

From the President's desk

Dear Members,

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Newsletter! Firstly, I would like to farewell outgoing ASP Council members and thank them very much for their support and contributions during their terms on Council. Special thanks are extended to Terry Spithill (Vice-President) as well as Bernd Kalinna (VIC representative), Jan Slapeta (NSW representative), Brendan McMorran (TAS representative) and Emanuela Handman (BMM convenor). I warmly welcome the new Council members: Robin Gasser (President-Elect), Neil Young (VIC representative), Colin Stack (NSW representative), Melanie Leef (TAS representative) and Roger Prichard (BMM convenor).

The 2012 ASP Conference held in Launceston from 3th-5th July was a great success, with sessions on fascioliasis, marine parasitology and marine aquaculture, parasite immunology, state-of-the-art technologies, and an ECR workshop. Highlights from the conference are featured in this newsletter. The public event "Parasite Encounters in the Wild" was excellent with most attendees having the unique opportunity to pat a Tasmanian Devil! The event was the first Inspiring Australia / ASP outreach event; video footage can be found on the ASP website or directly from our ASP YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/ASPParasiteNetwork>. On behalf of all members, I thank the organizing committee Organizing Committee (Lisa Jones, Nick Smith, Brendan McMorran and Barbara Nowak) for their fantastic efforts.

At the Launceston conference, Malcolm McConville from the University of Melbourne was awarded the *Australian Society for Parasitology Bancroft-Mackerras Medal for Excellence* for his outstanding contribution to the science of Parasitology, spearheading the new area of parasite metabolomics. The *J.F.A. Sprent Prize of the Australian Society for Parasitology* was awarded to Dr Christina Spry, for her thesis entitled "Utilisation of pantothenate by the human malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*" conducted under the supervision of Kevin Saliba at ANU. Sincere congratulations to both Malcolm and Christina!



Congratulations are also due to Ian Beveridge who has been awarded as an honorary member of the *World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology*. This is conferred on persons who have contributed in a distinguished manner to the advancement of vet parasitology internationally. Council is pleased to advise that Ian Beveridge has been nominated for a *World Federation of Parasitologists (WFP) Distinguished Achievement Award*, in recognition of Ian's lifelong dedication to the discipline of Parasitology through research and teaching.

The 2013 ASP Annual Conference program will be held in Perth on 25-29 August 2013 as a joint meeting with the *World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP)*. An excellent list of topics from high calibre national and international speakers in all fields of parasitology is anticipated.

Members will be aware of the bid to host the *International Congress of Tropical Medicine and Malaria 2016* in Brisbane in 2016, to be co-sponsored with the Australasian Society of Infectious Diseases and other societies and organisations. It is with great pleasure that I am able to congratulate Malcolm Jones, Michael Good and their team on successfully winning the bid. It is anticipated that the annual ASP meeting will be jointly held with the ICTMM in 2016 (likely in September).

In other news, the *International Journal for Parasitology – Parasites and Wildlife (IJP-PAW)* was launched at the Wildlife Diseases Association Conference in Lyon at the end of

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From the President's desk continued

July. On-line submissions are now accepted through the website (<http://ees.elsevier.com/ijppaw/>). The mandate of this journal is to publish the results of original research on parasites of all wildlife, invertebrate and vertebrate. This includes free-ranging, wild populations, as well as captive wildlife, semi-domesticated species (e.g. reindeer) and farmed populations of recently domesticated or wild-captured species (e.g. cultured fishes). Articles on all aspects of wildlife parasitology are welcomed including taxonomy, biodiversity and distribution, ecology and epidemiology, population biology and host-parasite relationships. The impact of parasites on the health and conservation of wildlife is seen as an important area covered by the journal especially the potential role of environmental factors, for example climate.

Also important to the journal is 'one health' and the nature of interactions between wildlife, people and domestic animals, including disease emergence and zoonoses.

I would also like to congratulate those ASP members involved in National Science Week activities around Australia. If any member has an interest in science policy or related activities, please let me know since occasions to represent ASP at such events do arise.

Finally, as mentioned at the AGM, members are encouraged to participate in a survey about the proposed ASP Parasitology Course. This is intended to gather information from potential students and early career researchers regarding

their ideal course content, as well as from laboratory heads regarding what they would be interested in supporting. I encourage everyone to please spend a few minutes completing this survey so that we may put together the best possible course. The survey will be open for 3 weeks until 12 October 2012 and can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ASPCourse>. All constructive feedback would be appreciated!

Best wishes

Denise Doolan

ASP Awards

The John Frederick Adrian Sprent Prize

Congratulations to Dr Christina Spry, Research School of Biology, Australian National University, who was awarded *The John Frederick Adrian Sprent Prize* of the Australian Society for Parasitology for her thesis entitled "Targeting the utilisation of pantothenate by the malaria parasite *Plasmodium falciparum*." Christina is pictured below receiving her award at the 2012 ASP Annual Conference, Launceston, Tasmania on Tuesday 3rd July.

This prize is awarded to a member who, in the opinion of a selection committee appointed by the Council, has written an outstanding thesis in Parasitology for which the PhD degree was awarded during the previous three years.

The Bancroft Mackerras Medal

Congratulations to Professor Malcolm McConville, Bio21 Molecular Science & Biotechnology Institute, The University of Melbourne, who was awarded *The Bancroft Mackerras Medal* of the Australian Society for Parasitology. Malcolm is pictured below receiving his award at the 2012 ASP Annual Conference, Launceston, Tasmania on Tuesday 3rd July.

This is the most prestigious award by the Society and recognises outstanding contributions to the science of Parasitology, particularly over the last five years. Malcolm was considered a very worthy recipient on the basis of his scientific achievements as reflected in the impact of his publications, including his efforts spearheading

the new area of investigation into parasite metabolomics, as well as sustained peer-reviewed grant and fellowship support, and major national and international invitations to speak and to write.

Congratulations to the following winners of ASP Awards at the 2012 ASP Annual Conference:

Wan Koh, Murdoch University won best ASP Student Poster prize for "The replication of *Cryptosporidium parvum* in artificial *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* biofilm systems" Wan Koh¹, Peta Clode², Paul Monis³, Andrew Thompson¹

¹Murdoch University, Australia; ²University of Western Australia, Australia; ³South Australia



ASP Awards continued



Water, Australia

Elinor Hortle, Menzies Research Institute, Tasmania won best ASP Student Poster presentation for "Investigating New Host Factors Involved in Malaria Resistance" Elinor Hortle¹, Shelley Lampkin¹, Fluer Rodda¹, Brendan McMorran^{1,2}, Gaetan Burgio^{1,2}, Simon Foote^{1,2}

¹Menzies Research Institute Tasmania, University of Tasmania, Australia; ²Australian School of Advanced Medicine, Macquarie University, Australia

Nicole Kirchhoff, University of Tasmania won best ASP Student Presentation for "Current research on blood fluke *Cardicola forsteri* infection of farmed southern bluefin tuna, *T. maccoyii*" Nicole Kirchhoff¹, Melanie Leef¹, Victoria Valdenegro¹, Craig Hayward², Barbara

Nowak¹

¹University of Tasmania, Australia; ²SARDI, Australia, now located at Tohoku University Institute, Japan

Michael Smout, James Cook University won best Early Career Researcher Presentation for "A granulysin growth factor secreted by the carcinogenic liver fluke, *Opisthorchis viverrini*, and the role it plays in carcinogenesis" Michael Smout¹, Thewarach Laha², Jason Mulvenna¹, Alex Loukas¹

¹Centre for Biodiscovery and Molecular Development of Therapeutics, Queensland Tropical Health Alliance, James Cook University, Australia; ²Department of Parasitology, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand

The following ASP Early Career Researchers were given special mentions for their 2012 ASP

conference presentations:

Satah Catalano, University of Adelaide

Robert Summers, Australian National University

Alejandro Trujillo, James Cook University

Catherine Gordon, Queensland Institute of Medical Research

Luz Botero Gomez, Murdoch University

*Pictured on previous page, left to right
Christina Spry Malcolm McConville, Wan Koh*

*Pictured on this page, left to right
Nichole Kirchhoff, Elinor Hortle, Michael Smout*



Vale Thomas Schnieder

1952-2012



Tragically, Professor Thomas Schnieder, Director of the Institute for Parasitology, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Germany, unexpectedly passed away on 16th May 2012 after a short battle with an aggressive cancer. He was only 59 years of age. Thomas was an international authority in the fields of veterinary helminthology and the control of parasitic diseases. His sudden death was a shock to many colleagues around the world.

Thomas Schnieder was born on 13th November 1952 in Stade, a small town in northern Germany. He was raised and educated in Lower Saxony, one of the major agricultural areas in Germany. Thomas studied Veterinary Medicine in Munich and then in Hannover. After graduating from the then School of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, he started his scientific career by pursuing a Doctor *medicinae veterinariae* at the Institute for Parasitology with Professor Michel Rommel. Here, Thomas studied *Toxoplasma gondii* and continued his research as a postdoctoral fellow on tissue cyst-forming coccidia.

In 1984, Thomas left Hannover to accept a position as Veterinary Technical Advisor with Pfizer in Karlsruhe, Germany. Here, Thomas gained extensive experience in the pharmaceutical industry, which laid the foundation for his subsequent industry-linked collaborations. In 1986, Thomas returned to the Institute for Parasitology in Hannover as a Senior Lecturer, continued his research on tissue cyst-forming coccidia, and developed a strong interest in parasitic heminths.

In 1989, Thomas was awarded a German Research Foundation (DFG) fellowship to undertake research in the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Melbourne in Australia. Here, he worked with Michael Rickard, Marshall Lightowlers and Henrik Bogh, and published research findings on the vaccination of mice against *Taenia taeniaeformis* using fractionated antigens. He developed links with Ian Beveridge and Robin Gasser. He became familiar with the use of molecular techniques to tackle problems in veterinary parasitology, which laid the basis for his subsequent research projects. Importantly, Thomas and his family learned a few things about good ol' Aussie life in those days and learned the religious practice of "a decent bloody barbie, and a few beers".

After his return to Hannover, Thomas developed a number of molecular parasitology projects. In 1993, he published his Habilitation thesis on the physiopathology, epidemiology and diagnosis of *Dictyocaulus viviparus*, for which he was awarded the *Venia legendi* in Parasitology by the School of Veterinary Medicine Hannover.

In the following years, Thomas worked as a Senior Lecturer and Adjunct Professor at the Institute for Parasitology in Hannover. He expanded his research into various areas of veterinary parasitology, including the epidemiology and control of parasitic worms of livestock and companion animals, the molecular biology of worms, anthelmintic resistance, the use of recombinant antigens in diagnosis and immunoprophylaxis of parasitic diseases, and PCR-based methods for the identification of parasites and diagnosis of infections. In 2000, the School of Veterinary Medicine bestowed on Thomas a Professorship in Parasitology and, one year later, he became the Director of the Institute for Parasitology, a post that he held with great distinction until his passing.

Thomas was a passionate parasitologist and a great advocate of veterinary parasitology. His research interests and enthusiasm brought him into contact with many scientists from around the world, and made him a key member of many national and international committees and advisory groups. Among others, he served as President of the German Society for Parasitology (DGP) and was a Diplomate of the European Veterinary Parasitology College (EVPC). He was a Coordinator of the Special Interest Group (SIG) for Parasitology and Parasitic Diseases of the German Veterinary Society (DVG) and of the German Team of the European Scientific Council Companion Animal Parasites (ESCCAP). He was also an Executive Committee Member of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP) for the past 9 years. His sudden passing leaves a major gap in these Societies and Bodies.

Thomas made major and sustained contributions to the field of veterinary parasitology through his research, teaching and services to the community. His scientific output comprises more than 300 publications and presentations, including approximately 150 scientific articles and a number of book chapters. He was a member of the Editorial Boards of several scientific journals, including the *Journal of Veterinary Medicine B*, *Veterinary Parasitology* and *Parasitology Research*. Thomas was also the Editor of a leading German textbook on Veterinary Parasitology. Thomas was a committed and caring teacher of undergraduate students, and, also a great mentor and supervisor of many postgraduate students, postdoctoral scientists and a number of prominent, young parasitologists.

Thomas' talents extended far beyond the scientific arena. Importantly, he was a passionate yachtsman, and had a great interest in soccer that he shared with his sons, Tobias and Daniel. He also spent a considerable amount of free time as a musician and singer in the German Irish Folk band "Fortune's Favour" - he even played in public events and featured in videos broadcast on the internet.

Thomas is sorely missed by those who knew him as a friend, colleague and mentor. Thomas is survived by his wife Heidrun and his two sons. Our thoughts are with them during this difficult time.

Michel Rommel, Christina Strube, Astrid M. Tenter, Robin B. Gasser, Alan Johnson

Inspiring Australia Public Event

Parasite Encounters in the Wild was a free public event, organised by the ASP, held at Country Club Australia, Launceston in July 2012.

Over 100 members of the public and around 150 scientists enjoyed our first Inspiring Australia / ASP outreach event **"Parasite Encounters in the Wild."**

The event, which for the first time was also streamed live on the internet, was run on 2nd July 2012 and featured presentations and activities based around parasites and wildlife, with a guest appearance of a Tasmanian Devil.

Our presenters were **Professor Greg Woods**, Menzies Institute Tasmania, **Professor Andrew Thompson**, Murdoch University, **Professor Ian Beveridge**, The University of Melbourne and **Androo Kelly** from Trowunna Wildlife Park. **Lisa Jones** was compere.

While the main presentations were being delivered, a workshop - the Young Parasites Science Club - took place upstairs, featuring a range of fun, hands-on science activities, Parasites in Focus quiz for older children and teenagers and a live feed of the Public Event. The young scientists did not miss out on the Tasmanian devils - like the main audience, they too had the opportunity to meet and cuddle a Tasmanian Devil.

Watch *Parasite Encounters in the Wild* from our ASP Outreach page http://parasite.org.au/?page_id=284 or directly from our ASP YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/ASPParasiteNetwork>



This Inspiring Australia initiative is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education in partnership with the Australian Society for Parasitology Inc.



An Australian Government Initiative



Parasitologists Meet Parliament

140 Australian researchers converged on Canberra for the 13th Science Meets Parliament, among them your intrepid ASP members Adele Lehane and Giel van Dooren, both from ANU.

What is the role of science in informing public policy? How can scientists best raise the profile of their research with the Nation's decision makers? What is the outlook for science in the tough economic climate ahead? These questions and more were addressed in two fascinating days in mid September, as over 140 of Australia's researchers converged on Canberra for the 13th annual Science meets Parliament conference. Amongst them were your intrepid ASP members Adele Lehane and Giel van Dooren (both at the Australian National University).

The first day of the conference readied participants for the political encounters ahead. Professor Graham Durant, the Director of Questacon, Australia's national science museum, kicked off proceedings. Professor Durant made a case for the critical role of Science in making Australia "healthier, wealthier and wiser". Science, he argued, is the engine of Australia's future economy, and it is critical that scientists be able to communicate their research to make society aware of its potential. He highlighted the "Inspiring Australia" initiative, which seeks to enable scientists to better communicate their research within the broader community. As part

of this initiative, Adele, Giel and many other researchers were interviewed over the course of the first day, with some of the interviews to be selected for public viewing at Questacon.

Other highlights of the first day included an entertaining talk by Dr Richard Denniss of the Australia Institute, a "think tank" that investigates and seeks to influence public policy. Dr Denniss drew on his experience as advisor to former senators Natasha Stott-Despoja and Bob Brown to highlight the keys to effective communication with politicians. He urged scientists to come to meetings with politicians well prepared. He emphasised the value of learning about the background of the politician you are going to meet and the constituency they represent, and making clear to the politician why you want to meet with them. Talking to a politician, Dr Denniss argued, is like building a bridge between what you think matters and what they think matters. It is therefore critical to avoid elitism and to be up-front about what you want from the politician. Making them feel like they have something to gain by taking on board your suggestions is critical for a successful outcome.

The evening of the first day featured a gala dinner in the Great Hall of Parliament House. Scientists were seated at tables with politicians, advisors and public policy makers. Over an excellent three-course dinner, and probably too much fine wine, scientists learnt how politicians incorporated scientific viewpoints into their policy decision-making. Giel spoke with Labor MP Steve Georganas about the similarities between the lives of politicians and scientists – long hours spent pursuing the things we are passionate



about. Giel also spoke at length to Jaimie Lovell, advisor to government minister Anthony Albanese, about the importance of peer review in determining scientific funding. Adele shared a table with Labor MP Mike Symon and Liberal MP the Hon Dr Sharman Stone, and spoke to them about the perils of antimalarial drug resistance and the long-term commitment needed to ensure that new drugs continue to be produced.

The night was punctuated by several more talks. A highlight of the night was the launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Science group, a bi-partisan collection of 50 parliamentarians with a passion and interest in science, headed by MPs Richard Marles and Karen Andrews. Both Mr Marles and Ms Andrews spoke passionately about the critical role that science education will play in the future of Australia. They made the case that research scientists have an imperative to inspire young Australians to choose science as a worthy career path.

Throughout the second day, scientists met with politicians. Giel met with Victorian senator Bridget McKenzie where he had the opportunity to highlight the diversity and importance of parasitology research in Australia. Adele met with an ACT MP, Dr Andrew Leigh, but unfortunately was interrupted by the division bell, and only had 1-2 minutes to convey that now is a critical time to maintain momentum in malaria research. At each meeting, Parliamentarians were presented with a copy of the book "the Geek Manifesto" by British author Mark Henderson, which argues for the importance of scientific literacy in modern society. The hope is that politicians will read the manifesto and realise the importance of scientific evidence for their policy-making endeavours.



Parasitologists Meet Parliament continued

Lunch on day 2 took place at Gandel Hall at the National Museum of Australia, where Australia's most recent Nobel Laureate Professor Brian Schmidt addressed the National Press Club. In light of recent controversy about the ban of the super trawler "Abel Tasman" to fish in Australian waters, going against scientific recommendations from the Australian Fishing Management Authority (AFMA), Professor Schmidt argued for the importance of consensus scientific viewpoints in informing evidence-based public policy. He was critical of the lack of trained scientists in relevant branches of government and the public service, and argued that installing these scientists will make for much better policies.

Aside from Adele and Giel, parasitologists were well represented at Science meets Parliament, including Malcolm McConville (Bio21), Alex Maier (ANU) and Dave Riglar (WEHI). Also Krystal Evans (WEHI) is currently completing a part-time internship with Adam Bandt, learning the inner workings of the parliamentary system, and influencing Greens policies to incorporate reasoned, scientific evidence. Brian Schmidt will no doubt approve.

Giel van Dooren and Adele Lehane



Previous page

Bottom Left: Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, Senator Chris Evans addressing delegates at the Gala Dinner.

Top Right: Giel van Dooren being interviewed as part of the Inspiring Australia initiative.

This page:

Bottom Left: Adele Lehane being interviewed as part of the Inspiring Australia initiative.

Above:

Top Left: Parasitologists at Parliament House. From left to right: Alex Maier (ANU), Giel van Dooren (ANU), Malcolm McConville (U. Melbourne), Adele Lehane (ANU) and Dave Riglar (WEHI, partly obscured).

Bottom left: Mike Symon MP (left), Adele Lehane and other delegates at the Gala Dinner.

Images courtesy of Lorna Sim / Science & Technology Australia

\$400 Undergraduate Prizes

The Australian Society for Parasitology is pleased to announce that it will be offering undergraduate student prizes of \$400 each to Australian Universities identified as offering a suitable course in parasitology, for presentation to the best undergraduate student in parasitology (highest passing mark/grade). The course(s) must be taught by a financial member of the ASP (of more than one year standing), and must comprise at least 30% parasitology.

Requests for 2013 prizes must be made by the eligible University to the ASP Treasurer or Secretary by the 30th September 2013.

Requests for prizes must include the following for each eligible course:

1. Course name/code/degree year
2. Number of Students enrolled in 2013
3. Number of hours dedicated to parasitology (and total number of hours for the course)
4. Name of financial ASP member (of at least 1 year standing) teaching course

Closing Dates for Awards

ASP Network Travel Award (includes JD Smyth Award)
Friday 5 October 2012

OzEMalaR Travel Award
Friday 9 November 2012

Bancroft-Mackerras Award
30 September 2013
(for award in 2014)

Sprent Award
30 September 2013
(for award in 2014)

ASP Fellowships
9 January 2013

For more information, visit the ASP website:
www.parasite.org.au

News from the ASP Network for Parasitology

We have recovered from another fun and highly successful ASP Annual Conference. Launceston 2012 featured some great international visitors, including **Professors Grace Mulcahy, David Sacks and Carlos Carmona** who toured before and after the conference as ASP Invited Lecturers, as well as our outstanding Australian scientists on show. Once again we hosted a very popular workshop in conjunction with the conference. **Terry Miller, QLD Museum and Jason Mulvenna, QIMR** ran the "Introductory Phylogenetic Systematics - From Sequence to Trees and Bioinformatics Workshop" at the AMC, University of Tasmania, Launceston for 22 attendees on 4th & 6th July 2012. Photos from the conference appear later in this newsletter.

The 2013 ASP Annual Conference will be a joint-meeting held with WAAVP 2013 in Perth, 25-29 August at the Perth Convention Centre. See our full page feature on the conference later in the newsletter.

Congratulations to **Malcolm Jones, Michael Good** and team who won their bid to hold the International Congress for Tropical Malaria and Medicine in Brisbane in 2016. The bid is a joint one between the Australian Society for Parasitology and the Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases.

Our first Inspiring Australia / ASP outreach event "Parasite Encounters in the Wild" was run on 2nd July 2012 and featured presentations and activities based around parasites and wildlife, with a guest appearance of a Tasmanian Devil. Our presenters were **Professor Greg Woods**, Menzies Institute Tasmania, **Professor Andrew Thompson**, Murdoch University, **Professor Ian Beveridge**, The University of Melbourne and **Androo Kelly**, Trowunna Wildlife Park who joined us with a Tasmanian devil! Watch Parasite Encounters in the Wild from our ASP Outreach page http://parasite.org.au/?page_id=284 or directly from our ASP YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/ASPParasiteNetwork>. Photos from "Parasite Encounters in the Wild" appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Through our Inspiring Australia grant the ASP will develop and run outreach initiatives to promote parasitology to the general public over the next 3 years, which will be a particularly exciting time in the lead-up to the 2013 joint ASP and WAAVP International Conference in Perth and the ASP's 50th Anniversary Conference and celebrations in Canberra in 2014. Please contact Lisa (lisa.jones1@jcu.edu.au) if you want to be involved.

Congratulations to **Professor Marshall Lightowlers, The University of Melbourne** who was recognised by the Federal

Government as one of the *Ten of the Best NHMRC Research Projects 2012*. In *Ten of the Best Research Projects 2012*, the Australian Government and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recognise the results of work that some of our finest Australian scientists and researchers have been putting their minds to.

Congratulations ARC Linkage Projects July 2012

Total value of \$1.8m

Jex, Dr Aaron R; McConville, Prof Malcolm J, *Harnessing the 'omics revolution to investigate drug response and resistance mechanisms in Giardia duodenalis*, The University of Melbourne and Yourgene Biosciences Co Ltd, Taiwan

Avery, A/Prof Vicky M; Burrows, Dr Jeremy, *Screening platforms for malaria drug discovery: identification of new therapeutics*, Griffith University and Medicines for Malaria Venture

Lew-Tabor, Dr Alicja E; Rodriguez Valle, Dr Manuel ; Broady, A/Prof Kevin W; Bellgard, Prof Matthew I; Vankan, Dr Dianne M; Atwell, Prof Richard B, *Harnessing the genome of the Australian paralysis tick to develop effective control products*, The University of Queensland and Eli Lilly Australia

Congratulations ARC Future Fellowships August 2012

Total value of \$2.1m

Tham, Dr Wai-Hong, *Complement evasion strategies of malaria parasites*, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Tonkin, Dr Christopher J, *Activation of invasion in Toxoplasma*, The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Wykes, Dr Michelle, *Mechanisms of subversion of malarial immunity*, Queensland Institute of Medical Research

Congratulations other grants and fellowships

Total value of \$3.1m

Maier, Dr Alex, *Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship*, Australian National University

Kirk, Prof. Kieran, *Testing the MMV Malaria box on malaria parasite ion regulation* (Medicines for Malaria Venture), Australian National University

Boddey, Dr Justin, *Human Frontier Science Program Young Investigator Grant*, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Brindley P, Loukas A., Mulvenna J. *Role of liver fluke granulin in cholangiocarcinogenesis*. National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, USA. R01 grant. \$US 2,000,000

Nick Smith

Convenor, ASP Network for Parasitology

Lisa Jones

Communications Coordinator

Network Mentorship Scheme

Early career researchers are encouraged to apply to the Network Convenor, in strict confidence, for funding to participate in the Network Mentorship Scheme. The scheme allows young investigators to be paired with experienced, successful researchers to discuss, plan, prioritise and set targets for their career. Typically, the early career researcher will fly to the institute of a senior parasitologist and spend a day there. Arrangements for professional development and progress to be reviewed by the pair annually can also be arranged. Importantly, mentors need not be from an individual's home institution but can be drawn from across the Network. The scheme has proved very valuable for several young researchers and their mentors already.

To apply, simply write to Nick Smith (nicholas.smith@jcu.edu.au) with a brief outline of your research interests and aspirations. You can also indicate a preferred mentor or ask Nick for advice on whom amongst the Network participants may be most suitable.

Early Career Researcher Workshops

At the ASP Conference in Launceston, we ran two Early Career Researcher Workshops.

Rowena Martin, Australian National University, ran an evening workshop attended by 52 giving very useful advice about constructing a CV. **Kate Hutson, James Cook University**, ran a breakfast workshop attended by 55 on the topic of "Tips for Networking at (and after) conferences" - including such important issues as "how to stand out from the crowd".



News about Australia/Europe Malaria Research Cooperation



Greetings from Africa! I'm currently on a 3-month sabbatical in Kilifi, Kenya and thoroughly enjoying the change of culture, the pace of life, the beautiful countryside and being able to see how our malaria research is applied in the field. I've included some images from the first few weeks here; this place is just so inspiring I'm tempted to stay!

It was terrific to see a strong component of malaria research represented at the 2012 ASP Annual Conference in Launceston and congratulations to Elinor Hortle, Menzies Research Institute, Tasmania for best ASP Student Poster talk.

Congratulations to malaria researchers who were successful in the July 2012 announcements of ARC grants:

A/Prof Vicky Avery, Griffith University;
Dr Wai-Hong Tham, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research; **Dr Michelle Wykes**, Queensland Institute of Medical Research; **Dr Alex Maier**, Australian National University; **Prof. Kiaran Kirk**, Australian National University and **Dr Justin Boddey**, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research.

Congratulations to our latest OzEMalaR Travel Award winners:

Chaitali Dekiwadia, PhD, Postdoc Research Officer, Laboratory of Dr. Stuart Ralph, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, The University of Melbourne for a Researcher Exchange to visit Dr. Friedrich Frischknecht Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg, Dept. fUr Infektiologie, Parasitologie Heidelberg, Germany to gain practical and theoretical experience in cryoelectron tomography, a method that is expertly practiced in EviMalar Laboratories at the University of Heidelberg.

Carla Proietti, PhD, Post-doctoral fellow, Molecular Vaccinology Laboratory (Doolan Laboratory), Queensland Institute of Medical

Research for a Researcher Exchange to visit the Laboratory of Professor Chris Newbold, Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford, UK, and Wellcome Trust Workshop "Working with Parasite Database Resources", Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (WTSI), Hinxton, UK.

The final closing date in 2012 for OzEMalaR Travel Awards is:

Friday 9 November 2012

Visit our website www.ozemalar.org to find out how you can apply for OzEMalaR Travel Awards to support early career malaria researchers (PhD and postdocs) from Australia to work and be trained in top European laboratories within EviMalar (= BioMalPar) for malaria research. To check which laboratories are eligible as hosts visit www.evimalar.org.uk

Download funding guidelines from the ozemalar website and start planning your researcher exchanges to utilise this great opportunity. We hope to see lots of new applications in the final round for 2012.

Please email Lisa with any news, jobs or events you have for the website (lisa.jones1@jcu.edu.au) or with your comments and suggestions.

Geoff McFadden
Convenor, OzEMalaR

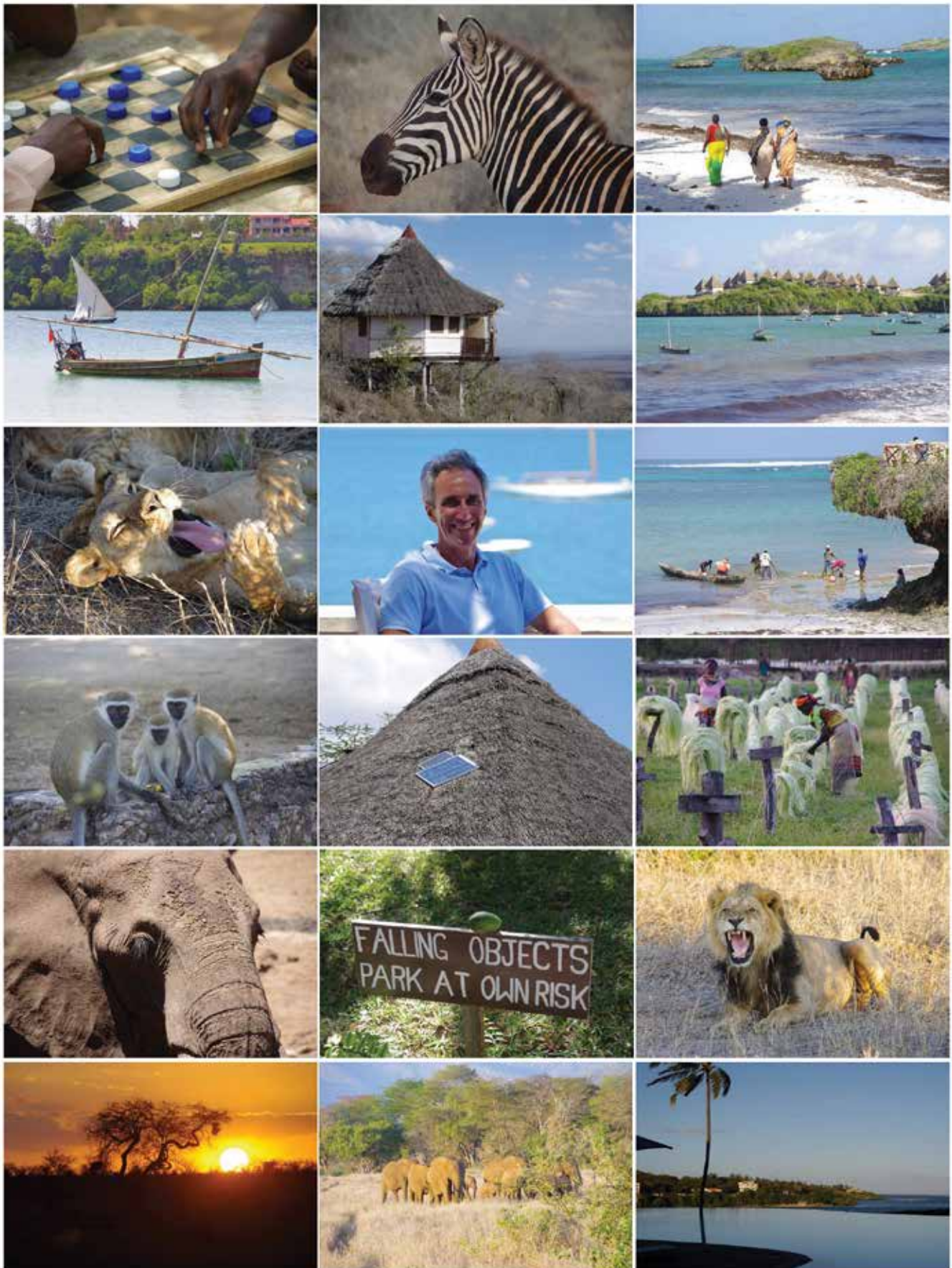
Researcher News

Professor Ivo Mueller of WEHI and an international team of researchers has shown that *Plasmodium vivax* malaria, the most prevalent malaria species in the Asia-Pacific, is a significant cause of genetic evolution that provides protection against malaria.



Their finding challenges the widely-accepted theory that *Plasmodium falciparum*, which causes the most lethal form of malaria, is the only malaria parasite capable of driving genome evolution in humans. The study was published today in the *PLOS Medicine* in September.

For more information see the Researcher News section of this newsletter.



ASP Outreach

Hugh Murray, an Honours Student in the School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences at UQ and QIMR, describes his use of the ASP's Parasites in Focus Exhibition in his outreach work. Hugh is an AATSE Young Science Ambassador.

I was chosen by the Australian Academy of Technical Sciences and Engineering to be a Young Science Ambassador for their Wonder of Science program in rural Queensland schools. My role was to visit schools and help students with their investigative projects for a competition later in the semester, and more generally to talk about life as a scientist. The greater aim of the program is to encourage students to study Science and Engineering at University, with a goal to address the skill shortages in those fields.

So on the 13th and 14th of August I travelled to Cairns State High School and Trinity Bay High

School, also in Cairns, and spoke to students about life as a scientist, and about parasitology and my research project on scabies. I used digital images from the exhibition of giardia, malaria, worms, lice and fleas which the students really found interesting, with a number of student commenting so afterwards. In fact, after presenting to one grade 10 Science class, I was told that four of the students had asked to be able to change their senior subject choices to

include Biology, which was heartening for me.

Overall, the use of the images from the exhibition, kindly provided to me by Peter O'Donoghue and Sue Bennett at UQ, really added an extra element to my presentation and I would like to thank ASP for the opportunity to use them.



Left: Hugh Murray addressing students at Cairns State High School

The 2nd Northern Australia Malaria Symposium

Australia has a strong malaria research program, but sometimes it is difficult to keep up with local achievements as results and publications tend to be discipline specific, rather than disease specific. The 2nd Northern Australia Malaria Symposium held in Brisbane on 23 April 2012 brought together 72 of the region's leading researchers and research students. The theme of the day was rapid fire 5 minute presentations

covering any aspect of malaria research, coupled with extended networking opportunities. The short, sharp presentations were well appreciated by the diverse audience and stimulated a lot of discussion over drinks. The keynote presentations by Tom Burkot (James Cook University), Qin Cheng (Army Malaria Institute), Jennifer Reiman (Griffith University) and Tina Skinner-Adams (Qld Institute of Medical Research) were equally well received covering a range of field and laboratory research. Key to the success of NAMS was the philosophy of minimal cost to remove financial barriers for participation, and a focus on

early to mid-career researchers. The organising committee wishes to thank the sponsors of the 2nd Northern Australia Malaria Symposium; the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Australian Society of Parasitology and the Queensland Tropical Health Alliance.

Outreach Funding

ASP members are encouraged to apply for ASP funding to support outreach in their state. \$2000 per annum per state is available for seminars, symposia, group events, networking etc. Proposals are to be submitted for consideration by State Representatives. Initiatives should foster outreach by members and advance the field of parasitology.

Proposals are to be submitted for consideration by State Representatives.

Researcher News

Professor Ivo Mueller on the evolutionary significance of *Plasmodium vivax* in the Asia-Pacific.

The malaria species rampant in the Asia-Pacific region has been a significant driver of evolution of the human genome, a new study has shown.

An international team of researchers has shown that *Plasmodium vivax* malaria, the most prevalent malaria species in the Asia-Pacific, is a significant cause of genetic evolution that provides protection against malaria.

Their finding challenges the widely-accepted theory that *Plasmodium falciparum*, which causes the most lethal form of malaria, is the only malaria parasite capable of driving genome evolution in humans. The study was published today in the journal *PLOS Medicine*.

Professor Ivo Mueller from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and Barcelona Centre for International Health Research (CRESIB) led the study, with colleagues from the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research, Centre of Global Health and Diseases, US, and the University of Western Australia.

Malaria is a devastating parasitic disease that kills up to one million people a year. It is a major cause of poverty and a barrier to economic development. Approximately half of the world's population is at risk of malaria infection.

"Humans and malaria parasites have been co-evolving for thousands of years," Professor Mueller said. "Malaria has been a major force in the evolution of the human genome, with gene mutations that provide humans with some protection against the disease being preserved through natural selection because they aid in survival."

Professor Mueller said the study has challenged the perception that *P. falciparum* malaria is the only malaria species that affects human genome evolution. "It has long been assumed that *Plasmodium falciparum*, the species that causes the most severe disease and most deaths from malaria, is the most important driver of this gene selection in humans," Professor Mueller said. "Our results suggest that *P. vivax* malaria, though until recently widely considered to be a 'benign' form of malaria, actually causes severe enough disease to provide evolutionary selection pressures in the Asia-Pacific."

Professor Mueller said that the research team was interested in whether *P. vivax* malaria might

be the cause of the unusually high rates of Southeast Asian ovalocytosis (SAO), a hereditary red blood cell disorder, in the Asia-Pacific region. "SAO occurs in approximately 10 to 15 per cent of the population in parts of the South West Pacific and is caused by a hereditary mutation in a single copy of a gene that makes a red blood cell membrane protein. This is almost an absurdly high frequency when you consider that inheriting two copies of the mutation is invariably fatal, so we figured it must confer a strong advantage to the carriers," he said.

The research team looked at the incidence of *P. vivax* and *P. falciparum* infections in three studies that included a total of 1975 children in Papua New Guinea aged 0-14 years. "We found that SAO-positive children were significantly protected against *P. vivax* infection, with 46 per cent reduction of clinical disease in infants with little or no immunity, and 52-55 per cent reduction in the risk of infection in older children. We also saw a significant decrease in parasite numbers in infants and older children, which is linked to a decrease in risk of clinical disease," Professor Mueller said.

The finding could have dramatic implications for future malaria vaccine design and development, Professor Mueller said. "Studying the mechanisms that cause SAO-positive people to be protected against *P. vivax* malaria could help us to better understand the mechanics of infection and help us to identify better targets for a malaria vaccine," he said.

The research was supported by the MalariaGEN Consortium, National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia, National Institutes of Health, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Research and Development, AusAID and the Victorian Government.

Below: Professor Ivo Mueller
(Image from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute)



Researcher News - Labs on the Move

Tilo Forbes, a PhD student in Alex Maier's Lab at ANU, describes the team's recent move from La Trobe.

A hailstorm on Boxing day. Bad for cricket, worse for the old rusty elevators in the Department. Even worse for the planned move of a fully equipped Malaria laboratory, including a biosafety hood that nobody can carry down 4 flights of stairs. This is the beginning of a story that features the inventive idea of using a cherry picker as a lift and the tireless work of dedicated removalists and staff from the La Trobe Biochemistry Department. Add an RA and a PhD-student driving a freezer van 900km to Canberra and you get a sense of the general madness that is moving labs. It sounds so easy in theory, shutting down before Christmas, just like every

other lab, packing up and shipping everything over, setting up the lab in a newly purpose-built facility and be running after MAM2012. Reality, as is the case so often, looks a little bit different.

First came the hail-damage to the elevator that postponed the planned removal date by 2 weeks. We had no idea that our trip in the rented freezer-truck would be the easiest part. An early morning rise, a combined effort to get all the stocks from the fridges, freezers and liquid nitrogen into the truck, a quick drive up to Canberra and rapid unpacking into freezers provided with the help of the amazing building manager at the Research School of Biology of the Australian National University. I even managed to check out my future house before a decent meal in the bush capital.

Back in Melbourne the lift was fixed. Removalists were booked again, but did not arrive quickly enough before the lift broke down again. Thus,

the cherry picker was needed. As our scientific belongings got shipped to Canberra via Sydney, our personal journeys to Canberra began.

Finding a home in Canberra is no easier than in Melbourne or Sydney and made no easier by being in Melbourne. So slowly the members of the Maier Lab arrived in their new home at the ANU, to unpack the goods.

A few months later and one could say we were truly back in the running. Enjoying our new home in the Research School of Biology at the ANU, slowly getting a feel for how the place ticks, basking in the amazing synergy that is on offer with the other research groups and continuing to find out more about the malaria-causing parasite.

Now we can look back upon the move and laugh about the incidents, but till next time, a strong *never again!*



*Above: the cherry picker in action in Melbourne
(photograph by Anne Evans, La Trobe)*

*Left and below: the Research School of Biology at ANU
(photographs by Casey Hamilton)*



Researcher News continued

Andres Greth describes the Malaria Genetics and Host Group's move from the University of Tasmania to Macquarie University in Sydney.

I still remember that particular morning when my supervisor told us "All students and staff into Simon's office now." On the way there our imaginations went wild about the purpose for this unexpected meeting. However being told that we all are relocating to Macquarie University in Sydney was definitely not part of the list. Total silence dominated the room after this announcement, while a mix of sudden frustration, excitement, and confusion occupied our minds. I probably don't have to mention that for the rest of the day there was very little progress in the lab. Perhaps part of the reason was that we all went to the pub for a drink or two.

Moving a lab is a very complex undertaking. A good working laboratory is fine-tuned over years of work and insights and gets totally disrupted and assembled back together in a new place. Any disruption could be disastrous, so any move is an obvious cause for anxiety and distress. Therefore it was no surprise that over the coming month the big move was the number one topic. Uncountable times we got asked by our fellow members of the Menzies institute how things are going. Our supervisors disappeared more and more from the lab and were glued to their desks organising removalists, new equipment and (most importantly) the shipment of our mice stock. We students felt a pressure to generate as much data as possible in the remaining time. However once we started to ship close to a thousand mice over the Bass Strait to Sydney, experiments changed into packing boxes filled with samples and lots of dry ice. A lot of new insights were also gained during that time. For example, who knew that it is possible to rent a cool box which is so big that it only can be stored in the loading dock of a big institute? To put that in perspective, the box could store 1500+ cans of beers: definitely a valuable

insight for the next lab party.

Now, 2 months after the big move, we are back in the lab genotyping, analysing samples on our hemocytometer or flow cytometer and getting frustrated again with Microsoft Excel. Considering the complexity of the move it has been an amazing effort by everyone. Even the most optimistic of us had his or her doubts that we would be functional again within 2 months. Sure, not everything is as smooth as before and there is still the occasional frustration when something can't be done which was no problem before. Lots of compromises have been made. But, on the other hand, it forced us on many occasions to think outside the square, providing us with lots of new opportunities and enabled us to work with brand new lab equipment.

Besides, leaving behind Tasmania's arctic climate has certainly helped every one of us think of Sydney as a place we can call home.

Publication

ASP member Klaus Rohde, based overseas has highlighted a new book being published in 2013 that can be ordered now.

Klaus Rohde editor: *The Balance of Nature and Human Impact*, Cambridge University Press.

Klaus says that several chapters deal either exclusively or partly with parasites, and it should be of interest to everybody concerned about climate change, habitat destruction and fragmentation, and invasive (often parasitic)

species. For full details:

http://www.cambridge.org/gb/knowledge/isbn/item6964672/The%20Balance%20of%20Nature%20and%20Human%20Impact/?site_locale=en_GB

Chapters dealing exclusively with parasites are:

2. Population dynamics of ectoparasites of terrestrial hosts Boris Krasnov and Annapaola Rizzoli
3. Metapopulation dynamics in marine parasites Ana Perez del Omo, Aneta Kostadinova and Serge Morand
6. Community stability and instability in ectoparasites of marine and freshwater fish Andrea Simkova and Klaus Rohde
7. Ectoparasites of small mammals: interactive saturated and unsaturated communities Boris Krasnov
15. The emerging infectious diseases crisis and pathogen pollution Daniel R. Brooks and Eric Hoberg

Left: Professor Klaus Rohde

24. The intricacy of structural and ecological adaptations: micromorphology and ecology of some Aspidogastrea Klaus Rohde



Events

Australian Society for Microbiology Conference - Food and Medical Microbiology 23rd-24th November, Royal Hobart Yacht Club



The Victorian Branch of the Australian Society for Microbiology (ASM) together with the Tasmanian Branch are organising a Bi-State conference "Food and Medical Microbiology"

Topics include:

- Tularemia case in Tasmania
- Biofilms in the dairy industry
- New Delhi metallo beta lactamase bacteria
- Parasites in fish
- Bioremediation in Antarctica
- Probiotics

- Infection Control in a developing country
- Campylobacter cases in Tasmania
- Floods and bugs in Queensland

For full program, visit:

<http://www.asmvic.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Program-for-website.pdf>

Conference commences:

10:00 Friday November 23rd

Conference concludes:

15:00 Saturday November 24th

Wine tasting on Friday night included

Conference Registration Fees

Early Bird (Before September 21st)

Member \$120

Non member \$150

After September 21st

Member \$150

Non member \$200

Student member \$100 (no Early Bird)

Day registration \$100

For bookings: <http://www.trybooking.com/29348>

3rd International Conference on Tropical Medicine 21st-23rd February 2013 Miami, Florida



The 3rd International Conference on Tropical Medicine will be held 21-23 February 2013 in Miami, Florida. Please see the website for details: <http://medicine.fiu.edu/conference/tropicalmedicine/2013/index.html>

12th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON TOXOPLASMOSIS



Save the date

St. Catherine's College, Oxford, UK.

Saturday June 22nd to Wednesday June 26th 2013

Organised by

David Ferguson
Markus Meissner
Frank Seeber
Mohamed-Ali Hakiimi
Jonathan Wastling
Hansa Pertab
Gillian Murray

Supported by



25-29 August 2013

Perth Convention Exhibition Centre
Western Australia



24th International Conference of the World Association
for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology
Hosted by **The Australian Society for Parasitology Inc.**

**Keynote Speakers
announced**

**Call for abstracts
now open**

**Sponsorship
Prospectus
now available**

**For further information or
to register your interest in
registering, scholarships
and grants visit the website.**

On behalf of the Australian Society for Parasitology, we have great pleasure in inviting you to the 24th International Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology in Perth, Western Australia, from 25-29 August, 2013.

WAAVP 2013 will bring together parasitologists from around the world to present and discuss the latest advances in their research as well as important issues relevant to veterinary parasitology. Our discipline embraces a broad and growing field of applied parasitology and WAAVP 2013 will provide the opportunity to look to the future as well as build on the successes over the last 50 years. The Perth Conference will celebrate WAAVP's 50th Birthday!

Western Australia offers a fresh perspective for conferences with plenty of open space for delegates to think, breathe and connect. The Conference Venue is set on the banks of the spectacular Swan River; the State's sparkling capital Perth is one of the nation's fastest growing urban centres, offering cultural diversity and sophistication combined with a relaxed lifestyle and friendly atmosphere.

The 2013 conference is in the most readily accessible location of any Australian capital to South East Asia which will make it easier for colleagues in SE Asia to attend the meeting and join other delegates from Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Australia.

Andrew Thompson and Brown Besier

www.waavp2013perth.com

ASP Conference 2012 Gallery



ASP Conference 2012 Gallery continued



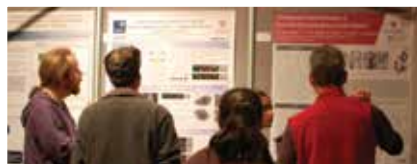
A successful conference

Launceston 2012 was a highly enjoyable and productive conference, with sessions on fascioliasis, marine parasitology and marine aquaculture, parasite immunology and state-of-the-art technologies.

International visitors included Professors Grace Mulcahy, David Sacks and Carlos Carmona.

Malcolm McConville from the University of Melbourne was awarded the Bancroft-Mackerras Medal and Christina Spry from ANU won the J.F.A. Sprent Prize.

Delegates enjoyed an outing to Trowunna Wildlife Park and the conference dinner, with the theme Christmas in July, was great fun.



IJP News

International Journal for Parasitology highlights

August 2012 issue

Succinctus

The insulin receptor is a transmission blocking veterinary vaccine target for zoonotic *Schistosoma japonicum*
Hong Youa Geoffrey N. Gobert, Mary G. Duke, Wenbao Zhang, Yuesheng Lia , Malcolm K. Jones, Donald P. McManus

September 2012 issue

Polyamine uptake by the intraerythrocytic malaria parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum*
J Niemand, Al Louw, L Birkholtz, K Kirk

Special Issues for publication in 2012 and 2013:

November 2012 Singapore Malaria Network Meeting 2012

February 2013 Apicomplexa in Farm Animals

March 2013 Translatability of Helminth Therapy



INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL FOR
PARASITOLOGY

State News

New South Wales

The University of Sydney

Laboratory of Veterinary Parasitology @ McMaster Building

A former Honours student Ms **Victoria Morin-Adeline** has been awarded the International Postgraduate Research Scholarships (IPRS) with Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) and will return to the laboratory for her PhD. Vicki will work closely with our postdoctoral fellow **Neil Portman**.

Ashlie Hartigan, a former PhD student, has departed and successfully started her postdoc at the Institute of Parasitology, Czech Academy of Sciences with Dr Astrid Holzer. Ashlie will continue her work on myxozoa but has "switched" hosts by focusing on fish myxozoa. We wish Ashlie all the best. By the way, her paper on the comparative pathology and ecological implications of myxozoa in native Australian frogs and the invasive Cane toad has been accepted in *PLoS ONE*.

David Emery is compiling the texts for the Australasian Veterinary Parasitology textbook that will be presented to students as an e-book. In our in-house survey, we have identified that the e-book format meets moderately to extremely well the needs of at least 78% of students (n=50).

Giselle Walker (University of Otago) will be coming back in November to complete our ultrastructure work on *Chromera velia* flagellate – the sister organism to all Apicomplexa.

Several recent publications have led to media interest and coverage, including articles in the Sydney Morning Herald and The Land. The publication by King et al. "Oocysts and high seroprevalence of *Neospora caninum* in dogs living in remote Aboriginal communities and wild dogs in Australia" (Veterinary Parasitology 187:85-92) was covered in The Sydney Morning Herald (4 June, 2012) <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/animals/spreading-parasite-affects-more-cattle-herds-20120604-1zs9z.html> and the The Land (31 May, 2012) <http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/livestock/cattle/cattle-parasite-spread-further-than-thought/2574576.aspx> The publication by Hartigan et al. "Myxozoan parasite in brain of critically endangered frog" (Emerging Infectious Diseases 18:693-5) was featured in The Sydney Morning Herald (May 20, 2012) <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/killer-parasite-puts-rare-frogs-in-peril-20120519-1yxfu.html> and it was annotated by the IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group (FrogLog102): <http://www.amphibians.org/blog/2012/05/23/froglog102/>

Jan Slapeta started as the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Veterinary Parasitology*. Recently, Jan was trying to explain what it is to become a fully professional researcher, in other words what it means to obtain and to hold the title PhD. While reflecting on the subject, Jan found a very topical explanation: "At the most basic level it means that you have something to say that your peers want to listen to." This sentence covers it all. Jan cannot thank enough Estelle M. Phillips and Derek S. Pugh who wrote *How to get a PhD: A handbook for students and their supervisors* (Open University Press). It is a book that everyone will profit from reading!

Queensland

The University of Queensland

School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences

Hurray! First semester teaching has finished, although the exams remain to be marked. Always a good test of whether the students learnt the material taught (often with surprising results!). During swat vac, **Peter O'Donoghue** (POD) facilitated a Global Leadership Series seminar on "Are our cities making us sick?" The consensus was Yes! Historically, cities were pest-holes for infectious diseases, esp. 'crowd' diseases. While improved sanitation and healthcare has curbed many diseases in developed countries, increasing urbanization in developing countries is being accompanied by a resurgence in communicable diseases. In addition, the incidence of chronic metabolic diseases is increasing due to our sedentary life-styles and burgeoning waistlines.

POD also hosted a visit to UQ by 100 North American healthcare workers involved in the International Scholar Laureate Program who were participating in a Delegation on Nursing in Australia. He presented an overview of Tropical Medicine in Australia and spoke about tropical viral, bacterial, fungal, protozoal, helminth and arthropod diseases. His PhD student at UQ, **Linda Ly**, is frantically describing new flagellate species from lower termites in Australia, while his



Left: *Eimeria tachyglossi* (DIC - left, UV autofluorescence - right) from the short-beaked echidna studied by John Debenham (Debenham JJ, Johnson R, Vogelnest L, Phalen DN, Whittington R, and Šlapeta J (2012). Yearlong presence of *Eimeria echidnae* and absence of *Eimeria tachyglossi* in captive Short-beaked echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*). *Journal of Parasitology* 98(3), 543-549 [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1645/JE-2982.1>]).

State News continued

student at the Australian Army Malaria Institute, **Veronica Zhang**, is preparing to host a visit by her American supervisor, Norm Waters, from West Point. Everyone is looking forward to the ASP/WAAVP conference in Perth next year.

QIMR

Scabies Laboratory

Katja Fischer and **Simone Reynolds** published a book chapter in *Proteinases as Drug Targets* which discussed the role of scabies mite inactive proteases in immune evasion and their potential as therapeutic agents. This was recently followed by the publication of two important papers for the scabies group heralding the results of research the group has expanded into. The papers explore the role that scabies mite proteins play in promoting the survival of pathogenic bacteria in scabies skin sores. This work stems from observations of the increasing and exceptionally high rates of *streptococcal* and *staphylococcal pyoderma* seen in the Australian indigenous population where scabies is endemic. These rates of bacterial infection coincide with the highest rates of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease in the world. Exploring this relationship the scabies group has found that the scabies mite ability to circumvent the immune system by releasing anti-complement proteins appears to promote the development of secondary bacterial infections.

Highlighting the importance of this direction of study has been the recruitment of microbiologist, **Dr Pearl Swe** to the group. Pearl was recruited from New Zealand to research this relationship in depth. Her work will include a study on the microbiota of scabies infested skin and will employ the scabies pig model, which has been relocated to the new animal facility at UQ's Gatton campus. Pearl's initial studies will be presented at the Australian Society for Microbiology Conference in July.

And PhD student **Simone Reynolds** has been awarded a travel grant from the Lowitja Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research to attend the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene meeting in Atlanta in November.

UQ-QAAFI and DAFF Livestock Biotechnology Group

The University of Queensland St. Lucia Campus

Jess Morgan and **Rosie Godwin** are busy using genetic markers (SNPs) to differentiate among strains of the 7 species of *Eimeria*. Their honours student Aniqah is hoping to discover more *Eimeria* strain diagnostic SNPs using next generation 454 sequencing of reduced genomic DNA libraries.

Ala Lew-Tabor and **Manuel Rodriguez Valle** were successful in the ARC Linkage round 2 recently, with significant funding for paralysis tick research (together with Murdoch University and University of Technology Sydney).

Other than that we are still analysing cattle tick data together with **Anthea, Bing, Bronwyn and Cathy. Ammielle** (Honours) is making progress with *Babesia bovis* strain differentiation with **Ala, Bing and Jess. Indra** (Honours) is progressing *Ixodes holocyclus* research with **Manuel. Tao Xu** (PhD) is busy expressing cattle tick serine protease inhibitors and analysing host:tick interactions.

Central Queensland University

Leonie Barnett recently submitted her PhD thesis, which investigated the ecology and evolution of the trematode fauna of intertidal gastropods in Central Queensland, for examination. She has been filling the nail-biting time between submission to getting the reports back by busily preparing the unpublished sections of her thesis for publication, when not being pestered by students she is currently lecturing that is.

Queensland Museum

Parasitology Section – Natural Environments Program

PhD students **Ricky Gleeson** and **Holly Heiniger** are busily preparing to submit their theses in the next couple of months, so have been inundating their principal supervisor **Rob Adlard** with seemingly endless drafts of manuscripts and chapters for comment. **Ricky's** PhD work has involved studying the ecology and systematics of myxosporean parasites of Australia's diverse elasmobranch fauna. His work has resulted in one of the largest and most comprehensive surveys in the world on myxosporeans infecting sharks and rays, which until now have received little attention. **Holly** is in the process of finishing her work on a couple of enigmatic groups of myxozoans in coral reef fishes of Australia as part of the CReefs/Census of Marine Life fish parasite project being conducted at the museum. **Terry Miller** (QLD Museum) and **Jason Mulvenna** (QIMR) recently delivered workshops on Bioinformatics and Introductory Phylogenetic Systematics to around 22 students during and after the ASP 2012 conference held in Launceston Tasmania. All of the students diligently showed up for the Friday portion of workshops at a 8am, on a Tasmanian morning that (for Queenslanders at least) was distinctly chilly.



Students hard at work during the Bioinformatics and Introductory Phylogenetic Systematics workshops run at The University of Tasmania, Launceston campus at the ASP 2012 conference

State News continued

James Cook University

Townsville Campus, Marine Parasitology Laboratory

Members of the *Marine Parasitology Laboratory* thoroughly enjoyed the scientific and social aspects of the ASP conference in Launceston. Masters student **Dinh Hoai Truong** delivered a superb poster-oral presentation on the reproductive strategies of *Neobenedenia* while Masters student **Alejandro Trujillo Gonzalez** received an honourable mention for his oral presentation on biological controls of mosquito larvae. PhD student **Alexander Brazenor** gave an excellent presentation on the effect of temperature and salinity on the life cycle of *Neobenedenia* sp. infecting barramundi (*Lates calcarifer*). **Kate Hutson** presented a parasite risk analysis for mariculture of barramundi and mullet and ran the student breakfast workshop with tips on how to network during and after conferences.

During free time on Wednesday Kate travelled with **Ian Whittington** (South Australian Museum) to visit Abta's abalone farm and Seahorse World. The trip was particularly eventful with a live electrical wire across the road at Beauty Point. Fortunately no one was electrocuted. Kate and Ian found several cephalopods (presumably parasitised by dycemids) in the Seahorse World gift shop which were given to **Sarah Catalano** (University of Adelaide) for further analysis.

Honours student **Thane Militz** (supervised by Kate) successfully submitted his Honours thesis on the efficacy of garlic as a control against ectoparasite infections. Meanwhile, Thane is enjoying a well deserved break before he plans to return to the office in order to develop flexible teaching programmes for JCU in Singapore and apply for a PhD scholarship.

Kate won an internal competitive *Collaboration across Boundaries* grant to work with **Jairo Posada** (ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies) and ASP member **Constantin Constantinoiu** (School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences). The grant will facilitate **Alejandro's** Masters research project

investigating the pathology and immune response of fishes to ectoparasite infections.

Northern Territory

Menzies School of Health Research

In 2012 the Global and Tropical Health Division at Menzies welcomed two new research assistants. **Steven Kho** relocated from Perth following the completion of Honours at the University of Western Australia. **Peta Tipping** relocated from Melbourne after completing Honours at Deakin University. **Peta and Steven** are working to characterise cellular immune responsiveness in adults and children with malaria and rheumatic heart disease. We welcome Peta and Steven to our group and hope you will soon have the opportunity to meet them in person and learn of their tales in the top end.

The Global and Tropical Health Division are now advertising for Masters and PhD students to evaluate: (i) regulatory T cell activation in malaria, and (ii) immune function in sepsis patients receiving statin treatment; and for a Research Assistant (Molecular Parasitology) to work on a variety of molecular aspects of malaria, including drug resistance, parasite genetics and epidemiology.

For the past three years Menzies has been working with the *Asia-Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN)* to improve national efforts towards malaria elimination in 13 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, the *APMEN Vivax Working Group*, supported by a team of clinicians, researchers and program staff based at Menzies, has been increasing efforts to achieve elimination of the predominant form of malarial disease in the region, caused by the *Plasmodium vivax* parasite.

The Working Group, which consists of National Malaria Control Program representatives and leading regional and international research

institutes, recently meet in Incheon, Republic of Korea <http://apmen.org/apmeniv/> to highlight current issues affecting regional efforts towards elimination, such as G6PD enzyme deficiency and parasite genotyping.

During this day and a half meeting, national representatives, researchers and industry experts analysed the major regional challenges in relation to G6PD deficiency and genotyping. Discussion focused on diagnostics, gathering and sharing data, possible courses of action and identifying research priorities. The combination of national representatives, researchers and industry professionals in attendance generated broad conversation and discussion, and resulted in the development of an action plan that will help direct and guide elimination efforts at both national and regional levels.



APMEN Vivax Working Group meeting in Incheon, Korea, 2012. Dr Sarah Auburn of Menzies School of Health Research

In 2013, Menzies will continue to support the *APMEN Vivax Working Group* to develop and support research relating to diagnostics, surveillance and optimising treatment of *P.vivax*, including development of a standardised genotyping tool that can be used in all 13

State News continued

countries, and also building regional capacity in molecular surveillance. The working group is planning to organise a workshop on resistance to antimalarial drugs in 2013. The emergence of artemisinin resistant *P.falciparum* strains has made resistance a high priority topic in malaria research, and this was identified as an area of major concern to elimination efforts for all meeting participants. The working group coordinating team is hoping to bring together scientists from the Asian Pacific region to discuss the detection, management, as well as underlying molecular events determining the spread of vivax and falciparum malaria.

Menzies would like to thank the following institutions and organisations for their valuable contributions throughout the meeting:

- National Malaria Control Program Representatives from Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Thailand and Vanuatu
- Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN)
- AccessBio Consulting Group, USA
- AusAID
- Australian Army Malaria Institute
- Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology, Indonesia
- Glaxo-Smith Klein, UK
- Karolinska Institute, Sweden
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK
- Mahidol Research Centre, Thailand
- Malaria Atlas Project, University of Oxford, UK
- Malaria Consortium
- Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), Switzerland
- Pasteur Institute of Cambodia
- Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH), USA
- Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU), Thailand
- Queensland Institute of Malaria Research
- University of Washington, USA
- UNICEF
- Walter and Eliza Institute, Melbourne
- World Health Organisation
- WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network

(WWARN)

For more information regarding APMEN including the meeting and presentations given please visit: www.apmen.org

The APMEN is now seeking applications to the Country Partner Technical Program: <http://apmen.org/research-grants/>. This program is open to organisations from Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

Victoria The University of Melbourne

Jemma Cripps (PhD student, The University of Melbourne) and **Ian Beveridge** (retiree) attended the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) international conference in Lyon, France, in July with **Jemma** contributing a poster on kangaroo nematodes and Ian contributing nothing beyond finding suitable restaurants for a two-hour wine soaked lunch each day. The conference was the largest ever for the WDA with about 500 participants and was generally judged to have been a great success. **Andy Thompson** was also there for the launch of the new journal, *IJP: Parasites and Wildlife*. **Dale Seaton** from Elsevier invited all of the editorial board members of the new journal to a dinner at an upmarket restaurant in Lyon, providing a very pleasant evening of local gastronomic delights and wines. Following the meeting, **Jemma** toured the Black Forest with a German vet student, **Catharina Vendl**, who had previously spent several months at Werribee identifying nematodes from kangaroos, while Ian attended a second conference on cestode systematics in Geneva along with **Bjoern Schaeffner**, another PhD student from The University of Melbourne. **Bjoern** presented a talk on his project on trypanorhynch cestodes which forms part of a survey of the biodiversity of fish parasites in Borneo, a project which also involves various other ASP members. Again, food and wine featured on the agenda, with one of our Swiss hosts, a real connoisseur, providing a memorable wine tasting evening in his garden (probably

not 'memorable' for everyone who attended as some people overindulged and probably have no recollection at all of the evening) and with the meeting terminating in an outing to a restaurant in the old town for a cheese fondue, not something normally consumed in mid-summer in Switzerland. **Ian's** European visit terminated with a session at The Natural History Museum in London, trying to sort out identifications for nematodes in white rhinos at the Dubbo Zoo (the type specimens of most rhino nematodes are held in London) and delving into problems in the identification of tapeworms from African warthogs as they are currently and rather incongruously placed in the same genus as tapeworms from wombats. Somehow, everyone returned safely to Melbourne, but probably with great regrets having had a great time (socially and scientifically) in Europe.

Jana Hagen (PhD student), **Neil Young** (post-doc) and **Bernd Kallina** (research fellow) from The University of Melbourne attended the Molecular and Cellular Biology of Helminth Parasites conference in Hydra, Greece in September with **Jana** contributing a poster on a novel method of gene silencing (RNAi) in flatworms and Neil contributing a presentation on sequencing the draft genome of *Schistosoma haematobium*. The conference was a great success and offered a unique opportunity for 100 researchers from the helminth world to get together and discuss their research and foster new collaborations in an idyllic setting with a suitable quantity of wine and great Greek food. This meeting is highly recommended to Australian ASP members studying parasitic helminths (particularly in the field of host-parasite interaction and genetics).

The annual meeting of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine SIG for 2012 will be held at St Vincent's Hospital, Fitzroy in the Aikenhead Lecture Theatre on Thursday the 4th October from 6-9 pm.

State News continued

Western Australia Murdoch University

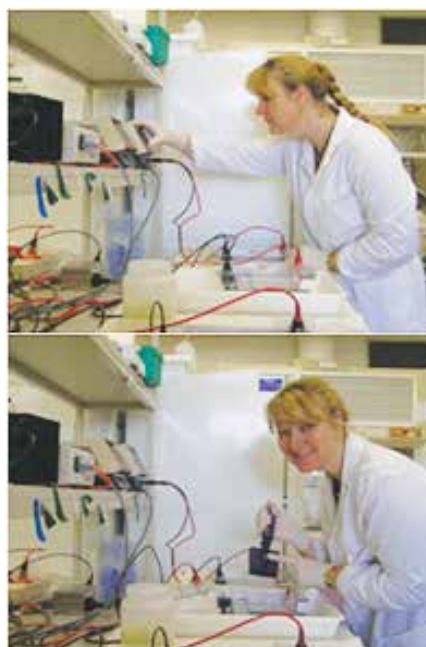
Earlier this year, the top students in the three parasitology courses run at Murdoch University's School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences in 2011 were awarded their prizes, generously sponsored by the Australian Society for Parasitology. Congratulations to **Gary Lee** (Veterinary Science), **Caitlin Jackson** (Animal Science) and **Adley Handoko** (Biomedical Science).



Adeley Handoko

Felicity Smout from James Cook University spent the last 7 months with the group gaining experience in molecular characterisation techniques for a variety of parasites including *Ancylostoma* and *Giardia*. This allowed Felicity to obtain some exciting and novel data on the epidemiology of infections with these two zoonotic parasites in dingoes and camp dogs in North Queensland. Felicity worked incredibly hard while at Murdoch and she already has one paper drafted and more in preparation as a result of her visit. We were all really sorry to see Felicity depart. She had really become a solid member of the group in a very short period of time and we all miss her generosity and humour.

The Parasitology group convened its regular, 4 year retreat, which was held 'down south' in Yallingup in May. The venue was chosen by Felicity and it proved to be perfect in all respects – a pleasant forest hideaway close to the newly opened Clancy's Fish Pub! As well as the Murdoch group, key collaborators from the University of WA, Department of Environment and Conservation and Proteomics International also attended. It was very productive and enjoyable resulting in the development of a new strategic plan for the Parasitology group, which has been presented to the University. (Photographs from this retreat are shown on the following page.)



Felicity Smout

Planning for the 24th WAAVP conference which will be held in Perth during the last week of August next year is well advanced. It will be a joint meeting with ASP, and the call for abstracts is now open. Members should visit the website www.waavp2013perth.com/ for information on Keynote speakers, draft programme, and other details.

Andy Thompson recently returned from a round-the-world trip taking in Lyon, Cluj (in Romanian Transylvania) and San Diego. Along with **Lydden Polley** from the Uni of Saskatoon and Elsevier's **Dale Seaton**, they launched the new journal *IJP-Parasites and Wildlife* at the Wildlife Diseases meeting in Lyon, followed by WAAVP2013 promotion at EMOP in Cluj and

AAVP in San Diego. **Craig Thompson** from the group also presented at EMOP, and **Fran Jones** at AAVP.

The Drug Discovery group recently welcomed **Sarah Keatley** who has joined the team as a Research Assistant. **Sarah** has quickly come to grips with the intricacies of maintaining the 'tri-tryps' in the lab *in vitro* and *in vivo*, and will make a great contribution to the exciting research currently in progress.

Alison Hillman has commenced her PhD which will investigate risk factors for urban wildlife from zoonotic parasites including *Toxoplasma* and *Giardia*. This is a truly 'One Health' project but in this case it is we humans who maybe the villains in terms of spillover of disease to wildlife! **Adriana Botero** who joined the group as a Research Assistant four years ago subsequently enrolled for a PhD and has already demonstrated the importance of trypanosome polyparasitism as a contributor to the decline of woylie populations in Australia. **Mikayla Morine** has also commenced a PhD on exotic parasites of Western Australia's unique and threatened freshwater fish fauna.

Hanna Edwards (nee Borowski) was recently awarded her PhD for her thesis "The 100 Faces of *Cryptosporidium parvum*" in which, using a variety of sophisticated microscopy techniques, Hanna visualised a variety of novel stages of the parasite and has effectively re-written the life cycle of *Cryptosporidium*. And lastly, **Rob Steuart** has submitted his PhD on the proteomics of *Giardia*!

Para Yallingup Forrest Retreat May 2012



Clancy's Fish Pub



Murdoch University Parasitology Group Retreat

Jobs

Research Assistant (Molecular Parasitology) Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin

The primary role of this position will be to undertake cellular and molecular laboratory assays relevant to malaria research, including anti-malarial drug resistance assays and genetic procedures, and to assist with general laboratory maintenance. The research activities will be undertaken with members of the Global and Tropical Health Division and external collaborators.

To be successful in this role you will need a Bachelor of Science along with relevant experience and the ability to undertake laboratory assays with the highest care, skill, rigour and attention to detail. You will also need exceptional organisational and time management skills along with an understanding of laboratory OH&S requirements.

Contact: Jutta Marfurt on 08 8922 7918 or Jutta.Marfurt@menzies.edu.au

Potential for Honours, Masters or PhD Projects, Global and Tropical Health, Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin

Research Area 1: Immunology

Supervisors: Dr Tonia Woodberry & Professor Nicholas Anstey

Research Project Title: Understanding immune function in sepsis patients receiving statin treatment

The tropical "Top End" of Australia has high rates of severe sepsis and septic patients admitted to Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH) ICU have an over-representation of Indigenous and younger patients, and several causative organisms that are rare elsewhere in Australia. The high prevalence of sepsis and its high mortality despite current treatments mean that more effective adjuvant therapies are needed.

"Statins" (HMG CoA reductase inhibitors), commonly used to treat hypercholesterolaemia, have been shown to have multiple effects apart from lipid lowering. These include anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, and

anticoagulant effects. A large retrospective cohort study (69,168 patients) has shown that those on regular statins have a significantly lower risk of sepsis and death. However, there are no published randomized controlled trials of statins for the prevention or treatment of sepsis.

The immune system plays a central role in the pathogenesis of sepsis. Regardless of the cause of the infection, there are similar symptoms and sequelae in sepsis patients including dysfunctional T cells and widespread apoptosis of lymphocytes. The mechanisms underlying sepsis-related T cell dysfunction are not well understood. Our research recently described, for the first time, significant reductions in T cell zeta chain expression and T cell dysfunction in sepsis patients.

We now aim to assess the impact of statin therapy in ICU patients with severe sepsis on T cell zeta chain expression and T cell function. Cells have been cryopreserved from RDH patients who participated in a multi-centre stratified prospective, randomised double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase II trial of statins for the prevention or treatment of sepsis.

This unique laboratory based project is suited to a person who has a passion for clinical immunology and a firm understanding or preferably experience with flow cytometry.

Contact: Tonia Woodberry on 08 8922 7918 or Tonia.Woodberry@menzies.edu.au

Research Area 2: Immunology/Infectious Diseases

Supervisors: Dr Gabriela Minigo, Dr Tonia Woodberry

Research Project Title: Understanding regulatory T cell activation in malaria

Immunopathogenic responses in malaria are known to differ between children and adults, and age is a critical determinant of malaria mortality. Regulatory T cells (Tregs) are key regulators of cellular immune responses, including cytokine secretion, and Treg phenotypes change with age. Little is known about differences in Treg activation between children and adults, particularly in response to malaria parasites. It is unclear how Treg activation following a first malaria infection affects the development of anti-malarial immune responses.

This project will address these knowledge gaps through comprehensive comparison of Treg phenotype and function between children and adults before and after exposure to malaria parasites. Using experimental malaria infection

of adult human volunteers (in collaboration with Prof James McCarthy, QIMR and Prof Michael Good, Griffith University) the impact of Treg activation on the quality of immune memory responses will be studied. Results will be compared with responses in clinical disease using samples obtained from patients with malaria at Menzies' field sites in South-East Asia.

Contact: Gabriela Minigo on 08 8922 7918 or Gabriela.Minigo@menzies.edu.au

PhD Project Wildlife parasitology/ecology Murdoch University, Perth

The Parasitology Section within the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences at Murdoch University invite applications for a PhD student to join a new ARC-funded research project, looking at how animal behaviour influences parasite transmission in two species of bettongs, the brush-tailed bettong (*Bettongia penicillata*) and the burrowing bettong (*Bettongia lesueur*). These closely related species share a diverse parasite fauna exhibiting a variety of lifecycles and transmission mechanisms, yet have contrasting forms of social organisation. This project will use social network models to explore how host behaviour (and in particular, how different forms of social organisation) influences the transmission of parasites. It will provide new insights into the factors driving the transmission of parasites in wildlife populations, whilst allowing broader insights into how the behaviour of the host and transmission method of the parasite affects the spread of parasites in wildlife populations. This project involves both field-based research and laboratory work, and we invite the applicant to tailor their research project to their own interests within this broader research programme.

This PhD project comes with a scholarship awarded at the APAI rate (\$27,651 pa). The scholarship is awarded on a competitive basis, and is only available to domestic students. It is expected the project will be undertaken on a full-time basis. In the first instance, we invite interested applicants to **contact Dr Stephanie Godfrey** (s.godfrey@murdoch.edu.au) about their interest in the proposed project. Applications should be made through the Murdoch University scholarships page.

Applications for scholarships close on the **31st October 2012**, and the project will begin in early 2013.

Council of the Australian Society for Parasitology Inc.

Executive

President

Denise Doolan
The Queensland Institute of
Medical Research, The Bancroft
Centre
PO Royal Brisbane Hospital,
Brisbane QLD 4029
T: (07) 3362 0382
F: (07) 3362 0105
E: Denise.Doolan@qimr.edu.au

President-elect

Professor Robin Gasser
The University of Melbourne
+61 3 9731 2283
robinbg@unimelb.edu.au

Executive Secretary

Robert Adlard
Queensland Museum
PO Box 3300, South Brisbane
Queensland 4101
T: 07 3840 7723
F: 07 3846 1226
E: robert.adlard@qm.qld.gov.au

Treasurer

Kathy Andrews
Queensland Institute of Medical
Research, The Bancroft Centre
PO Box Royal Brisbane Hospital,
Herston 4029
T: 07 3845 3725
F: 07 3362 0104
E: kathy.andrews@qimr.edu.au

State Councillors

ACT

Richard Allen
Research School of Biology,
Australian National University,
Linnaeus Way, Canberra, ACT,
Australia, 0200
T: +61 2 6125 3129
M: 040204 7278
F: +61 2 6125 0313
E: richard.allen@anu.edu.au

NT

Jutta Marfurt
Menzies School of Health Research
Global and Tropical Health Division
PO Box 41096
CASUARINA, NT 0811
T: 08 8922 7918
F: 08 8927 5187
E: jutta.marfurt@menzies.edu.au

SA

Lesley Warner
South Australian Museum
North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
Email: l.warner@cqu.edu.au

VIC

Neil Young
Gasser Laboratory
Faculty of Veterinary Science
The University of Melbourne
Corner of Park Drive and
Flemington Road
Parkville, Victoria, 3010
Phone: +61 9 731 2330
E: nyoung@unimelb.edu.au

NSW

Colin Stack
Senior Lecturer,
School of Science and Health,
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 2797
NSW 1797
T: +61 2 4620 3237

QLD

Terrence Miller
Queensland Museum
PO Box 3300
South Brisbane, QLD 4101
T: 07 3842 9173
E: terrence.miller@qm.qld.gov.au

TAS

Melanie Leef
University of Tasmania
AMC, NCMCRS
Locked Bag 1370
Launceston, Tasmania 7250
E: mleef@utas.edu.au

WA

Alan Lymbery
School of Veterinary and
Biomedical Sciences
Murdoch University
Perth WA 6150
E: a.lymbery@murdoch.edu.au

Other Members

Incorporation Secretary

Chris Peatey
QIMR, The Bancroft Centre,
Herston, QLD 4006
T: (07) 3362 0419
E: chris.peatey@qimr.edu.au

Bancroft-Mackerras Medal Convenor

Roger Prichard
McGill University,
E: roger.prichard@mcgill.ca

Webmaster

Jason Mulvenna
QIMR, The Bancroft Centre,
Herston, QLD 4006
E: jason.mulvenna@gmail.com

IJP Editor

Alex Loukas
Queensland Tropical Health
Alliance, James Cook University,
Cairns QLD 4878
E: editor@IJP.org.au
T: (03) 5256 1394

ASP Network Convenor

Nick Smith
Queensland Tropical Health
Alliance, James Cook University,
Cairns QLD 4878
T: (07) 4042 1315
E: nicholas.smith@jcu.edu.au

IJP:DDR Editors

Dr Kevin Saliba
Research School of Biology, ANU
kevin.saliba@anu.edu.au
(02) 61257549

Dr Andrew Kotze
CSIRO Animal, Food and Health
Sciences
andrew.kotze@csiro.au
(07) 32142355

IJP:PAW Editor

Prof RCA (Andrew) Thompson
School of Veterinary and
Biomedical Sciences
Murdoch University
Murdoch WA
+61 8 9360 2466
a.thompson@murdoch.edu.au

Newsletter Editor

Lisa Jones
ASP Network for Parasitology,
QTHA, James Cook University,
Cairns QLD 4878
T: (07) 4042 1311
E: lisa.jones1@jcu.edu.au

Archivist

Haylee Weaver
Building 41
Research School of Biology
The Australian National University
Acton, ACT 0200
T: (02) 6125 4940
F: (02) 6125 0313
E: haylee.weaver@anu.edu.au