

Registered Charity
No 274839

Wessex Medical Research

Funding research to fight disease



The newsletter of WESSEX MEDICAL TRUST

Autumn 2016

NEW FOREST SHOW 2016

Late July once again saw us at the New Forest Show. We had a bigger and more robust tent (unlike last year, it didn't tend to move every time the wind blew!) and this permitted a wider range of exhibits. We were very pleased to be awarded the trophy for the Best Local Stand, particularly as one of the main judging criteria was that our exhibitors (that is, the researchers) went out of their way to engage with the visiting public. As our picture shows, there were plenty of smiling faces to welcome the trophy.



The surgeons brought along some of the devices they use to train clinicians in keyhole surgery techniques. These proved especially popular, with queues forming at peak periods of visitors wishing to try their hand.

We weren't really aware that there was a competition and we certainly didn't notice when the judges came to visit—apparently, their approach is to arrive unannounced. So, imagine our surprise when, towards the end of the first day of the Show, an official appeared and presented us with this rather splendid trophy and the accompanying certificates. We were told that some 400 of the trade stands at the Show were eligible for the prize in this category so we are particularly proud to have won.



Wessex Immunology Group produced a very colourful and interactive stand which appealed to children of all ages!

FUTURE OF THE TRUST

At the end of June, Wendy Burchall retired as Fundraising Manager after over 15 years of devoted service to Wessex Medical Research. Following much consideration the Trustees, with great sadness, have decided that for the future, the activities of Wessex Medical Research should move to an all-volunteer basis. As a result, Laura-Jo Smith has also now left to pursue her career in other areas. We send both Wendy and Laura-Jo our very best wishes for the future and thank them for their valuable contribution to the Trust's past success. We have been in discussion with the various volunteer groups and hope that at least some of them will feel able to continue to organise events on our behalf from time to time. Our principal source of income remains legacies and in that regard, we have been fortunate recently in receiving a number of significant bequests: therefore, our ability to continue our core function of providing grants for medical research, particularly relating to early-career researchers, is presently well supported.

PhD Studentship

As the result of our ongoing joint venture arrangements with a number of other grant-giving charities, we have been able to award the following four-year PhD studentship of £80,000. The successful supervisor—Dr Jane Collins—is now in the process of recruiting her student to commence their research course in October 2016.

Dr Jane Collins

*Associate Professor of Molecular Cell Biology,
Faculty of Medicine*

PhD Studentship jointly funded with Rosetrees Trust and British Lung Foundation

“Dissecting the WISP signalling network in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.”

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a devastating lung disease with a median survival of only 3 years from diagnosis, worse than many cancers. Our research aims to identify novel pathways that cause lung scarring in IPF with a view to developing new therapies.



Innovation Grants 2016

The Trustees have this year awarded four Innovation Grants, each of up to £20,000, to the following:

Dr Matthew Blunt
Faculty of Medicine

“Overcoming IL-4 mediated drug resistance in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia .”
Developing new treatments for patients with blood cancer resistant to current therapy.

Dr Dario Carugo
*Faculty of Engineering
and the Environment*

“UltraStem - An Ultrasonic Toolbox for on-demand Modulation of Stem Cell Fate.”
Engineering solutions to improve the differentiation of stem cells with potential application in stem cell transplants for cancer and immune diseases.

Dr Sandi Dheensa
Faculty of Medicine

“Using digital health to facilitate the clinical integration of whole-genome sequencing”
Developing mobile apps to help patients and their families to understand the meaning of new genetic tests.

Dr Edward Rogers
Institute for Life Sciences

“Quantifying neuronal changes during age-related hearing loss with polarisation-contrast imaging.”
Using new imaging tools to understand how hearing is lost with age.

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