

# Bradford ChemBio

What's been going on in our school for the past three months...  
March – May 2021



@UoBChem

@UoBBio



Have an item for the newsletter? Email [k.riches@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:k.riches@bradford.ac.uk) or [a.tedder@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:a.tedder@bradford.ac.uk) with 'Newsletter' in the heading

# Welcome!

## Welcome from your Newsletter Editors...

Summer is here! And for once, the decent weather appears to have come along with it ☺ The last quarter has been a very busy time for students and staff alike, with major assignment deadlines and marking loads. On the backdrop of what was a continuing lockdown, we would like to congratulate students on their continued efforts in a challenging educational time, and staff on their resilience, initiative and ability to stick to deadlines. Well done all!

In this edition, we are happy to report some fantastic funding successes that recognise the excellent research that is being conducted at the University of Bradford. **Dr Conor Meehan** and **Dr Briony Yorke** received the prestigious Academy of Medical Sciences Springboard awards (see page 3), and **Prof Nic Barry** secured a continuation of his highly sought after Royal Society University Research Fellowship. You can read all about this and our other funding successes on page 4.

This has also been a very successful quarter for PhD students passing their vivas. This is an incredibly special and personal moment for any researcher – the nerves and fears beforehand, the stimulating discussion during and the relief and 'what now?!' feeling afterwards. Congrats to you all – you are the future of science and we are proud that you started your journey here at Bradford!

And finally... a reminder that we are not machines and we all need a break. Book a holiday if you can, and try and explore a little bit of this wonderful island that we all call home.

**Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** and **Dr Andrew Tedder**



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

Our committee has completed a hand over and refreshing in both approach and staff. Starting in June, we will now have champions who will advocate on the school level and above for specific areas that are core to our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. These champions are:

- **Dr Conor Meehan** Chair and LGBTQ+
- **Dr Anais Pitto-Barry** Deputy chair and Parental/carer/sickness leave & support
- **Dr Briony Yorke** CARE/student
- **Dr Gisela Helfer** Gender
- **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** Mental health and neurodiversity
- **Dr Yvonne Nyathi** N-able
- **Dr Sobia Kauser** Race/BAME
- **Dr Juanvi Canet-Perez** Technical and non-academic staff
- **Dr Zak Hughes** Career progression
- **Dr Maria Katsikogianni** Flexible working
- **Prof Anne Graham** Culture and organisation

If you have anything you would like to raise regarding EDI, please contact any of the listed staff members or myself, and keep an eye out for what we'll be developing into the next academic year.

**Dr Conor Meehan, EDI Chair**



## Fond Farewell

We wish the best of luck to our Chemistry teaching technician **Heather Reeve** as she embarks on a new adventure. "As many of you might be aware I am leaving University of Bradford this year to pursue a teacher lifestyle. This hasn't been an easy decision as I love my job here at Bradford and I have been able to get involved with many different things including Athena Swan leading into EDOC and most recently I was involved in the start of a new scheme involving mental health. But in August I will be leaving everything behind to embark on a new adventure in the form of a PGCE up in Cumbria to be back with my partner. I have loved every minute being a technician within the teaching team helping develop different techniques and incorporating these into the teaching for the students. There will be some form of leaving do, COVID dependant, and I will circulate this closer to the time! Many thanks and best wishes going forward!"



## Promotions

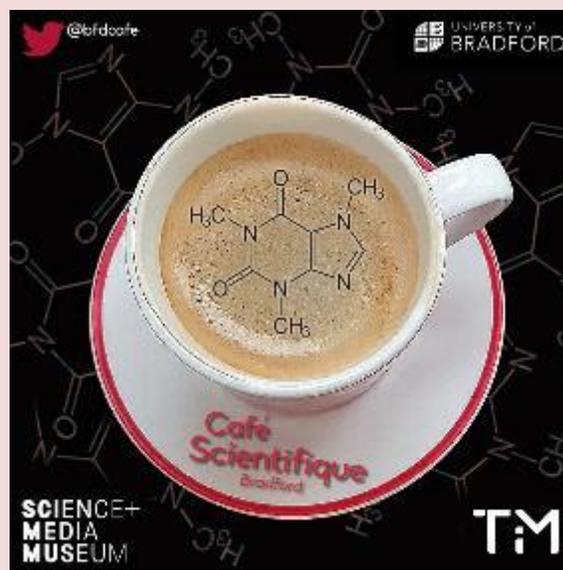
Congratulations to **Dr Jenny Waby** who has been promoted to Associate Professor, the School's first 9 to 10 under the new Bradford Academic process. As Director of Studies Jenny has been pivotal in working with our programme leaders during the pandemic and ensuring we have delivered our portfolio of learning and teaching programmes as effectively as we can during the most challenging of years. Jenny also led the successful external PSRB accreditation of the BMS programme with the IBMS in 2018. Jenny has also been hugely supportive to the HoS over the last 11 months.

We are also delighted that **Dr Anaïs Pitto-Barry** has been promoted to Assistant Professor in Inorganic Chemistry. Congratulations to both!

## Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy

Congratulations to **Kara Thornton** who has been awarded her D2 Fellowship of the HEA.

## Café Scientifique



## Administrative Role Changes

**Dr Clare Peyton** has been appointed as the School Interim **Director of Studies** during Dr Jenny Waby's maternity leave. The School is looking forward to working more closely with Clare on the School Exec on all matters relating to Learning and Teaching across the School. Congratulations to Clare! Thank you to everyone who applied, a number of people were interviewed for the position and it was a very strong field.

**Dr Sanjit Nayak**, **Dr Yvonne Nyathi** and **Dr Debbie Crawford** are joining **the School Admissions and Marketing Team** led by **Dr Andrew Tedder** to lead on and support International student recruitment, PGT recruitment and Outreach events respectively. Thank you to all for coming forward and this will help hugely with the ongoing recruitment of students.

**Dr Gisela Helfer** has been elected as the new **Programme Director for Bradford Café Scientifique**. She will oversee the annual programme of events and develop and disseminate an exciting and vibrant programme for the coming years. If you would like to host an event or suggest a speaker (internal or external) please get in touch with Gi.

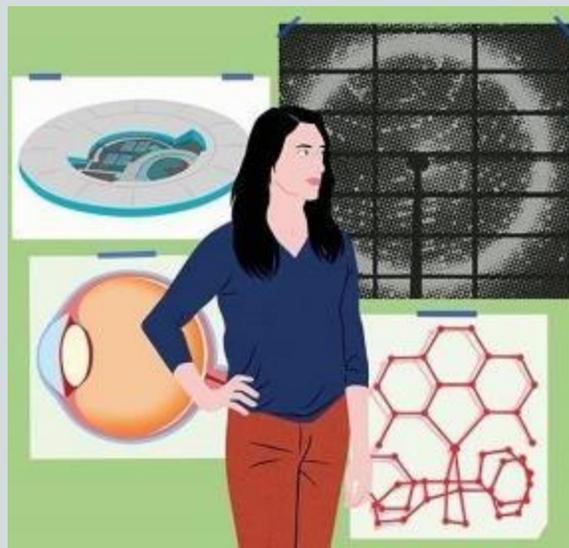
## Academy of Medical Sciences Springboard Award

Two Bradford researchers have been awarded grants from the **Academy of Medical Sciences** in this year's Springboard Round. **Dr Briony Yorke** and **Dr Conor Meehan** have each been awarded a grant of £100,000 to help them progress their research projects over the next two years. The Springboard is an early-career scheme for researchers within 5 years of their first full-time appointment.

Springboard offers a bespoke package of support to biomedical researchers at the start of their first independent post to help launch their research career.

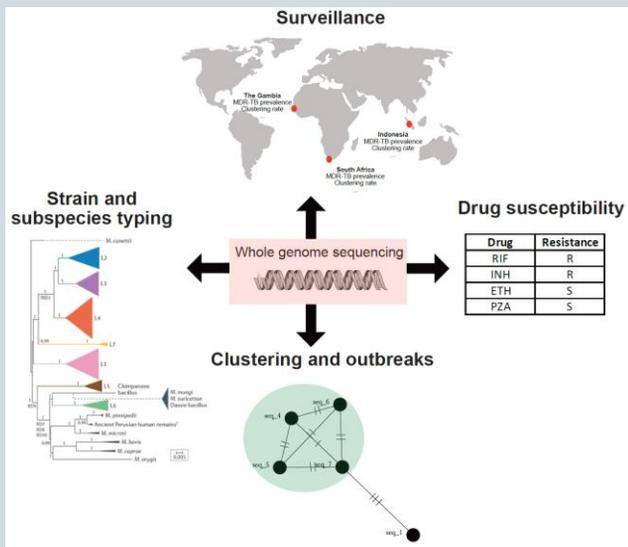
Dr Briony Yorke, Lecturer in Structural Biology/Biochem, is carrying out research looking at how cataracts develop, and the molecular mechanisms involved. With the funding she will create innovative videos showing the early stages of cataract development, which will feed into a wider project on developing new drugs to offer a safe alternative to cataract surgery.

Dr Conor Meehan, Assistant Professor, will use the funding to further his work looking at the spread of Mycobacterium tuberculosis (TB) and the flaws in tracking transmission due to DNA differences. His research aims to improve global accuracy of TB tracking and tracing and so help to quickly identify hotspots and reduce the number of TB transmissions.



The University of Bradford, led by the Springboard Champion **Professor Diana Anderson**, was invited to the scheme in 2017 and over the last four years has received five awards. The scheme welcomes applications from a broad range of research fields and supports experimental and theoretical approaches; the only key criterion is that the proposed project must demonstrate clear relevance to human health.

Professor Diana Anderson, Springboard Champion said: "The University of Bradford has some fantastic early career researchers who are helping solve real-world problems that affect millions of people. We have had great success with the Springboard scheme over the last four years and I am delighted that Dr Yorke and Dr Meehan are able to further their research with the help of this grant and look forward to seeing the results over the next two years."



## Biochimica et Biophysica Acta Rising Star Award

**Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** has been shortlisted for the **BBA Rising Star award in Molecular Basis of Disease**. This is an international competition across the suite of Biochimica et Biophysica Acta journals. As a short-listed finalist, Kirsten will produce a review article pertaining to her recent work and how this will influence the field in the future, to be published in a special edition across the BBA suite of journals in early 2022. The overall winner will then be selected from the journal editors. Kirsten is delighted to have been shortlisted and is looking forward to publicising the university of Bradford and the important work that we do to a global audience. Congratulations Kirsten!

## Higher Education Innovation Funding

The Centre for Skin Sciences has been awarded two **Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) grants** following the recent call. These grants are designed to foster collaborations between the university and SME companies, with a view to leading to larger industrial funding applications in the future.

**Dr David Ansell** secured £7,500 on a project entitled "Development of an assay culturing bacteria on human stratum corneum". David is the PI and **Dr Joe Taylor** and **Dr Maria Katsikogianni** are Co-I, with **Tecrea Ltd** as the Industry partner.

**Dr Steve Sikkink** with support from **Dr Gill Westgate** and **Russ Hodgetts** secured £9,895 HEIF funding to work on a project with **Follicum AB** entitled "Formulating for natural skin pigmentation" which will support new joint IP.

## UKEMS

**Dr Khaled Habas** has secured £5,000 funding from the **United Kingdom Environmental Mutagen Society (UKEMS)** to develop an *in vitro* test battery for assessment of male germ cell genotoxicity

Germline mutations resulting from exposure to genotoxic and mutagenic agents are of great concern because they affect not only the exposed generation but also may be transmitted to offspring and potentially affect further generations. This can result in impaired fertility as a result of embryonic or foetal death or heritable disease or abnormality in the offspring. *In vivo* tests can be used for the detection and study of germ-cell mutagens but have relatively low sensitivity, high expense and are very time. For these reasons and following the principle of the 3Rs, there is a major imperative in reproductive genotoxicity testing to develop *in vitro* methods that can reproducibly and sensitively detect DNA damage or a cellular response to genotoxic agents.

One advantage of *in vivo* assays is that they can take account of germ-cell type (phase) specificity of effects, which has long been a problem for *in vitro* assays. I have recently developed a test system for the detection of genotoxicity using primary cultures of rodent spermatogonia, spermatocytes and spermatids simultaneously, which has yielded data comparable to published data from *in vivo* assays but much more rapidly and requiring very many fewer animals. At present it is limited to the detection of effects on two end-points (DNA damage detected by Comet assay, and apoptosis) so this project will seek to increase the number of end-points used, to make our approach a more viable alternative to *in vivo* tests.

## Royal Society

Congratulations to **Prof Nic Barry** for securing a full 3-year **Royal Society University Research Fellowship Renewal award**. The award will enable Nic to continue his pioneering work on the synthesis and preclinical evaluations of anticancer metallodrugs and polymer nanoparticle conjugates.

The University Research Fellowship (URF) is the Royal Society's flagship fellowship programme which has supported the most promising early career scientists since 1983. The URF programme aims to support the next generation of research leaders undertaking cutting-edge research. Funding is initially provided for five years, with an opportunity for fellows in the penultimate year of this first term, to formally apply for an extension.

During his original award period, Nicolas and his team have unveiled the chemistry and biological properties of so called "electron-deficient organometallics", an understudied class of inorganic compounds (molecules which contains a metal). These molecules are highly potent against platinum-resistant and advanced *in vitro* cancer models whilst presenting very little toxicity against normal cells. Their modes of action against cancer cells are also different from the ones of cisplatin, which opens exciting perspectives for the treatment of difficult-to-treat cancers. Although some anticancer activity is retained in animals, the lack of water-solubility of the compounds preclude them to reach the tumours with a concentration high enough to shrink them. During his Renewal, the team will alter the chemical structures of the most promising compounds to overcome the identified issues. The lead compounds will then be progressed *in vivo* to confirm the unlocked anticancer potential of this family of molecules. As such, this project will create a milestone in the field of chemotherapy for treating cancers by allowing innovation and impact in the healthcare area with direct benefits for both patients and the NHS.

## Royal Society of Chemistry

**Dr Sanjit Nayak** and **Ms Queency Patricia Rosario** (2nd year BSc Chemistry student) have won an **Undergraduate Research Bursary from Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)** to carry out some exciting research over the summer.

## BSN

Congratulations to **Dr Katie Hanna** for receiving a £5K Project support grant from the British Society for Neuroendocrinology. The aim of the project is to investigate circadian rhythms of the naked mole rat. This was Katie's first ever grant application, so well done!

## Papers in Press...

Akhtar S, **Anderson D**, Azam TM, Malik A. **P53-mediated in vitro inhibition of PhIP-induced oxidative damage by myricetin bulk and nano forms in healthy lymphocytes** *Archives of Toxicology* 2021 in press

**Alhawmdeh M**, Isreb M, Aziz A, Jacob BK, **Anderson D**, **Najafzadeh M**. **Interferon-gamma liposome; a new delivery system to improve drug delivery in the treatment of lung cancer.** *European Respiratory Journal* 2021 in press

Goc G, Balci S, **Yorke BA**, Pearson AR, Karakus YY. **Probing the role of Val228 on the catalytic activity of Scytalidium catalase.** *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta (BBA) - Proteins and Proteomics* 2021;1869(8):140662

Hemmings KE\*, **Riches-Suman K\***, Bailey MA, O'Regan DJ, Turner NA, Porter KE. **Role of microRNA-145 in DNA damage signalling and senescence in vascular smooth muscle cells of Type 2 diabetic patients.** *Cells* 2021;10(4):919 (\*equal first author)

Mu W, Li S, Xu J, Guo X, Wu H, Chen Z, Qiao L-Y, **Helper G**, Lu F, Liu C, Wu Q-F. **Hypothalamic Rax+ tanycytes contribute to tissue repair and tumorigenesis upon oncogene activation in mice.** *Nature Communications* 2021 in press

Pečerska J, Kühnert D, **Meehan CJ**, Coscollá M, de Jong BC, Gagneux S, Stadler T. **Quantifying transmission fitness costs of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis.** *Epidemics* 2021 in press

**Piito-Barry A**. **Polymers and boron neutron capture therapy (BNCT): a potent combination.** *Polymer Chemistry* 2021 in press (part of the themed collection: Polymer Chemistry Pioneering Investigators 2021)

Sarker P, Lang W, Obaid R, **Rimmer S**. **Synthesis of poly(vinyl ether)s by chain-end capping with a silyl ketene acetal in ab initio cationic polymerisations.** *Arkivoc* (2021) (special invited paper celebrating the career of Philip Hodge)

**Swift T**, **Hoskins R**, Hicks J, Dyson E, Daignault M, Buckle D, Douglas CWI, MacNeil S, **Rimmer S**. **Semi-interpenetrating polyurethane network foams containing highly branched poly(N-isopropyl acrylamide) with vancomycin functionality.** *ACS Appl Bio Mater* 2021 in press

Van Rie A, de Viedma DG, **Meehan CJ**, Comas I, Heupink TH, De Vos E, de Oñate WA, Mathys V, Ceysens PJ, Groenen G, **González-Candelas F**, **Forier A**, **Juengst E**. **Whole-genome sequencing for TB source investigations: principles of ethical precision public health.** *IJTL* 2021;25(3)

## Other conferences

- **Dr Briony Yorke** chaired the biological structures group session 'Time-Resolved Crystallography' at the **British Crystallographic Society** spring meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** attended the **British Microcirculation and Vascular Biology Society** meeting and was a poster judge for their ECRs in April 2021
- **Dr Andrei Mardaryev** gave a webinar to the **American Hair Research Society** on 7th May on: "Hair follicle chemo-sensation: TRPM5 signaling is required for anagen maintenance".

## Book Chapter

**Dr Sanjit Nayak** has a book chapter titled "**Water purification: Removal of Heavy metals Using Metal-Organic Frameworks (MOFs)**" in a book "**Metal-Organic Frameworks in Biomedical and Environmental Field**"; Springer Nature, Editors: Horcajada, Patricia, Rojas Macías, Sara  
(Link: <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030633790>)

## BSID

**Prof Julie Thornton** attended the virtual annual meeting of the **British Society for Investigative Dermatology** (BSID) and presented three posters on behalf of CSS.

- **Rachael Williams**, **Gillian E Westgate**, Alison D Pawlus, **Julie Thornton**: Identifying biomarkers for ageing in the scalp dermal environment
- **Aaiad Al-Rikabi**, Desmond J Tobin, **Kirsten Riches-Suman**, **Julie Thornton**: Phenotypic differences in human dermal fibroblasts in the presence of type 2 diabetes mellitus and their response to TNF- $\alpha$
- **Lucy Trevor**, **Kirsten Riches-Suman**, **Ajay Mahajan**, **Julie Thornton**: Overcoming wound healing complications following radiotherapy in breast dermal fibroblasts through the influence of pre-adipocytes

## NCRG

**Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** attended the **Northern Cardiovascular Research Group** virtual meeting, hosted by Bradford, in May 2021. She chaired one of the sessions and also presented two posters from her students' work.

- **C Erinle**, **M Habtu**, **S Khan**, **A Uthayasooriyan**, **K Riches-Suman**. Can human smooth muscle cells from the dermal plexus act as a proxy for those from the saphenous vein? This poster highlighted the work that my final year undergraduate project students conducted in 2019-2020.
- **FT Moshapa**, **KAA Munro**, **JJL Williams**, **J Elies**, **K Riches-Suman**, **TM Palmer**. Stabilisation of suppressor of cytokine signalling 3 (SOCS3) to inhibit human saphenous vein smooth muscle cell proliferation and vascular stenosis. This poster showcased the final work from my PhD student **Florah Moshapa**, who successfully defended her thesis in April.

## Grow MedTech

**Dr Mojgan Najafzadeh** gave a talk at the **Grow MedTech** conference on her project "The use of AI (deep learning) in LGS test to diagnose cancer at an early stage". The benefit of the LGS test will be to offer front line staff a tool that will avoid the referral of healthy patients into cancer treatment pathways whilst identifying those at risk, even where symptoms are vague.

## Postgraduate Researcher Mental Health

In May, **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** attended the satellite programme for the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Postgraduate Researchers, from the **UK Council for Graduate Education**. The programme gave insights into the challenges that PGR students have faced throughout the pandemic and gave advice on how to facilitate a return to wellness through support and communication. Being open about our own feelings as members of staff can act in a way to give students 'permission' to admit to having difficulties and fears; this is a lesson that is also applicable to all our students (both undergraduate and postgraduate).

## Distance Learning

**Dr Conor Meehan** taught remotely on the **Molecular Data for Infectious Diseases (MID)** course at the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Belgium (<https://edu.itg.be/courses/molecular-data-for-infectious-diseases>). This course aims to provide advanced training, from field sample collection, through lab techniques to data analysis, in molecular biology research in resource-poor settings. Many students were joining remotely from their home countries around the world and Conor and the team were able to interact with experts in their fields and each other to build a support network and learn valuable skills not usually available in their own countries. Conor taught online module on next generation sequencing and an all day workshop on phylogenetics and epidemiology

## G floor Teaching Labs

This has been a very difficult time for all students undertaking laboratory-based courses, and we have taken real care and effort to provide lab experiences where we could in a Covid-safe environment. The **Chemistry technicians** have received some glowing feedback from their first, second and third year students about their limited time in the J-floor Chemistry Teaching Laboratories this past year:

'I loved Laboratory sessions'

'Thank you to everyone for the **support** and **help**'

'Hopefully I get more practicals for next year'

'Technicians were very helpful and friendly'

'**Technicians are amazing**, great help and have made me feel very comfortable'

'Technicians were amazing. All friendly and super helpful, give constructive criticism'

'**The COVID measurements put into place have been top tier made me feel safe**'

'Technicians very supportive and available when needed, very nice as well and felt comfortable with their help.'

'Technicians and demonstrators have been **extremely helpful** with guiding us through the practical's'

'**Every single technician** was very nice and friendly, helped and supported a lot throughout the year'

'Great lab technicians **credit to the university**'

'Technicians always helped and treated us as peers'

'Brilliant as always, thanks for everything'

'The technicians are amazing. They are a dream team and done everything & beyond especially with COVID. Wouldn't be in wet labs if they didn't do what they do'

'Without the technicians labs would have been a great struggle'

'Overall this year has been difficult due to COVID, however the labs once they were back were supported very well by the staff'

# Admissions and Outreach

## Admissions

From an admissions perspective, we have survived to the end of the semester two! That sounds very dramatic I know, but it's partially because as an admissions team, we have had a huge number of applicant experience days (AEDs), which have seen us informally interview hundreds of applicants. I cannot stress enough my gratitude to the team for doing this, particularly **Dr Mark Sutherland** and **Dr Alex Surtees** for leading the AEDs in their respective fields, and to everyone who participated, including: **Dr Gi Helfer**, **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman**, **Dr Jenny Waby**, **Dr Anna Snelling**, **Dr Anais Pitto-Barry**, **Dr Conor Meehan**, **Dr Jon Fletcher**, **Dr Pete Nichols**, **Dr Richard Telford** & **Dr Colin Seaton**.

Obviously, it isn't only staff members that have contributed to the success of the AEDs, we have had a huge amount of support from our incredible student ambassador teams. With the student led sessions being continually highlighted as the best part of the day.

The end of semester two this year also signals the end of our first complete recruitment cycle where we have 'interviewed' applicants. Anecdotally, we have seen a huge upturn in the number of applicants we see at these events (across both sides of the school), but is there evidence that these new AED events are driving conversion? Well, based on the number of offer holders who have put us down as either 'firm' or 'insurance' choice, the answer would seem to be a resounding yes. This is really positive news, and tied to the increased applicant numbers, shows the new admissions strategy appears to be moving in the right direction. Hopefully this puts us in a strong position for clearing...

The provisional clearing rotas for both Biomed and Chemistry have been shared with staff, so I think everyone knows what they are doing. If you are on the rota, but haven't yet signed up for the call training, please do so [here](#). Myself, the admissions leads and the programme leads will put together a cheat sheet of information for clearing, and will hold a brief 'training' session to allow you to ask any questions you might have. I will announce the date of that session as soon as possible.

There will be a clearing open day on **Thursday 12 August**. It is not clear yet whether this will be virtual, or on campus, but we suspect the latter. I will send an email round about volunteers for that as soon as I know. At the very least we should be expecting a small number of campus/facilities tours.

In other (but related) news, we have also been busy with both PG and UG virtual open days. In general, attendance at these events has been 'variable', but the recent events have been much better attended, with considerably more applicant participation. So thanks to all the staff and student ambassadors who have been involved in these events, including: **Dr Philip Drake**, **Dr Alex Surtees**, **Dr Colin Seaton** & **Dr Gi Helfer**.

Finally, I wish you all a great summer! Enjoy it as much as possible, and then let's make one big push to get over the line for clearing.

**Dr Andrew Tedder** Director of Admissions & Marketing

## IRIS

**Dr Anais Pitto-Barry** gave a keynote lecture at the 2021 **Conference of The Institute for Research In Schools**. IRIS develops opportunities for secondary students and post-16s from all backgrounds to participate in authentic research in school and make valuable, recognised contributions to the scientific community. More information about what they do on their website: <https://researchinschools.org/>

## Yorkshire Post

National Diabetes Prevention Week was held in May and the Yorkshire Post ran a feature on the exciting research that Bradford is doing to combat this health concern. The article picked up on the work that **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** has been undertaking with regards to cardiovascular disease and diabetes, as well as highlighting our fantastic links with clinicians and the Digital Health Enterprise Zone. <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/education/the-university-of-bradford-in-fight-to-tackle-the-big-diabetes-problem-in-the-city-3228732>

# Admissions and Outreach

## Café Scientifique

Café Scientifique has seen some outstanding talks and discussions in the recent months exploring the latest breakthroughs in science and research. While we are still operating virtually, we are working hard to be back in the National Science and Media Museum for the July event. The programme for the remainder of the academic year can be found on twitter @CafeScientifiqueBDF or the National Media Museum website <https://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/whats-on/cafe-scientifique>

The next event will take place on Thursday 17 June from 18:30 via Zoom. Professor P.B.Anand, Professor of Public Policy and Sustainable Development and Head of Peace Studies and International Development will discuss 'Is making cities sustainable a mission impossible'. Book your free place via the National Science and Media Museum.

On Thursday 22 July from 18:30 we welcome Dr Dominic Watt from the University of York. Dom is interested in forensic phonics and his talk will align with the start of the National Science and Media Museum new exhibition Sound Season.

Book your free place via the National Science and Media Museum.

## I'm a Scientist...

**Dr Philip Drake** took part in the "Im a Scientist get me out of here" online event for May. No, he did not get locked up in some remote castle laboratory and subjected to toe curling, taste bud retching, bizarre challenges. It was much worse, he was dropped into classes of school children to answer all their (science related) questions! Luckily he survived the ordeal but sadly did not win the final vote. On the way he managed to chat to over 700 school children from age 5 years to 18 years from across the UK and picked-up a few more twitter followers. The event was organised on line and involved signing up to school requests for scientists to form online panels to chat to their kids. At the end of each chat the kids could vote for their favourite scientist. Dr Drake found it hard to compete with the Jordan the palaeontologist (@JordanBestwick1), dinosaurs are just so much cooler than chemistry.....especially to 10 year olds! The conversations would jump around from the creation of the university and if anyone heard the Bang, to your favourite computer game and what kind of cheese you like! There was one long conversation with a 16 year old who was trying to work out what to do in their life, the student was toying with helping his dad on the building site, the panel suggested he thought about Architecture and Design (and possibly Chemistry). A fun time was had by all the 30



## BBC Radio

After a very successful debut in 2020, **Dr Gisela Helfer** was again invited to host the **Research Matters** radio show on BCB radio (106.6FM and online) for International Women's day. The show was first broadcast on 7 March 2021 at 12 noon. The programme featured **Professor Julie Thornton**, Director of the Centre for Skin Sciences. Julie discussed the range of projects that take place in the Centre for Skin Sciences, from wound healing to hair biology. Gisela was also joined by **Dr Clare Peyton**, Associate Professor in Biophysical Chemistry. Clare gave an insight into her research on proteins and their involvement in amyloidosis, a group of diseases caused by a build-up of abnormal proteins.



## The Conversation

**Dr Tom Swift** was invited to write an article for the Conversation that was published in May: **A Jane Austen quote encoded in plastic molecules demonstrates the potential for a new kind of data storage**

## PhD Vivas

We have had a bumper crop of PhD students passing their vivas over the last few months – massive congratulations to you all for achieving your PhDs in the midst of a global pandemic!

In late March, **Florah Moshapa** successfully defended her PhD thesis, with **Prof Anne Graham** and **Dr Phil Drake** amongst the examining team. Florah studied her PhD on the role of SOCS3 turnover and regulation in human saphenous vein smooth muscle cells signalling and function and was supervised by **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** and Dr Jacobo Elies (School of Pharmacy) and Prof Tim Palmer (Hull-York Medical School).

The following week, **Lucy Trevor** passed her defence. Lucy is one of the Plastic Surgery and Burns Research Unit fellows and was studying the complications of wound healing following radiotherapy and whether adipose-derived stem cells from the stromal vascular fraction can have a beneficial impact. She was supervised by **Prof Julie Thornton** and **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman**.

Postgraduate Research student **Branka Franicevic** is co-supervised by **Dr Jonathan Fletcher** and is based on H floor of the Richmond Building, although her home School is Archaeological Sciences. She was awarded her PhD in early April. Her research has looked at environmental and microbiological factors affecting the decay of analogues for human body decomposition from a forensic perspective, with Andrew Wilson and Rob Janaway being the other members of the supervisory team.

Towards the end of May, **Maysa Alhawamdeh** passed her PhD viva. She has been researching a new technique termed interferon gamma liposomal delivery system and whether this can improve drug delivery in the treatment of cancer. Maysa was supervised by **Prof Diana Anderson** and **Dr Mojgan Najafzadeh**.

**Paul Norton** (supervised by **Prof Julie Thornton** and **Dr Maria Katsikogianni**) has also passed his transfer viva and is progressing with his PhD, with a view to joining the illustrious ranks of those above in the next year or so.



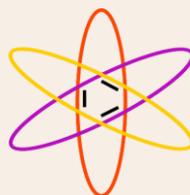
## PhD Examinations

**Dr Gisela Helfer** was external examiner for two PhD thesis (University of Tromso and University of Otago):

- Daniel Appenroth, Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics, Department of Arctic and Marine Biology, UiT The Arctic University of Norway: Circadian-based processes in the high arctic: activity, thermoregulation and photoperiodism in the Svalbard ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta hyperborea*)
- Kaj Kamstra, Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Physiology, University of Otago, New Zealand: Leptin and glucose homeostasis in the zebrafish

## Student Societies

We have two societies for our students – **ChemSoc**, and the **Biomedical Science Society**. Did you know you can even join both if you fancy it? Please keep an eye out as to how to join and all the different events that they put on – it's a great part of being an undergraduate. While you're at it, why not follow the School on twitter - @UoBBio and @UoBChem to find out all our latest developments.



## ChemSoc

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!



Are you interested in helping out with the newsletter? Do you want to quiz your professors on how they reached their positions? If so, then we would like to hear from you! We are looking for volunteers from either Chemistry or Biomedical Science (or indeed both) who would be interested in conducting the 'Meet Your Professor' interviews that are normally found at the end of this newsletter. All it takes is a ~1 hour timeslot with yourself and the professor, and then a write up of what you discussed. It's easy, and our two roving reporters from last year (**Absari Choudhury** and **Ridha Ali**) really enjoyed the experience. If you would like to volunteer, please contact **Dr Kirsten Riches-Suman** ([k.riches@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:k.riches@bradford.ac.uk)) or **Dr Andrew Tedder** ([a.tedder@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:a.tedder@bradford.ac.uk)) – we're looking forward to hearing from you!

## Student Ambassadors

The University are currently recruiting for student ambassadors, who play a key role in supporting recruitment activities. Student ambassadors act as advocates for the university and their degree programmes, working on events such as Open days and UCAS fairs, as well as acting as role models, helping to raise aspirations and awareness of higher education. Outbound calling ambassadors help to encourage attendance at events such as open days, as well as supporting enquirers and applicants with any questions they may have about university life.

If you are interested, you can fill out an application form [here](#)!

We are also asking all staff to please help us in promoting this opportunity to ensure we have the best advocates for our courses and the university. You can do this by encouraging students to enquire by emailing [ambassador@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:ambassador@bradford.ac.uk) before the application **deadline of 23:59 on Thursday 17th October**

## Join our LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn is a great tool for building your professional network, showcasing your skills and can even lead to employers contacting you, rather than the other way around. Here at Bradford we have our own LinkedIn groups so please, sign up for your free LinkedIn profile at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and join the community!



**Bradford University School of Biomedical Sciences**  
**Bradford University School of Chemistry**