



SPPIRIT

Scottish Parasitology Partnership in
Research, Innovation and Training

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SPPIRIT Network Newsletter

April 2023

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Spotlight!

Congratulations to both leaders and role models in parasitology named below.

Dr Mattie Pawlowic - Principle Investigator, Lecturer and Sir Henry Dale Fellow at the University of Dundee

The **RSE Dame Anne McLaren medal** recognizes exceptional achievements in the life sciences by an early career researcher. We are delighted that one of SPPIRIT's founding committee members, Dr Pawlowic, is the recipient of the RSE Dame Anne McLaren Medal for commitment to teaching, training and research in cryptosporidiosis disease control.

Dr Pawlowic has also been honoured with a **Biochemical Society Early Career Researcher Award** that recognises "eminent bioscientists" and "exceptional ECRs".





Dr Susan Wyllie – Principle Investigator at the University of Dundee

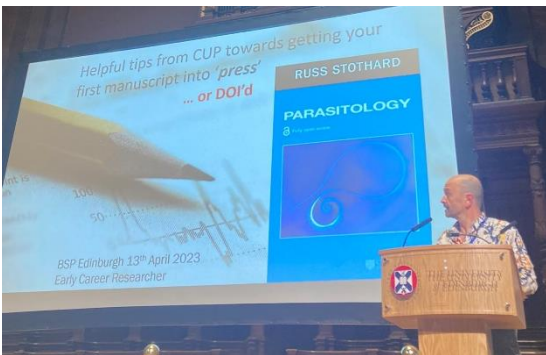
Dr Wyllie was awarded the **CA Wright Memorial Medal** at the British Society for Parasitology's Spring meeting, which recognizes distinguished research leaders that have made an outstanding contribution to the discipline of parasitology.

Early Career Researchers Session at BSP

The British Society for Parasitology (BSP) Spring Meeting took place in Edinburgh between 11th-14th April. On 13th April, SPPIRIT hosted a well-attended session at the meeting dedicated to Early Career Researchers, organised and chaired by a sub-committee of the SPPIRIT network.



The session was split into two halves. The first half focused on advice on publishing and was sponsored by the Cambridge University Press (CUP) journal *Parasitology*. First up, Dr Russell Stothard (Editor and Chief of CUP) gave attendees an overview of the publication process as a whole, from writing to final publication. Alison Paskins (Manager CUP Editor for *Parasitology*) followed up by giving an overview of the publication process, particularly from the perspective of the publisher.



This included key guidance on the differences between different open access publication options. Section one was rounded off with talks from [x] and John Archer (PhD student at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene) who provided insight into their own publication experiences as ECRs. This was followed by an open forum in which speakers were invited to form a panel and to field questions from the audience. A key point raised during the forum was the lack of formal training support for ECRs to review manuscripts.

Section two focused on advice for grant proposals and was opened by Charis Wilson from the University of Edinburgh's Central Research Office. Charis provided information on the different documentation required to put a large funding proposal together and the typical procedures and timelines involved. Annamaria Carusi (Inter-change) gave an insightful talk on *real* interdisciplinary research with lots of important points to consider, particularly when applying for funding as a collaboration/consortium. The final talk of the session was from Ally Hughes (SULSA), who gave an overview of how SULSA is supporting ECRs, such as providing seed funding for ECRs to generate pilot data for grants or to springboard an independent collaboration with another lab. Similar to section one, this section finished up with a forum in which our speakers formed a panel and fielded questions from the audience.



We are grateful to BSP, CUP and all of our invited speakers for supporting this valuable session.

SPPIRIT sub-committee members for the organisation and running of the BSP ECR session included Dr Emma Briggs (University of Edinburgh), Dr Kirsty McWilliam (University of Edinburgh), Dr Katie Hildersley (Moredun Research Institute) and Dr David Smith (Moredun Research Institute).

- *Dr David Smith, Moredun Research Institute*

SPPIRIT mentoring scheme: tell us your thoughts!

Are you interested in being a mentor or mentee? Following a pilot mentoring scheme for fellowship applicants, we are gauging interest in a wider mentoring scheme open to all SPPIRIT members. Please fill in [this short survey](#) to help us identify unmet mentoring needs in the community so that we can design a scheme that complements existing resources.

Leadership in a Laboratory Environment course

SPPIRIT sponsored three members to attend the Royal Society for Biology's *Leadership in a Laboratory Environment* course in February 2023. Over two half days, the course covered teamwork as well as leadership models, styles, and strategies specifically for laboratory-based research. Participants gained a better theoretical understanding of leadership and practical leadership skills that can otherwise be difficult to develop as a PhD student or postdoc. One attendee "found it highly beneficial and valuable. The course was very interactive and engaging, with lots of opportunities for discussions, group activities, and case studies." Although the course was virtual, participants "were constantly encouraged to discuss topics in private chat rooms with a variable person or small cohort of participants from different backgrounds and industries. This provided another way of learning from each other's experiences and perspectives."

SPPIRIT is keen to support our members' career development going forward. Please get in touch with suggestions for future sponsorship opportunities.

- *Dr Melanie Ridgway, University of Dundee*

Public Engagement Workshop: How to Design & Future-Proof Engagement

As a last-minute addition to the BSP2023 program, our public engagement workshop on Thursday April 13th was aiming to inspire you to integrate public engagement with your own research and to meet colleagues with similar interests. It was amazing to see a full house, and so many ECRs.

We focussed on the different types of outreach you can engage with, and on how to make public engagement durable and sustainable within your research (slides can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yx4yzkjs>). We were delighted to see your enthusiasm for outreach, and hope we can work towards integrating more outreach into our research, including conferences. You don't need to be either a scientist or a public engagement person, you can be both at the same time!

We've highlighted how important it is to combine your own goals with that of the people we engage with, and our audience noted that they'd really like to see that all universities and funders appreciate the importance of outreach, and see it as part of research instead of an extracurricular activity. Outreach helps disseminate the results of our research, inspires others to do science, and in addition to being very motivating (let's admit – being a scientist is quite a cool job, but we need to be reminded of that once in a while), it really helps us develop our skills from communication to designing, planning and evaluating projects.

Many of you participated in our competition during the poster sessions and the temporary parasite tattoos provided by SPPIRIT were quite a hit (#ShowUsYourSPPIRIT). Hopefully, there will be more of those next year. Going forward, we hope to start building a parasitology public engagement community, with opportunities to share resources, ideas, knowledge and more. In the mean time – we love to chat, and you know where to find us.



- *Hannah Bialic* (Hannah.Bialic@glasgow.ac.uk) & *Petra Schneider* (Petra.Schneider@ed.ac.uk)

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