



Anopheles larva (credit: Creative Commons CC0).

VOL. 1 · APRIL 2024

SPPIRIT NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the SPPIRIT Network

Also in this issue:

BSP SYMPOSIUM & SULSA
PAGE 2

BRITISH COUNCIL FELLOWSHIP
PAGE 3

WCIP UPDATE
PAGE 4

UPCOMING EVENTS
PAGE 5

PAPERS & OPPORTUNITIES
PAGE 7

Contributions: Mattie Pawlowic,
Jack Hanna; Adam Hayward;
Jason Mooney; Aradhana Singh; Frank Venter

MAIN FEATURE

UNIV. OF DUNDEE RECOGNISES LOCAL TEAM

The School of Life Sciences (SLS) recently held its annual Review of the Year event, led by Dean Julian Blow, to celebrate the achievements of 2023. Notably, the Scottish Parasitology Partnership in Research, Innovation, and Training (SPPIRIT) Committee received the Team Award for their exceptional support of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Led by members such as Melanie Ridgway, Josh Richards, and Rebecca Edgar, the SPPIRIT Committee demonstrated outstanding dedication and innovation in supporting their peers. Despite pandemic obstacles, their efforts fostered collaboration and resilience within the SLS community.



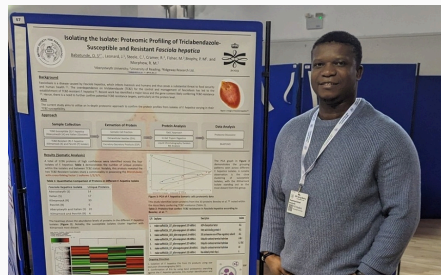
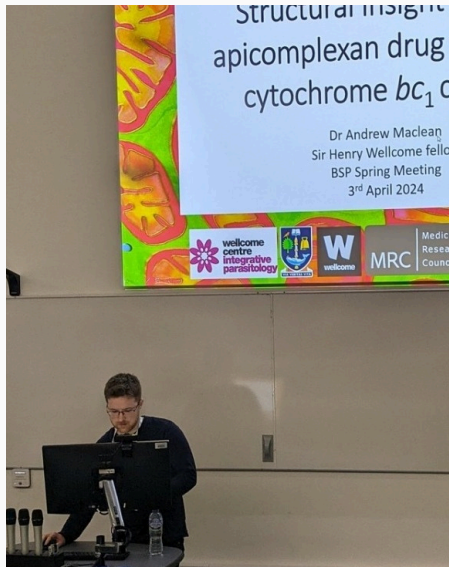


BSP SPRING SYMPOSIUM

LIVERPOOL 2024

The BSP Spring Symposium in Liverpool, held from April 2nd to 5th, was a resounding success. Notable moments included Andy Fenton receiving the C.A. Wright medal and delivering an inspiring speech, Lara Lopez Escobar winning the Best Talk award, and the famous BSP ceilidh.

Save the date for a special joint parasitology meeting in Wurtzburg, Germany, scheduled for March 2025.



“The meeting provided an excellent avenue for learning and networking”.

KEVIN KIDAMBASI
PHD STUDENT, EDINBURGH

SPOTLIGHT ON SULSA

SUPPORTING SCOTTISH RESEARCH

Formed in 2004 by the Scottish Funding Council and six Scottish Universities, the Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) aims to foster collaboration and resource-sharing among researchers in Scottish higher education. Today, comprising 12 universities and one research institution, SULSA serves as a conduit to Scotland's dynamic life sciences research community. By promoting equal access to career advancement and collaborative research opportunities, SULSA enhances international competitiveness across its member institutions.

See page 7 and or <https://sulsa.ac.uk> for current opportunities.

SULSA
Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance



Credit: Andy Fotheringham

UoD is the first recipient of 3 state-of-the-art Orbitrap Astral Mass. Specs.

NEWS FROM OUR NETWORK

MULTI-MILLION POUND INVESTMENT IN DUNDEE

This substantial investment significantly enhances mass spectrometry capabilities through the acquisition of new state-of-the-art Orbitrap Astral instruments, at the School of Life Sciences and MRC Protein Phosphorylation and Ubiquitylation Unit. Supported by the University of Dundee Strategic Research Fund, School of Life Sciences, and a Medical Research Council grant, this acquisition exemplifies collaborative endeavours. Stay updated with developments via @UoDLifeSciences and @mrccppu on X (formerly Twitter).



BRITISH COUNCIL WOMEN IN STEM FELLOWSHIP

Congratulations to Aradhana Singh for receiving this prestigious fellowship! Her doctoral research in India focused on parasites like *Entamoeba histolytica* and *Ancylostoma duodenale*, revealing insights into their genetic diversity and drug susceptibility. Now at the University of Edinburgh, she embarks on a new journey, investigating urinary Schistosomiasis among school-aged children in The Gambia. This project aims to deepen our understanding of the disease's distribution and genetic variations, crucial for effective intervention strategies. For Aradhana, securing this fellowship represents more than just a career opportunity; it symbolizes a chance for personal and professional growth. With a commitment to bridging the gender gap in STEM, she sees the fellowship as a platform to inspire and empower aspiring female scientists. Through her experiences and research, Aradhana aims to encourage future generations of women to pursue careers in science and contribute to global health.

See page 7 for more information on this fellowship & how to apply.





WCIP'S FUTURE AS A NEW CENTRE

Glasgow boasts a rich history of parasitology, with key discoveries made by University of Glasgow-trained scientists. Wellcome's involvement in Glasgow's parasitology research dates back decades. In 1987, the Wellcome Unit of Molecular Parasitology was established, the first UK-based collective funded by Wellcome. Transitioning to a Centre in 1999, it has since thrived, focusing on research into parasitic diseases like malaria and sleeping sickness. Now, as March draws to a close, we're witnessing a major change: The Wellcome Centre for Integrative Parasitology becomes the University of Glasgow Centre for Parasitology. Though the name may change, the commitment to groundbreaking research and nurturing future scientists remains steadfast. A heartfelt thanks to the Wellcome Trust for their unwavering support over the past 35 years.



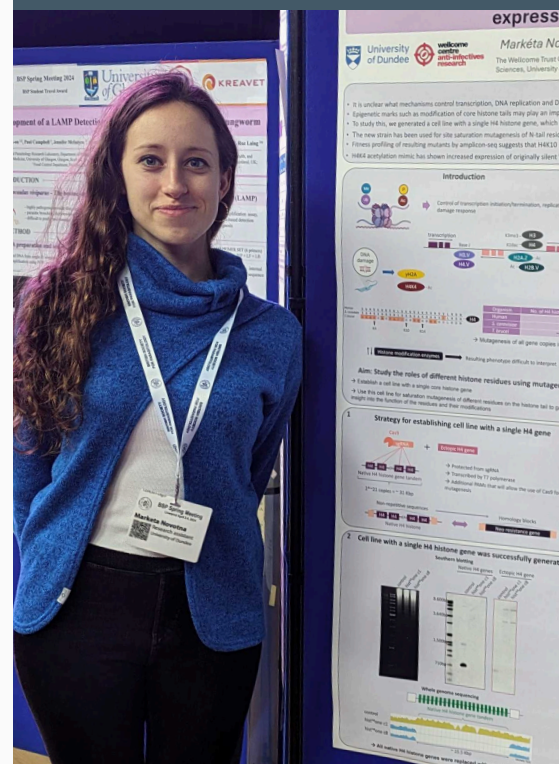
GRANT AWARDED

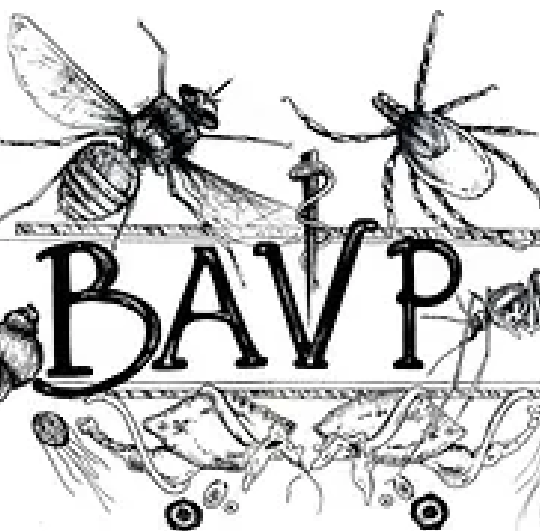
Keith Matthews from the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) and Liam Morrison from Roslin Institute secured a new 3-year BBSRC grant. The project, led by researcher Frank Venter, aims to investigate the interaction between trypanosome co-infection and drug resistance in cattle. Animal African trypanosomiasis (AAT) poses a significant health threat and with drug resistance on the rise, this research addresses a critical need in the field.

CONGRATS DR NOVOTNA!

Marketa Novotna successfully defended her PhD thesis titled "Precision Mutagenesis of Histone Tail Residues in Trypanosomes" at the University of Dundee and passed her viva examination. She utilised the CRISPR/Cas9 system to genetically manipulate the histone H4 tail, shedding light on the biological significance of these residues and their modifications. Currently, Marketa is finalising her work in David Horn's lab at Dundee. Looking ahead, she plans to pursue postdoctoral positions in kinetoplastid research.

The Glasgow
Centre for
Parasitology
continues its
commitment to
research and
training





UPCOMING EVENTS

BAVP ECR MEETING; 2-3 MAY 2024

Calling all ECRs in veterinary parasitology! Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to showcase your research, network with peers, and engage in discussions with experienced researchers. Whether you're looking to present your latest findings, connect with fellow researchers, or explore sponsorship opportunities, our meeting has something for everyone. 100% free, 100% online, 100% early-career researchers in veterinary parasitology.

More information: <https://www.bavp.org.uk/bavp-ecr-meeting-2024>
Register before 1 May.



PINT OF SCIENCE

Join the scientific revolution at Pint of Science! From humble beginnings in a pub to a global movement, we're all about making research accessible and fun. Our diverse events offer something for everyone, whether you're a seasoned scientist or just curious about the world around you. Join us from May 13-15 in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow for fascinating talks, interactive discussions, and maybe even a pint or two.

Discover local events and reserve your spot at pintofscience.co.uk!



GLASGOW SCIENCE FESTIVAL 2024

Get ready for an unforgettable experience at Glasgow Science Festival 2024! Since its launch in 2007, our festival has become one of the UK's largest, engaging over 100,000 people each year. Join us from June 6-16 for a fascinating journey into the world of science, technology, engineering, art, math, and social science. With events designed for all ages and interests, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to explore, learn, and be inspired!

Discover more at: gla.ac.uk/events/sciencefestival.



OUR NEWEST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

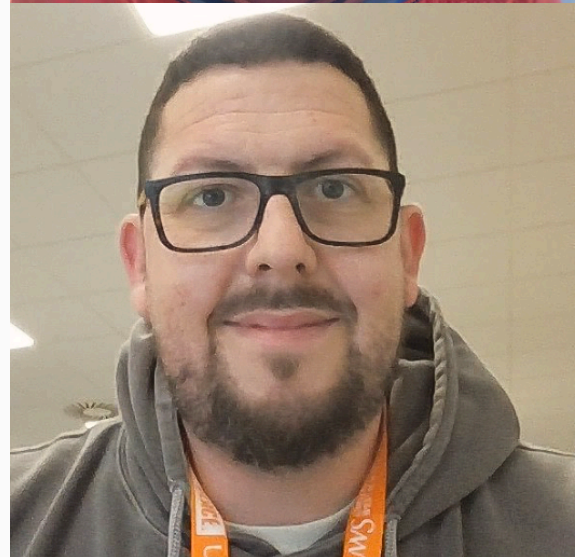
ADAM HAYWARD

Adam Hayward joins the Scottish Parasitology Partnership in Research, Innovation, and Training (SPPIRIT) committee as a new committee member. A research Fellow at Moredun, Adam applies statistical techniques to understand and mitigate livestock diseases, particularly helminth parasites of sheep and cattle. His research aims to uncover individual variations in response to infection and disease management. Welcome to the team, Adam!



TONY MCCULLOCH

Tony McCulloch, a first-year PhD student at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), recently became a member of the SPPIRIT committee. Formerly a chef and now a father of three, he earned a first-class honors degree in Immunology and Microbiology from the University of Strathclyde, followed by a master's in Infection Biology from the University of Glasgow. His research now centers on cultivating cerebral organoids from human-induced pluripotent stem cells to explore host-pathogen interactions for targeted drug therapy development.



ANDREW MCCLUSKEY

Andrew joins our committee as a new member. Initially, he pursued a career as a software engineer in the industry and recently embarked on a PhD in Thomas Otto's lab at Glasgow, funded by the BBSRC and Unilever. His current research focuses on investigating transcriptomic signatures of skin irritation and the integration of different kinds of 'omics' data, with future work planned to focus on parasites.



New ECR volunteers are welcome to join our committee; get in touch with us



@SPPIRITnetwork



sppirit.network@gmail.com



RESEARCH FROM OUR NETWORK

RECENT PARASITOLOGY PAPERS

Ovciarikova et al. (2024). *Jour. Cell. Biol.* describe a novel nuclear-mitochondrial membrane contact site in *T. gondii*.

Researchers in York and Edinburgh, published work describing differentiation granules as a regulator of *T. brucei* development.

Cayla et al. (2024). *Nat. Comms.*

A team at the Universities of Dundee and York determined how a highly selective protein bridge allows cells to express a single gene from a large parasite gene family.

Faria et al. (2023). *Nat. Comms.*

Two companion articles have been published detailing drug compounds that may revolutionise the treatment of Chagas disease.

Gonzalez et al. (2023). *Sci. Transl. Med.* &

Braillard et al. (2023). *Sci. Transl. Med.*

Oke et al. (2023). *Parasites & Vectors* describes a non-destructive assay to track the sporozoites of two rodent malaria species, *P. chabaudi* and *P. berghei*, in a mosquito over time.

Silvester, Szoor et al. (2024). *PloS Path.* presents research on a conserved trypanosomatid differentiation regulator's role in substrate attachment and morphological development.

**Want to feature your new paper?
DM or tweet us @SPPIRITnetwork**

OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDING

British Council Women in STEM. Early Academic Fellowships for female candidates looking for post-doctoral experience in STEM related subjects. More information: britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/in-uk/scholarship-women-stem

The SULSA Network Support Grant provides funds towards the running of a network event. Applications close Monday 29th July 2024. More information: sulsa.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/

SULSA/ Rheinland-Pfalz Research Collaboration Funding. This funding aims to support the development of PhD and Postdoctoral Researchers with building their international networks. More information: sulsa.ac.uk/funding-opportunities

Wellcome Early-Career Awards. This scheme provides funding for early-career researchers from any discipline who are ready to develop their research identity. Apply by 21 May 2024. More information: <https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/schemes/early-career-awards>

POSITIONS

Research Technician position with Megan Sloan at the University of Glasgow, studying mRNA-binders in *Toxoplasma*. Closing date 06/05/24; Job ID: 143931. Apply: gla.ac.uk/explore/jobs/

Post-doctoral Research Fellow with Musa Hassan at the University of Edinburgh, characterising the pathogenesis of key livestock apicomplexan parasites. Closing date 07/05/24; Job ID: 10170. Apply: findajob.dwp.gov.uk/details/14305376