

Connective Issues



BSMB Newsletter

Committee:

Prof. Ray Boot-Handford (Chairman), Prof. John Couchman (Secretary),
Dr. Graham Riley (Treasurer), Dr Ann Canfield, Dr David Young,
Dr Jelena Gavrilovich, Dr Wael Kafienah, Dr Mandy Plumb, Dr Tonia Vincent and
Dr Chris Murphy

Registered Charity no. 281399

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Editorial

John Couchman

Happy New Year to all our members – and welcome to Connective Issues. As this is our 75th issue, I have invited short articles from two of our members. Doreen Ashhurst, one of the founder members of what, in our previous incarnation, was The British Connective Tissue Society, provides a look back over the past 30 years. Then Emma Blain, the BSMB Committee's postdoctoral representative and co-organiser of 2008's highly successful Cardiff meeting, gives a view on the BSMB from a younger member's perspective. Thanks to both, and I hope you enjoy their commentaries.

In 2010, we look forward to a busy year for the Society and the membership. We return to the usual format of two meetings in the year. The first, on **March 29th – 30th** in Manchester, organised by Ann Canfield, and the second in Norwich on **September 6th -7th**, organised by Jelena Gavrilovic. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us. The usual mix of excellent science and camaraderie are on the agenda for both meetings. Details of the Spring meeting are included below.

After their respective meetings, however, Ann and Jelena will complete their terms on the BSMB Committee. We thank them for their many contributions and enthusiasm over the past 3 - 4 years. Therefore, we are now seeking two replacements on the Committee, and a request for nominations is included later in the newsletter. In addition, after many years of distinguished service to the BSMB, Graham Riley's tenure as Honorary Treasurer will end at the March Annual General Meeting. A notice concerning our search for a new Treasurer is below.

Please note the proposed changes to the **BSMB Constitution**; details are on page 9. We ask members to vote on these changes.

I welcome feedback and articles for the newsletter. The next submission deadline is June 20. Finally, I would like to wish all BSMB members a successful and rewarding 2010.

Chairman's Letter

Ray Boot-Handford

Dear Fellow Matrix Biologists,

Let me first wish you a happy, prosperous and scientifically productive New Year.

As we enter a new decade which is bound to see the global economic crisis have a significant impact upon the levels of funding for higher education and research, I am pleased to be able to state that The BSMB is in a strong position to face the forthcoming challenges. Membership has held up reasonably well following the changes to subscription rates instigated last year and we as a committee will be discussing ways of maximising our membership numbers over the coming year. Our meetings continue to be both well attended and scientific successes. Most conferences, as a result, end up generating a slight financial surplus which is used to support our enhanced and generous travel bursary programme (see website for details).

The committee has spent effort in the past few months considering the refining the aims and objectives of the Society. This introspection is demanded of all Charities by the Charity Commission and we have been ably led in this process by our retiring Treasurer, Graham Riley. As a result, we will be proposing minor changes to our constitution for approval at the AGM in Manchester in the Spring and we plan additions to the website to enhance public engagement and understanding of matrix biology particularly in relation to disease.

In a Society such as ours, the Treasurer plays a pivotal role in that without a sound and secure financial base, none of our activities are possible. Not only does the Treasurer maintain our accounts and investments ensuring that they are audited for presentation at the AGM, but he also reports annually to the Charity Commission on the Society's behalf and of course, advises the committee on the level of funding available for various activities. Graham Riley must retire from this position in the Spring

having served the maximum period of office allowable under our constitution of 6 years. Graham had already served 3 years as an ordinary committee member prior to being elected treasurer. Graham has proved a most successful Treasurer and leaves the Society in a strong and healthy financial position. This is no mean feat given that in the past 5 years The Society has instigated a number of prestigious prizes (Fell-Muir and Young Investigator), considerably expanded the level of support given to travel bursaries and employed a part-time administrator (Jane Lohmann). In addition, Graham has negotiated and organised the modernisation of our payment procedures so that we can now pay for conferences and membership on-line and in the last couple of years he has also assumed responsibility for our website. On behalf of the Society, I extend our sincere thanks to Graham for all of his hard work and dedication.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead for matrix biology. Society meetings in Manchester on vascular biology in the spring and in Norwich on inflammation and matrix in the autumn flank the FECTS meeting in Davos in July so there are many opportunities for us to meet and discuss our science – please note that the BSMB provides bursaries to members for each of these meetings. Finally, I wish to encourage all eligible members to consider standing for the committee positions that become vacant this spring (details included below). Helping promote matrix biology through the Society is a rewarding occupation that provides opportunities to influence the research field in the UK and develop conference programmes covering your own specific interests.

With best wishes for the New Year.

BSMB 2010 Spring Meeting

‘Vascular Matrix in Health and Disease’

Organised by Ann Canfield & Anna Fildes (Meeting administrator)

March 29th – 30th

Hulme Hall, University of Manchester

This meeting will bring together researchers at the forefront of cellular, molecular, translational and in vivo research in vascular biology. The programme includes excellent international keynote speakers, interactive poster sessions and short oral communications selected from the abstracts. Sessions include vascular development, stem cells & vascular regeneration, angiogenesis, vascular matrix in pathology and a BSMB Society session which includes talks from outside the major theme of the meeting. Prof. Gill Murphy (University of Cambridge), the recipient of this year's Fell-Muir Award to honour her achievements in the field of Matrix Biology, will also present a lecture entitled: ‘Metalloproteinases - from demolition squad to master regulators’. In addition, a presentation on funding & fellowship opportunities available from the British Heart Foundation will be given by Professor Jeremy Pearson (Associate Medical Director, BHF). An outline of the meeting is shown below:

Session 1 – Vascular Development

Prof. Charlie Little (University of Kansas, USA)

Prof. Bob Mecham (Washington University in St Louis, USA)

Session 2 – Stem Cells & Vascular Regeneration

Prof. Cay Kielty (University of Manchester, UK)

Session 3 – Angiogenesis

Prof Bjorn Olsen (Harvard University, USA)

Dr Holger Gerhardt (London, UK)

Session 4 – BSMB Open Session

Prof. Charles Streuli (University of Manchester, UK)

Prof. Mark Ginsberg (University of California, San Diego, USA)

Session 5 – Vascular Matrix in Pathology

Dr. Sarah George (University of Bristol, UK)

Prof. Elena Aikawa (Harvard University, USA)

Prof. Checco Ramirez (Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, USA)

Each session will also include **short talks selected from the abstracts**. There will be **two extended poster sessions** (with refreshments), and the invited speakers have kindly agreed to judge the posters eligible for prizes.

The **BSMB Annual General Meeting** will be held during the course of the meeting. All BSMB full, student and honorary members are encouraged to attend.

Meeting venue: The meeting will be held at **Hulme Hall** which is part of the University of Manchester campus and is located just 1.5 miles from Manchester city centre in leafy surroundings. The lectures, poster sessions, meals and accommodation (in single en-suite rooms) will all be on site. Wi-Fi is available in the catering areas, the main theatre and lounge, along with some of the bedrooms.

The **conference dinner** will be held in the [Whitworth Art Gallery](#), a 5 minute walk from Hulme Hall. A pre-dinner wine reception will be held in the Gulbenkian Room which houses displays from the gallery's modern collection. This will be followed by a 3 course dinner with wine in the stunning South Gallery which overlooks Whitworth Park and houses large modern artworks. The dinner will be catered by a multi-award winning local company, [The Modern Caterer](#), who pride themselves on the ethical sourcing of local and sustainable, seasonal produce. A DJ/music will be set up for after the meal and a cash bar will be provided.

Key Dates

- Registration, which is already open, closes **1st March 2010**. After this date, a late fee of £20 will apply. Please register now!
- Abstract submission closes **12th February 2010**.
- Bursary application closes **12th February 2010**. Successful applicants will be notified on or shortly after **24th February 2010**.

Please go to <http://www.bsmb.ac.uk> for details and further meeting information.

Meeting Contacts:

ann.canfield@manchester.ac.uk
anna.fildes-2@manchester.ac.uk

Conference Bursaries from the BSMB

Ann Canfield

Bursaries are available to support members of the society to attend meetings relevant to matrix biology. Applicants should be non-tenured scientists, preferably at an early stage of their research career and unlikely to have access to travel funds. For this reason, preference is given to young researchers such as graduate students and early post-doc (less than 6 years post-doc). Several types of bursaries are available:

- Bursaries to attend BSMB meetings
 - Conference Presenter Bursaries
 - Conference Reporter Bursaries
- Bursaries to attend meetings organised by the Federation of European Connective Tissue Societies (FECTS) and the American Society for Matrix Biology (ASMB)
- Bursaries to attend other national and international meetings with a matrix biology theme

All applications for bursaries must be sent by e-mail to Dr. Ann Canfield (ann.canfield@manchester.ac.uk), **not** to the conference organiser. Further information regarding eligibility and deadlines is available on the BSMB website (www.bsmb.ac.uk).

Meetings in 2010

In addition to our own spring and fall meetings in Manchester and Norwich, respectively, this year has a busy meetings calendar. The XXIInd FECTS meeting will be held in Davos on July 3rd – 7th, organised by the German Society of Connective Tissue Research and the Swiss Society of Matrix Biology. This will also be a joint meeting with the International Society of Matrix biology. Meeting details can be found at www.facts.eu

In a further link with the German Society, the BSMB will be contributors to their Annual Meeting in Frankfurt, organised by Prof. Liliana Schaefer. The dates are March 18th – 20th, and details can be found at www.dgbf.de. We shall contribute one session, chaired by Graham Riley, with all the speakers drawn from our membership. We appreciate the kind invitation from the German Society to participate in this meeting, a new venture for the BSMB. Members who are interested to attend can register at the reduced, member, rate. **Late note:** a few rooms are available in Frankfurt for this meeting at no cost. If you are interested, please contact Graham Riley (Graha.Riley@uea.ac.uk).

Later in the year, the American Society for Matrix Biology will hold its meeting on October 24th - 27th in Charleston, South Carolina. Details can be found on their website (www.asmb.net). For all these meetings there are opportunities to apply for BSMB bursaries.

Request for Nominations - BSMB Committee

The BSMB Committee is seeking to fill two places on its Committee that will become vacant in March 2010. The new incumbents will then take their place on the Committee at the Manchester meeting in March 2010. The usual term of office is three years.

Any current BSMB member in good standing is eligible for nomination. Committee members formulate policy for the Society and there is a major responsibility for the organisation of BSMB meetings. It is expected that each Committee member will take a major part in planning and organisation of one BSMB meeting in the course of their tenure. Committee members should be available to attend most Committee meetings that coincide with our conferences, but also attend one or two further meetings per year, usually in Birmingham. In the past these have been in the winter (December/January) and summer (June/July).

We encourage Society members to become involved in the future of the BSMB. Candidates should forward their CV and statement of interest to Ms. Jane Lohmann (J.M.Lohmann@bristol.ac.uk). In the event that we receive more than two nominations, an election may be held, in line with our Constitution. Informal enquiries about these vacancies can be made with the Secretary, John Couchman by e-mail (john.couchman@bric.ku.dk) or phone (+45 353 25670).

**CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS IS
FEBRUARY 15, 2010.**

BSMB Treasurer

The current BSMB Honorary Treasurer, Dr. Graham Riley, completes his term of office at the March 2010 meeting of our Society. Therefore, we have begun the search for his successor.

The Honorary Treasurer is one of three Officer posts in the BSMB (along with the Chairman and Honorary Secretary). The incumbent is responsible for the finances of the BSMB, which includes assembling financial statements, arranging oversight by professional accountants and reporting to the BSMB membership as well as The Charity Commission. Together with the Committee, the treasurer assists with formulating policy, and has important roles in liaising with BSMB meeting organisers.

The Honorary Treasurer shall not normally hold that office for a term of more than three years. In any case, he/she shall not hold that office for more than six consecutive years, but they shall be eligible for election to any other office in the Society. The term of office will begin at the March 2010 BSMB meeting. It is an expectation that the Treasurer will be available to attend a very high proportion of BSMB Committee meetings and conferences through his/her term of office. It is anticipated that the new Treasurer will attend the March 2010 meeting to take office.

The BSMB Committee has nominated Dr. David Young (Newcastle University) for this position and is delighted that David has accepted this nomination. David is currently serving on the Committee and is organising a BSMB meeting in Newcastle scheduled for the autumn of 2011.

However, further nominations can be made by the membership. Nominations for this post can be made by any 2 current members of the BSMB. Nominations, together with the written consent of the proposed nominee should be forwarded to the Honorary Secretary, Professor John Couchman, by **Monday 15th February, 2010**. They can be sent by e-mail to john.couchman@bric.ku.dk

In the event of more than one nomination, a ballot of the membership by e-mail will be held. To this end, it would be helpful if nominees can send a brief (one page) CV together with a short statement outlining their aspirations for the Society should they be elected.

John Couchman, Honorary Secretary, BSMB, January 2010.

Current BSMB Committee

Officers:

Chairman, Prof. Ray Boot-Handford (University of Manchester; ray.boot-handford@manchester.ac.uk)
Honorary Secretary, Prof. John Couchman (University of Copenhagen; john.couchman@bric.ku.dk)
Honorary Treasurer, Dr. Graham Riley (University of East Anglia; Graham.Riley@uea.ac.uk)

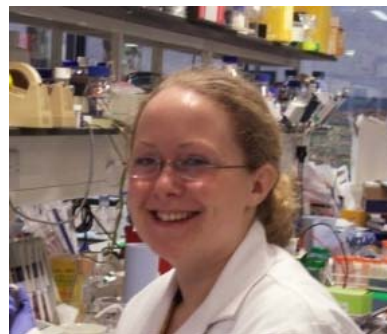
Elected and Seconded Members:

Dr Jelena Gavrilovic (University of East Anglia; j.gavrilovic@uea.ac.uk)
Dr Ann Canfield (University of Manchester; ann.canfield@manchester.ac.uk)
Dr David Young, (Newcastle University; d.a.young@ncl.ac.uk)
Dr. Mandy Plumb (University of Aberdeen; a.plumb@rgu.ac.uk)

Dr. Wael Kafienah (University of Bristol; w.z.kafienah@bristol.ac.uk)
Dr. Tonia Vincent (Kennedy Institute for Rheumatology, Imperial College London t.vincent@imperial.ac.uk)
Dr. Chris Murphy (Kennedy Institute for Rheumatology, Imperial College London c.murphy@imperial.ac.uk)

Co-opted Members:

Prof. Bruce Caterson (Cardiff University; caterson@cardiff.ac.uk)
Prof. Anthony Hollander (University of Bristol; A.Hollander@bristol.ac.uk)
Dr. Emma Blain (Postdoctoral Representative, Cardiff University; blain@cardiff.ac.uk)
Eleanor Jones (Student Representative, University of East Anglia; eleanor.r.jones@uea.ac.uk)



Eleanor Jones, the new student representative on the BSMB Committee

BSMB 2009 Meeting Report and Abstracts

Abstracts and the meeting report from the **BSMB/BRS 2009 joint meeting** held at University College London will be published in early 2010 in the International Journal of Experimental Pathology. The journal and the editor, Dr. David Katz are gratefully acknowledged for their continuing support, especially of the BSMB Fell-Muir award, which in 2009 was presented to Professor Tim Hardingham. The meeting report can be also accessed on the BSMB website (<http://www.bsmb.ac.uk>).

Welcome to New Members!

We welcome the following new members and student members to the BSMB.

Dr. James Whiteford and Dr. Taylan Demirci (Queen Mary University of London), Dr. Cleo Bonnet, Dr. Anwen Williams and Marisol Vazquez (Cardiff University), Jonathan Howe, Sally Thirkettle and Richard Kelwick (University of East Anglia), Dr. Philip Sawle (Northwick Park & St. Marks, Northwest London Hospitals NHS Trust) and Ewa Mularczyk, Louise Kung, Josphe Robertson, Mark Howard, Helen Corby, Michal Dudek, Nikki Paul, Margaux Horn, Kate Williamson, Andrew Hamilton, Despina Soteriou and Douglas Dyer (University of Manchester).

We hope you find membership of the Society to be both enjoyable and rewarding

Reflections on the past 30 years.

Doreen E. Ashhurst

Extracellular matrix biology became an established discipline in the 1960s, following the application of the newly developed techniques of electron microscopy and X-ray diffraction to collagen and elastin and new biochemical techniques to the glycosaminoglycans (mucopolysaccharides). Groups of researchers in Europe and the USA formed informal clubs to exchange results and ideas. In Europe, the clubs started to come together every two years for a FECTS (Federation of European Connective Tissue Clubs) meeting. It is an interesting, but largely forgotten, fact that people working in the glue and leather industries were instrumental in the formation of collagen clubs; in the US there was a West Coast Glue Club!

In Britain there were originally two clubs, the Collagen and Mucopolysaccharide Clubs. The accumulating evidence for the interactions between the fibrillar and other macromolecules within the matrix made the

members of the two Clubs increasingly aware that they needed to keep abreast of new developments in both collagen and proteoglycan biochemistry and hence the British Connective Tissue Society (BCTS) was formed.

On September 19 1980, the first meeting of the BCTS was held at University College, London when a committee was elected and a constitution adopted. Charitable status was granted on January 21 1981. In the succeeding 30 years the field has expanded and led to the change of name to British Society for Matrix Biology in 1998.

The format of 1½-day meetings held twice a year has been followed since 1980. In the first few years, collagens and proteoglycans were the major topics of meetings, but gradually other macromolecules, such as fibronectin and laminin appeared on the programmes as they were characterized. The identification of growth factors, cytokines and integrins and their roles in matrix homeostasis and development enlarged the scope of the meetings and hence a more appropriate name for the Society was adopted. While basic science predominated at meetings, its clinical relevance was never ignored.

Similarly, the membership which has varied between 200 and 500, has always included both basic and clinical scientists. The small meetings of around 150 members facilitate interaction and create a friendly atmosphere. There have always been large groups such as those at Langford (Bristol) and Strangeways (Cambridge) in the 1980s and in recent times, Cardiff and Manchester. But many members are in small groups and the Society is of immense value to them as it provides opportunities for discussion and friendships with people with similar interests. It is important that members in large groups appreciate this and welcome them into the Society.

What of the future? None of us knows where our research will lead us in the future, or how this important area of research will develop. Connective tissue was once regarded as a dull, inert, supporting tissue, but over the last 50 years its dynamic role

throughout embryonic development, during wound healing and other repair processes, and in disease, has been acknowledged. Connective tissue diseases are of increasing economic importance as populations age worldwide. We can only hope that the research funding bodies recognize that adequate funding is essential for both basic and clinical research.

Meanwhile, as a founder member of the Society, it is gratifying to see how the Society has adapted to changes in the field and how it flourishes today. Some aspects of the Society's meetings have survived the years with little change, others have changed. We started with no funds, but now there is sufficient money to offer bursaries for young scientists to attend meetings and this emphasizes the charitable aspects of the Society. Two prizes are now awarded each year. One, the Fell-Muir prize is awarded to a distinguished senior investigator and is sponsored, in part, by the International Journal of Experimental Pathology. The second is the Young Investigator award and is funded by the Society. It is also possible to plan more ambitious meetings and bring more speakers from abroad. None of this would be possible without the time, hard work and dedication of the members over the past 30 years.

The survival of the Society over the next 30 years will depend on the enthusiasm and hard work of its present young members. They are inheriting an active, thriving Society and there is no reason to doubt that they will nurture the achievements of the past 30 years.

3 December 2009

The BSMB – a “young” person’s perspective.

Emma Blain

Three things immediately sprung to mind when I was asked to write a piece for the BSMB newsletter on **what exactly does the British Society for Matrix Biology have to offer to the “young” society members:** [1]

scientific meetings, [2] networking and [3] money. I have been a member of the society for 11 years starting out as a PhD novice and currently residing as the post-doctoral representative on the BSMB committee. From my early days as a PhD student, not only was I encouraged to join the BSMB by my supervisor but to also attend the **biannual meetings**, irrespective of whether the theme reflected my doctoral studies! As a result of the wide-ranging interests of the BSMB society within the field of extracellular matrix research, I have attended meetings on diverse topics spanning fibrotic disease to tissue engineering to tendon pathology with a healthy smattering of cartilage biology and matrix metalloproteinases thrown in for good measure! Although I wasn't always convinced by my PhD supervisor's strategy to attend every BSMB meeting, looking back I can now understand why. Being exposed to other areas of matrix research prevented a blinkered attitude, and I actually learnt a great deal about the matrix in other tissues and pathological conditions. I would recommend this approach to all of the younger BSMB members.

During the 11 years that I have been a BSMB member my involvement with the society has changed and with it opportunities have evolved including becoming the post-doctoral representative. Autumn 2008 I co-organised the BSMB Cardiff meeting, and for the first time saw how much effort was involved in planning and orchestrating such an event. Attending these meetings also presents the opportunity to **network**. Our BSMB meetings generally attract audiences of between 100-200 delegates; poster sessions and a conference dinner are regular fixtures. The delegate number and the manner in which the conferences are organised actively encourage and promote interactions between the young BSMB people and the senior members. Having been there once myself, I know it can be quite daunting approaching an eminent “senior scientist”, but the BSMB meetings offer an ideal environment in which to exchange ideas and set up collaborations.

And finally to **money!** The BSMB is a society that is keen to nurture and develop the next generation of scientists in the field of matrix biology, and this is reflected in its

commitment to support the younger members to attend not only our own meetings but to also present at FECTS and other international conferences. Every year, 15–20 bursaries are made available to attend our biannual meetings. As a PhD student and early post-doc I took full advantage of this scheme and received several bursaries to either present my data or to write a report on the science discussed at the meeting. These bursaries (up to £200) are extremely useful in covering registration, accommodation and travel costs, particularly if money is tight in your supervisor's coffers! Bursaries are also available to attend FECTS (up to £500); I made use of this scheme and attended the FECTS meeting held in Sicily in 2004. Over the last 2 years, a further bursary has been introduced where the BSMB will contribute to the costs of attending an international conference on any aspect of matrix biology (up to £300). Although widely advertised on the BSMB webpage and in the newsletter, applications for these bursaries are disappointingly low. We, the members of the BSMB committee have asked ourselves why? It makes no sense not to apply. One of the benefits of becoming a young member of the BSMB is surely the opportunity to apply for these bursaries to attend conferences. The return on your £10 per annum membership fee could well involve a cheque for £500 to attend the upcoming FECTS meeting in Davos this summer. It's a no-brainer - get your application forms in now!

As the postdoctoral representative for the BSMB society I am interested in your views – what we are doing right (or not!) and ideas for improvement. Please get in touch with me on blain@cardiff.ac.uk. We want to ensure that the BSMB nurtures our younger members so that the British matrix biology field continues to thrive.

Over the last few years to encourage participation of our younger members at the BSMB meetings, we have been inviting “little chairs” i.e. PhD students and postdocs to partner “big chairs” i.e. the senior scientists/group leaders in running the sessions. We are actively seeking “little chairs” to assist in running the sessions at our next meeting in Manchester (March 29-30th, 2010); if you would like to participate

then please email me (blain@cardiff.ac.uk) or the local organiser Dr Ann Canfield (ann.canfield@manchester.ac.uk).

The BSMB Constitution

As indicated in the Chairman's letter, it is important that from time to time we review the roles and operations of the Society. A subcommittee drawn from the BSMB Committee has recently reviewed the Constitution of the Society, and have made suggestions for minor changes. This, in part, reflects current requirements of The Charity Commission, to whom we report. The BSMB Committee as a whole have approved the revised version.

The existing Constitution and the proposed, revised version are available for viewing on the Society website (www.bsmb.ac.uk). At the next Annual General Meeting to be held at our Manchester meeting in March, I shall ask whether the membership approve the new version. Two-thirds majority is required for adoption. For those members unable to attend the AGM, please send a postal vote to:

Ms Jane Lohmann, BSMB Administrator
British Society for Matrix Biology
University of Bristol
Department of Cellular & Molecular Medicine
School of Medical Sciences
University Walk
Bristol BS8 1TD

Please mark your vote with your name and membership number. In future, assuming the revised Constitution is adopted, electronic voting will be used. Your vote is important.

Should any member have concerns concerning our Constitution that they would like to raise before the AGM, please contact me by e-mail (john.couchman@bric.ku.dk).

John Couchman



British Society for Matrix Biology

Abstract deadline is February 12th 2010

29th – 30th March 2010

Hulme Hall, University of Manchester, UK

Vascular Matrix in Health & Disease

Confirmed Speakers:

Charlie Little (Kansas, USA)

Bob Mecham (Washington, USA)

Cay Kielty (Manchester, UK)

Holger Gerhardt (London, UK)

Bjorn Olsen (Harvard, USA)

Mark Ginsberg (San Diego, USA)

Sarah George (Bristol, UK)

Checco Ramirez (New York, USA)

Charles Streuli (Manchester, UK)

Jeremy Pearson (London, UK)

Elena Aikawa (Harvard, USA)

Gill Murphy (Cambridge, UK)

Local organiser: Ann Canfield/Anna Fildes

Anna.Fildes-2@manchester.ac.uk

www.bsmb.ac.uk



Wellcome Trust Centre for Cell-Matrix Research

