL Diploma and MSc, and travel grant application deadlines. The Society did receive some sad news of the death of Dr John Edwards, and there are two interesting and appreciative articles celebrating John and his contribution to mycology.

Sue Howell

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## BSMM Annual Meeting London 2009

45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the British Society for Medical Mycology  
Imperial College London  
March 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> 2009

### *Translational Research in Medical Mycology*

It will be a pleasure to welcome BSMM members to the 2009 BSMM Annual Meeting at the South Kensington Campus of Imperial College London. The focus of the meeting is 'Translational Research in Medical Mycology'. The programme, composed of presentations from invited speakers and junior researchers, poster forums, a formal 'Question Time' debate and ample informal discussion, seeks to explore recent advances in applied mycological research as well as to direct future

research efforts towards addressing key clinical needs, while connecting researchers with common goals.

The Foundation Lecture will be delivered by Dr Christopher Hitchcock, of Pfizer Central Research, Sandwich, Kent. Dr Hitchcock joined Pfizer in 1989, working in the Discovery Biology Department at the Sandwich laboratories. He was a member of the team responsible for discovering the anti-fungal medicine Vfend(TM), a breakthrough treatment for life-threatening fungal infections in patients with impaired immune systems, including patients with HIV. Before joining Pfizer he was a post-doctoral research fellow at Leeds University in the UK. In 2003 Dr Hitchcock, was named by Scientific American magazine as one of the 'Scientific American 50' - the noted magazine's annual list recognising outstanding acts of leadership in technology, for his work in the discovery and exploratory development of a compound called UK-427,857, a CCR5 antagonist for treating HIV/AIDS.

Other invited speakers will cover a spectrum of interests shared by BSMM members including antifungal vaccine development, new approaches for diagnosis of fungal infection, modelling of allergic and mucosal immunological responses to fungal pathogens and peptides as antifungal agents.

**The BSMM has pledged significant financial support to encourage the attendance of junior researchers and clinical trainees at the 2009 meeting. Registration fees for students/trainees presenting posters have been waived, moreover, registration and accommodation fees have been waived for students/trainees making oral presentations. Additionally BSMM travel grants are available to support other BSMM members in attending the meeting.**

Imperial College South Kensington Campus offers State of the Art conferencing facilities, and is situated within walking distance of several sites of national and historical significance including Kensington Palace, Hyde Park, The Natural History Museum, The Science Museum and The Victoria and Albert Museum. Accommodation is provided at discounted rates in hotels close to the meeting site and the social programme will include the best of musical and performing arts talent that the College has to offer and, most importantly, the traditional BSMM sing-a-long following the conference dinner. The full line-up of invited speakers, registration and abstract submission

forms can be accessed from the BSMM website at <http://www.bsmm.org/>. Early registration is encouraged.

I look forward to welcoming you to London in the Spring

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**UKCMN Annual Meeting London 2009**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> UK Clinical Mycology Network (UKCMN) Annual Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 after the British Society for Medical Mycology annual conference.

The UKCMN, Chaired by Professor Chris Kibbler, was inaugurated in 2005 with an initial network of three centres and the HPA Mycology Reference Laboratory. It was set up under the auspices of the HPA Advisory Committee on Fungal Infection and is managed by a Steering Committee of representatives from the different centres which allows for a national perspective. The UKCMN is aiming to provide a centrally managed structure for the UK-wide coordination of mycology service delivery, mycological surveillance, medical and laboratory training, diagnostic development and translational research. This is especially important now the pathology modernisation process has made it clear that efficiency and clinical care will be key in provision of the service. In 2008 the UKCMN had grown to seven centres around the UK.

After successful annual meetings in 2007 and 2008, the 3<sup>rd</sup> UKCMN annual meeting will be held at Imperial College with the support of the BSMM and attendance is free. The programme includes practical diagnostic exercises using the revised definitions of invasive fungal disease from the EORTC/MSG, presentations on safety in the lab and what to look out for and finally an FAQ sessions with brief presentations on important clinical queries, with a chance for the audience to ask and discuss additional questions.

The annual meeting is also an opportunity for additional centres to join the UKCMN and make an active contribution to the provision of mycology services around the UK. Membership is free, and open to centres that provide clinical mycology services, as defined in the application form. Membership entitles

representatives of centres to receive UKCMN publications and other output and to be able to declare affiliation with the UKCMN and use the logo on their communications alongside their stated level of service. Those Members who join at specialist or regional centre level may also have representation on the steering committee.

The programme for the annual meeting and an application form to join the UKCMN are both available at:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1201094590966?p=1201094590966>, but please feel free to email [easo@hpa.org.uk](mailto: easo@hpa.org.uk) if you have a specific enquiry about the UKCMN annual meeting.

**BSMM/UCL Diploma & MSc graduation**



The graduation ceremony for the first graduates of the BSMM and University College London Diploma/MSc course took place in the September 2008 at Logan Hall. The picture above shows from left to right: Christine Fagan (MSc), Cynthia Alexis (MSc), and Lorna Vale (Diploma). Christine, from the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne enrolled on the in 2004. Her MSc project was a “Study to determine if inducible resistance to voriconazole in *Saccharomyces* and *Candida* species can be demonstrated”. Cynthia, from the Department of Medical Microbiology at King's College Hospital in London enrolled on the in 2004. Her MSc project was “The epidemiology and characterisation of *Candida albicans* recovered from the blood cultures of different patient groups in a London Hospital”. Lorna, from the Department of Bacteriology University Hospital of Wales, enrolled in 2004. Her Diploma project was on

“Aspergillus in the water supply of the University Hospital of Wales and its correlation to patient isolates”.

Congratulations to everyone!

**Obituary**



**DR JONATHAN (JOHN) HARVEY EDWARDS  
1942 – 2008**

Dr John H Edwards, a previous secretary of the Society and honorary member, has died after a long illness. John was the leading authority on hypersensitivity pneumonitis in the United Kingdom contributing many original papers, chapters and guest lectures in his field for the last 30 years.

John was born in Swansea, graduated at the University of Liverpool with honours in bacteriology before returning to Wales to the Welsh National School of Medicine to undertake his PhD at Sully Hospital, researching the antigenic complexes associated with Farmer’s Lung and allied diseases. He entered the field at a time when the recognition of hypersensitivity pneumonitis was in its infancy, the pathogenesis unclear and confirmatory diagnostic testing inadequate. He quickly established innovative techniques to grow

*M.faeni* leaving the antigens free of growth media. Through analysis of *M.faeni* strains from across the world he was able to show antigenic profiles as being consistent, there being thirteen antigens with three dominant antigens. This was unlike *Aspergillus fumigatus* where there was considerable antigenic variation.

He then joined the MRC Pneumoconiosis Unit at Llandough Hospital, keeping his Sully Hospital base, becoming the Senior Clinical Scientist at the Unit. He extended his research to Pigeon Breeder’s Lung, clarifying the antigens involved and explaining the loss of pigeon IgG in droppings by subsequent proteinase degradation. He characterised allergic alveolitis illness due to Sulphasalazine and Toluene Di-Isocyanate. Due to his innovative laboratory techniques he was to supply W.H.O. with reference antigens for *M.faeni* and *Aspergillus fumigatus* for some 30 years.

John was an enthusiast for animal models and developed reliable models for Farmer’s Lung, Byssinosis and Pigeon Fancier’s Lung. He extended this to human challenge using both skin testing and bronchopulmonary lavage techniques. As a result of this work he developed written guidelines for both farmers and pigeon breeders to be safe in their chosen environment. His recent attention had been given to Humidifier Fever and he investigated several outbreaks clarifying the role of amoebae species in these outbreaks. John was a strong supporter of the Society; he was a member of the Working Party on Fungal Serology, was secretary between 1990 and 1993, sat on the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council on Occupational Asthma and was a member of many European and American working groups on hypersensitivity pneumonitis. He had close links with Professor Jordan Fink and co-workers in Marshfield and with Professor John Salvaggio in Tulane, New Orleans. He was elected an honorary citizen of New Orleans in 1986. John remained in Cardiff throughout his professional life.

John was a strong supporter of young research workers in his field and supervised many PhD and MD theses. Over his 35 years in Cardiff he published over 50 peer reviewed papers, many of them ground breaking in their technical areas.

John was a charming, enthusiastic scientist whose substantial contribution to respiratory medicine and mycology has ensured that patients have been able to come to early diagnosis and are able to reduce the risk of lung disease in their chosen occupations and hobbies.



The family of the late Dr John Edwards would like to express their heartfelt thanks for all the kind expressions of sympathy received during their recent sad loss.

Dr Brian H Davies  
Llandough Hospital

We are indebted to Dr Brian Davies, a consultant immunologist from Llandough hospital and one of John's long-term colleagues and close friends, for such an enlightening account of John's many academic and professional achievements. Those of us who remember John from BSMM meetings remember the boyish charm and sense of mischief as much as his powerful intellect. John's funeral on a bright September day, despite the melancholy of the event, would certainly have been one of which John would have approved. If you knew John you couldn't help but be enthused by his love of jazz, indeed the BSMM annual meeting that he organised in Cardiff in 1986 included a jazz evening, and this passion was the major reason for him being given the 'Freedom of New Orleans'. True to form John's friends from the local jazz band played three compositions at his funeral and John's niece sang a piercingly beautiful and deeply moving Welsh ballad. These were interspersed with poignant but often hilarious reminiscences of some of his close friends and family.

For most of his career John was fortunate to be based on a top floor of beautiful Sully hospital and his lab opened onto a flat roof area directly overlooking the Bristol Channel. In an era untroubled by laboratory inspections and accreditation his freezers were stuffed with recently caught salmon, crabs and prawns and the +4s (fridges to you and me) were usually well stocked with home-brew. His laboratory equipment included wooden laundry tongs which he used to remove large floating mats of *Aspergillus fumigatus* from giant flasks that had been allowed to incubate for weeks in dark cupboards in order to produce somatic and culture filtrate antigens. It certainly did the trick as John's antigenic extracts were second to none and many thousands have benefited from their diagnostic potential. Another technique was to persuade aviary keepers to allow him to clean out their pigeon lofts, budgerigar and exotic bird enclosures no doubt to the puzzled delight of the owners. The antigenic extracts obtained from the guano were then used to test for avian alveolitis (pigeon/bird fanciers' lung). John's expertise led to a long-term commercial relationship with Microgen and it is no coincidence that they are now discontinuing most of their more esoteric lines such as finch, love bird, parakeet and canary antigens!

For many years a stalwart of the Welsh Male Voice Choir section of the BSMM many of us will choose to remember John, pint in hand, giving a stirring rendition of Calon Lan.

Dr Elizabeth Johnson  
President BSMM

### **BSMM interactions with other societies**

The BSMM has links with a number of other Societies, including the Biosciences Federation, Federation of Infection Societies, ISHAM, Pathological Society. This item aims to update members on developments that may be of general interest or have wider implications to the science community.

#### **Biosciences Federation**

The Biosciences Federation regularly offer advice on policies concerning science and education from school to post graduate level. The website has links to the latest policies and developments concerning issues of science and its education, see [www.bsf.ac.uk](http://www.bsf.ac.uk).

The BSF is holding an Extraordinary General Meeting on Monday, 1st December in London to decide whether the BSF Members support the creation of a strong unifying voice for the biosciences through fusion with the IoB. More information on the new organisation can be found on the BSF website at the link entitled 'New Organisation for the biosciences' on the homepage: <http://www.bsf.ac.uk>

#### **Federation of Infection Societies**

Dr Gary Moran, the meetings secretary, is representing the BSMM at the Federation of Infection Societies (FIS) 2008 consultative committee. The next FIS meeting is in Cardiff from 2-4 December 2008 and there will be a BSMM workshop organised by Dr Richard Hobson and Dr Silke Schelnz. In addition to this, Dr John Rex will be giving an expert session on the management of candidaemia.

### **Book corner**

So much of our literature is now available online, but sometimes it can be difficult to locate copies of older references or to access key texts or books. Collectively, our Society membership probably has in its possession numerous invaluable references and books. The Newsletter could provide a useful means for members to

locate materials that are had to find or no longer available.

Kate Seaman from the Frenchay Hospital has asked if anyone has a spare copy of "Atlas of Clinical Fungi" by GS De Hoog, J. Guarro, J. Gene, MJ Figueras that they would be willing to sell. The Atlas is currently out of print and this laboratory is very keen to find a copy. If you can help please contact Kate at:

Kate Seaman  
Department of Microbiology  
Frenchay Hospital  
Bristol  
BS16 1LE  
email kgseaman@mac.com

#### NEW MAGAZINE - FUNGI

Each issue of *FUNGI* explores the world of mycology with regular features on toxicology; medicinal mushrooms; how to photograph, cook, and cultivate mushrooms; and peer-reviewed technical papers ranging from original research findings to reviews of taxonomic groups to new records of North American species.

Many of the Contributing Editors of *FUNGI* are leaders in regional North American mycological societies who believe that North American mycologists should have a magazine of their own that is the equal of what the Europeans are publishing. Several recent events, including the termination last year of the British journal *The Mycologist*, led them to the conclusion that the time is right for something new.

*Fungi* aims to appeal to anyone with an interest in mushrooms and other fungi. *FUNGI* is published five times per year (four seasonal issues plus a special issue) More information including author instructions, subscription rates, and archives can be found at the Web site: [www.fungimag.com](http://www.fungimag.com).

#### Travel grant deadlines

There are a number of big meetings happening in 2009 (eg. ASM Candida, ISHAM) and the BSMM does offer travel grants to attend meetings to members of at least one year. The application deadlines for the coming year are:

31<sup>st</sup> January 2009  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2009  
31<sup>st</sup> September 2009

Application forms can be downloaded from the BSMM website [www.bsmm.org](http://www.bsmm.org) or from the BSMM secretary.

#### Comment!

Dr Richard Barton sent in this snippet from the ASM educational email list. It's a reminder that following a protocol does not always guarantee understanding of what is being done.

From the "We're all gonna die!" category; shared by one of my colleagues:

"As a first semester grad student, I walked in on a mycology student (finishing their Master's studying *Aspergillus* - aflatoxin producing *Aspergillus*) working with his cultures in a biological containment cabinet - with the front face completely raised and the blower running. He had just recently discovered that the front face could be raised and was so happy because it made working in the cabinet sooooo much easier - the mechanics of the "containment" aspect of the unit in which he had worked for years having completely eluded him. You can teach almost anyone to do almost anything - to understand what they're doing is a whole other story!"

Dr Sandra I. Resto-Ruiz  
University of South Florida

#### Forthcoming meetings

##### FEBS

FEBS advanced practical and lecture course on comparative analysis of in vitro and in vivo *Candida albicans*-host interaction systems. 1-14 February 2009, Madrid, Spain <http://www.cantrain.be/febs/>

##### 25th Fungal Genetics Conference

March 17-22 2009, Asilomar, USA  
<http://www.fgsc.net/25thFGC/FGC25.htm>

##### 45<sup>th</sup> BSMM Annual Meeting

28-31 March 2009, Imperial College, London, UK  
Details: [www.bsmm.org](http://www.bsmm.org)

##### 3<sup>rd</sup> UKCMN Annual Meeting

31 March, Imperial College, London, UK.  
Details: <http://www.hpa-events.org.uk/ukcmn> website not active until early December 2008.

##### SGM Spring 2009 Meeting

30 March - 2 April 2009, Harrogate International Centre, UK.  
<http://www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings/MTGPAGES/Harrogat e2009.cfm>

**19th ECCMID**

16-19 May 2009, Helsinki, Finland

<http://www.akm.ch/eccmid2009/>

**ISHAM Congress**

25-29 May 2009, Tokyo, Japan

Details: [www.congre.co.jp/isham2009/](http://www.congre.co.jp/isham2009/)

**26<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Chemotherapy and Infection**

18-21 June 2009, Toronto, Canada

Details:

**Yeast genetics and Molecular Biology**

24th International conference, July 19 - 24 2009,

Manchester, UK <http://www.yeastgenetics.org/home/>

**British Mycological Society**

Annual scientific meeting, 1 - 4 September 2009, West Park Conference Centre, Dundee, Scotland.

<http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/events/showevent.asp?EventID=111>

**TIMM-4**

4th Trends in Medical Mycology, October 18- 21, 2009,

Athens, Greece [www.timm2009.org](http://www.timm2009.org)

**Items for the next BSMM Newsletter**

If you have any ideas, reviewed a mycology book, or come across something that would be of interest to our community, and that would be suitable for publication in the BSMM Newsletter please email Sue at [susan.howell@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:susan.howell@kcl.ac.uk)

**BSMM membership**

Current membership of the BSMM stands at 306 members. This is comprised of 229 UK members (including 22 honorary and 1 life member), and 75 overseas members (including 6 honorary members).

The BSMM welcomes the following members to the Society who have joined since publication of the last Newsletter:

- Purnima Ramnarain, Stanmore
- Paul Everest, Glasgow
- Nicola Smith, Manchester
- Margherita Bertuzzi, London

**And finally...**



“ Oh yes, we always wear them when out collecting! ”

**Geoff Gadd**