

SCOTTISH MICROBIOLOGY
ASSOCIATION

Irish Society of Clinical Microbiologists

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The 9th Pan Celtic Microbiology Meeting will be hosted by the Welsh microbiology Association at the Angel Hotel, Cardiff from 5th to 7th June 2009. The programme runs from Friday lunch to Sunday lunch and includes a mix of scientific sessions, social activities and entertainment. The scientific programme will cover a diverse range of topics delivered by distinguished speakers as well as short papers and poster sessions.

We would like to encourage as many SMA members as possible to submit an abstract. There will be prizes awarded to the best oral and poster presentations and delegates with an accepted presentation will enjoy a further reduction in their registration / accommodation rates.

In order to encourage members to attend, SMA Council has decided to pay £100 towards the registration / accommodation package for everybody who attends the meeting. That makes the cost of full meeting package (3 days, two nights accommodation and dinner on 6th June) as low as £50 per person based on two people sharing and £80 for a single room. The banquet at Cardiff Castle on 5th June is an optional extra at £30 per person. You would be responsible for your own travel arrangements.

To access the meeting announcement, programme outline, abstract form and registration form, please go to the SMA website: www.scottish-micro-assoc.org.uk. Alternatively, contact Fiona MacKenzie (f.m.mackenzie@abdn.ac.uk tel. 01224 554957)

Preliminary Programme

12.45 Welcome – Dr Peter James WMA President

Opening Address

First Session:

1.00 - 1.30
1.30 - 2.00
2.00 - 2.30
2.30 - 3.00
3.00 - 3.30

Second Session:

3.30 - 4.00
4.00 - 4.30
4.30 - 5.00
5.00 - 5.30
5.30 - 6.00
7.30 to 10.00 pm

Rt. Hon. Rhodri Morgan, First Minister, Welsh Assembly Government

Clostridium difficile Chair Dr Jon Brazier (WMA Meetings Secretary)Dr. Mari Morgan - *C. difficile* surveillance in Wales and disease outcome
Dr. Derek Brown - *C. difficile*, a Scottish perspective
Dr. Paddy Kearney - *C. difficile*, a Northern Ireland perspective
Prof. Mike Wren - *C. difficile*, what can the laboratory do to help?
Tea / Coffee Break with Trade

Chair: Dr Margaret Lennan (ISCM President)

Dr. Rachel Jones - CMV infection update
Dr. Cathy Ison - Gonorrhoea screening and testing, where are we?
Dr. Colin Fink - DNA and diagnosis
Dr. David Wareham - *Acinetobacter baumannii* – facts and fictions
TBC - Real life experience with NAAT for gonorrhoea

Welsh Banquet at Cardiff Castle (ticket only).

Late night drinks and singing at Angel Hotel

5th June

Third Session:

09.30 - 10.00
10.00 - 10.30
10.30 - 11.00
11.00 - 11.30
11.30 - 12.00
12.00 - 12.30

Fourth Session:

1.00 - 2.00
2.007.00 - 7.30
7.30 - 8.00
8.00 - late

Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Chair: Prof. Ian Gould (SMA President)

Dr. Robert Townsend - Outpatient management of bone infections

Dr. Robin Howe - New antibacterials
Dr. Rosemary Barnes - New antifungals

Tea / Coffee Break with Trade

TBC - New antivirals

TBC - Licensed to prescribe

Poster walk – with judges (12.30 approx.)

Lunch

Social Programme / free time

Coach trip to St. Fagan's Welsh Folk Museum (pre-booked ticket required)

Wine Reception

Royal College of Music and Drama (singers)

Conference Dinner, Speeches / poster prize, Disco

6th June

Fifth Session:

9.30 - 10.00
10.00 - 10.30
10.30 - 11.00
11.00 - 11.30
11.30 - 12.00
12.30 - 1.00

An interactive session with voting hand sets!

Dr. Ali Omrani - an infectious disease case

Dr. Brendan Healy - a laboratory case

Dr. Jorg Hoffman - a public health case

Tea / Coffee

TBC – An infection control case

Mr. Raymond Mundle - a microbiological case history

7th June

President's column

No sooner do I take up the post of SMA President than it is time (or so it seems) to look to demitting office in the autumn and be put out to grass. Time flies by when you are enjoying it. Having been involved with the SMA since its inception, having been the first Meetings Secretary and on Council ever since, it will leave a big gap in my life. But I am pleased to say that I will be leaving the Association in good fettle with a strong bank balance and a great team on Council, not least your President Elect: John Winning.

Just one more onerous, major duty to perform before I stand down at the next AGM. The 9th Pan Celtic Microbiology Meeting to be held in June in Cardiff. Having missed out on an Irish Pan Celtic meeting two years ago (and another chance to wear the big gong), this should be one to remember. I urge you all to come along, particularly those of you who have never before experienced the camaraderie, good song and hospitality of a Pan Celtic meeting organised by the WMA. The whole weekend for the never repeated price of £50 is a further bonus (see back page for details) and you folks in the central belt can further economise by filling your cars with friends and colleagues if the £100 flights seems a bit steep.

So! Get organised, get your duties covered and see you in Cardiff!



Recent SMA Meetings have seen the reintroduction of Free Paper sessions which have proved enormously popular. The prize for the best Free Paper at each meeting is £600 towards the costs of attending a relevant conference in Clinical Microbiology. I'm pleased that the newsletter contains conference reports from Adele Foster and Tracey Joliffe who won Free Paper prizes in 2007 and 2008. Adele's winning paper presented at the Autumn 2007 meeting was entitled "Do you feel enriched?" A case study demonstrating the value of enrichment culture in ascites. Tracey's winning paper presented at the Spring 2008 Meeting was entitled MRSA in companion animals. We look forward to hearing from Nitish Khanna who won the Autumn 2008 prize.

SMA Council

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Report from ECCMID 2008:

Adele Foster
SMA Free Paper Winner 2007



As a Biomedical Scientist it is important to continually increase knowledge in line with the research and technical advancements within the field. Each year, thousands of Scientists, Consultants and Companies meet up for 4 days at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) to exchange the above and dinner invites with free alcohol! Last year I was lucky enough to attend the 18th ECCMID in Barcelona thanks to the funding I was awarded from the SMA after my presentation at the SMA Autumn 2007 meeting on the Value of Enrichment Culture in Ascites.

Whilst at ECCMID I attended a number of the Oral Presentations on various subjects. Two of these were on very prominent issues that have been in the media on a regular basis, *MRSA* and *Clostridium difficile*. Both presentations contained up to date information on the pathogenesis of the organisms, the isolation requirement of patients and new novel strategies for treatment; for example in one of the lectures on *Clostridium difficile*, Metronidazole resistance was discussed, although uncommon this has been linked to a high rate of non responses and relapses in patients infected with the 027 epidemic strain. Alternative treatments and the use of Vancomycin was also discussed with the perspective for a *C. difficile* vaccine looking very promising in the near future.

Following a hard days learning there was always plenty to do in the evenings, on one evening I attended a dinner held by Biomérieux where I had the chance to meet fellow scientists from across Europe and make use of the free wine. The experience of seeing Dr Connor stroking a robotic fish to get a response from it was one not too miss. On the subject of Dr Connor should you ever be out with him and lost, his compass does not work and don't believe a word he says and Mr Raymond Mundle's sense of direction leaves a lot to be desired after 2 hours in a tapas bar!!



Part of visiting new cities is too see the sights so I took the opportunity to explore Barcelona and visit some of the impressive sights such as the Olympic stadium and national art gallery and a number of phallic monuments that amused us all.



One of the aspects of ECCMID I really enjoyed were the poster presentations, they covered a spectrum a topics and had been contributed by people from all fields of Microbiology. I am currently involved a project with a colleague in the Dumfries and Galloway Microbiology Laboratory and have been inspired to now produce a Poster Presentation of this for the 19th ECCMID to be held in Finland this year. Attending ECCMID can be a thoroughly rewarding experience both in education and if you attend with work colleagues finding out all about their penchant for Guinness!

I would personally like to thank the SMA for the award I received that enabled me to attend ECCMID last year. Many thanks.

Report from EBRs 2008:

Tracey Joliffe
SMA Free Paper Winner 2008



As a new SMA member attending my first meeting in Aviemore, I was surprised and delighted, to win the free paper prize; funding to attend another conference. But which to choose? The European Bat Research Symposium (EBRS) may seem an odd choice, but will hopefully become understandable. I qualified as a BMS in bacteriology (being utterly mystified by those pesky viruses) and was happy in my job. Then the head of the rabies research laboratory found out that I knew about bats... "Come and work with us" he said. "But I don't know anything about viruses" I replied. "That's OK" he said, "you teach us about bats and we'll teach you about viruses". And so my career as a virologist began! Perhaps it was fate I should end up at Ninewells Hospital – where the UK's only case of bat rabies in a human presented.

Bats have long been associated with zoonoses, acting as a reservoir for the organisms and rarely becoming ill themselves. But the potential for overspill into humans is increasing as we invade their habitat, and interest in this area of research is growing. The EBRs is a week-long, tri-annual event. The 2008 conference was held in Transylvania (making it too good an opportunity to miss), attracting over 200 international delegates. The pace of the conference was frantic (up to 27 presentations each day). The microbiology section included bacterial, viral and parasitic topics, a few of which are summarised as follows:

Following the research in China that established Horseshoe bats as the most likely original host of the SARS coronavirus, Germany has begun prevalence studies of coronaviruses in their bat population. From a sample of 317 bats, the prevalence was 9.8%, predominately in juveniles and lactating females.

Researchers from UCL in Dublin and the Pasteur Institute in Paris gave a detailed review of bats and viruses, highlighting the difficulty in detecting new and emerging viruses, and the importance in zoonotic disease prevention.

German zoological scientists studied fatal bacterial infections in bats and presented their findings in several papers. The most common infections were *Pasturella* species but more unusual pathogens included *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis*. A single report of *Serratia liquefaciens* was commented on as an incidental finding, and not thought to have contributed to the death of the bat. However I have previously isolated this organism in a bat in my long-term care which subsequently died, and no other cause of death could be found.

So, was the trip worth it? Well I think so. Microbiology of (non-human) animals is often dismissed by medics as irrelevant. Aside from the veterinary medicine aspect, vital for animal health, the potential of zoonotic infections should never be ignored.



I returned from this conference positively brimming with enthusiasm for research of my own, after all, how many bat specialist virologists do you know? Now, let me at that PCR machine – I've got some bat poo to test...