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*We gratefully acknowledge the support of our  
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## In this issue....

Dear Network Participant,

I hope that you have had a relaxing break over Christmas and that 2008 brings you every success. As Lisa continues her maternity leave, I'll be taking responsibility for the Newsletter for the next few months.

2008 promises to be a busy and exciting year for parasitology, in general, and the Network and the ASP, in particular, as planning for ICOPA and for life after the end of the Network's current funding begins in earnest. The Network Management Committee and the ASP Council will be discussing a variety of alternatives for how the Network may look in the future and I'll report on these discussions at the ASP Annual General Meeting in July.

Featured in this issue is a profile on Russ Hobbs, recent recipient of an ASP Fellowship, and congratulations for some recent outstanding achievements by Terry Speed, Brian Cooke, Brendan Crabb, and David Jenkins.....

As always, please don't hesitate to provide feedback and supply us with news stories, grant successes, job ads, notices of upcoming events *etc etc*. We plan to issue a Newsletter at least every 2 months this year.

In the meantime, best wishes,  
Nick

(Nick Smith, Convenor, ARC/NHMRC  
Research Network for Parasitology;  
nick.smith@uts.edu.au)

## Congratulations

It is a pleasure to start off the year by acknowledging four great achievements by Network Participants:

First, congratulations to Terry Speed of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research who received an NHMRC Achievement Award for his outstanding contributions to bioinformatics and statistical genetics at the inaugural ceremony for the NHMRC Awards for Excellence in Health and Medical Research, held in Canberra on December 12.

At the same ceremony, Brian Cooke, of Monash University, received the NHMRC Science to Art Award in recognition of his research into malaria, one of the results of which was this stunning image of the surface of an infected red blood cell:



Congratulations also to Brendan Crabb on his recent appointment as the new Director of the Burnet Institute in Melbourne after an “*extensive national and international search which secured an outstanding medical research scientist with significant experience and expertise in infectious diseases of global significance*” ( quote from the Burnet’s Chairman, Alastair Lucas).

Finally, congratulations to Dave Jenkins, who has accepted a post of Senior Lecturer in the new vet school at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, joining Nick Sangster, Tiggy Grillow and Terry Spithill in a dynamic new Australian parasitology group.

## Conference News

The Glenelg2008 conference website is now up and running and registration and abstract submission are open. The Network is, once again, subsidising venue and invited speaker costs to ensure the meeting is as affordable as possible. It is a “not to be missed” event, with the organising committee having done an outstanding job of attracting some superb, internationally recognised speakers.

The conference will be held at the Stamford Grand Hotel in Glenelg, South Australia, just a short trip from Adelaide Airport. It will commence on Sunday, July 6 with a Welcome Reception at The Grand and conclude with the Conference Banquet at Hardy’s Reynella Winery on Wednesday, July 9.

Early bird registration and abstract submission close on April 11, 2008. Full details about the conference can be found at [www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/conference](http://www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/conference)

## Grant Winners

Congratulations to Don Gardiner, Katherine Trenholme (both of QIMR) and John Dalton (institute for the Biotechnology of Infectious Diseases, UTS) on the award of a lucrative National Institutes of Health (USA) grant. The grant was awarded for "*High throughput screening for inhibitors of Plasmodium falciparum aminopeptidases*", under the programme, "Solicitation of assays for high throughput screening in the molecular libraries screening centers (R03)".

Congratulations also to Mark Robinson (also from IBID at UTS) for winning a prestigious UTS Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Mark initially came to Australia with the help of a Network Researcher Exchange, Training and Travel Award.

## Network Researcher Exchange, Training and Travel Awards

Congratulations to the most recent Network Exchange, Training and Travel Award Winners:

Jack Richards of WEHI for laboratory work and field studies at the PNG Institute for Medical Research;

Andrew Thompson of Murdoch University to sponsor a visit from Dr Lydden Polley of the University of Saskatchewan. Dr Lydden is an internationally recognised researcher exploring the application of molecular epidemiology to parasitic zoonoses with particular regard to climate change.

## Network Researcher Exchange, Training and Travel Award application dates in 2008

The Network Researcher Exchange Training and Travel Award scheme continues to prove to be an outstanding success and young researchers are particularly encouraged to apply for assistance. In 2008, there will be six application rounds with the following deadlines:

Friday January 25  
Friday March 2008  
Friday May 30  
Friday July 25  
Friday September 26  
Friday November 28

Following each of these dates, the applications will be assessed by a specific assessment committee and applicants will be advised of the outcome, where possible, within 4 weeks. Guidelines for the Network Researcher Exchange, Training and Travel Awards can be found at [www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/funding](http://www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/funding)

## Network Mentorship Scheme

Early career researchers are encouraged to apply to the Network Convenor ([nick.smith@uts.edu.au](mailto:nick.smith@uts.edu.au)), in strict confidence, for funding to participate in the Network Mentorship Scheme. The scheme allows young investigators to be paired with experienced, successful researchers to discuss, plan, prioritise and set targets for their career. Typically, the early career researcher will fly to

the institute of a senior parasitologist and spend a day there. Arrangements for professional development and progress to be reviewed by the pair annually can also be arranged. Importantly, mentors need not be from an individual's home institution but can be drawn from across the Network. The scheme has proved very valuable for several young researchers and their mentors already.

To apply, simply write to Nick with a brief outline of your research interests and aspirations. You can also indicate a preferred mentor or ask Nick for advice on who amongst the Network participants may be most suitable.

## Network IT Initiative

The Network IT Initiative will continue in 2008 and Network Participants are encouraged to contact its chair, Ross Coppel of the Victorian Bioinformatics Consortium at Monash University, to explore any and all their bioinformatic needs. Ross presented an informative and comprehensive overview of what the Network IT Initiative has to offer

Network Participants at the most recent ASP Annual General Meeting - a copy of that presentation is attached. In short, the Network IT Initiative can assist Network Participants in:

- Microarray analysis/storage
- Sequence analysis/storage
- Comparative genomics
- Custom software development
- Online project collaboration
- Data visualization
- Computer hardware selection

So, don't hesitate to contact Ross to explore how he and his team can assist you:

<http://www.vicbioinformatics.com/parasitology.shtml>  
[ross.coppel@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:ross.coppel@med.monash.edu.au)  
[torsten.seeman@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:torsten.seeman@med.monash.edu.au)

## Network Survey

Please help us fulfil our annual reporting obligations to the ARC and NHMRC by completing the annual Network Survey by Feb 29. The survey can be completed online. Please click on the link below or cut and paste into your browser:

<http://surveys.uts.edu.au/index.cfm?surveyid=3040>

## Profile - Russ Hobbs, ASP Fellow

Russ Hobbs, from Murdoch University, was made a Fellow of the Australian Society for Parasitology at the recent 2007 ASP & ARC/NHMRC Research Network for Parasitology Conference in Canberra. Russ talks to Lisa Jones about his career and how he became interested in parasitology.



***Tell me about your area of research?***

Russ said, "My main area of interest is in wildlife parasitology, in particular taxonomy and ecological aspects of parasitology and I focus on the parasites of mammals and some fish parasites. I'm also interested in epidemiology and community ecology – how parasites interact with each other and the effect they might have on each other. Some parasites may compete with other parasites so that one can affect the distribution of the others to either move other parasites on or change the environment. The need for large samples makes it challenging to study community ecology."

***How did you become involved in parasitology research?***

Russ started his science career as an undergraduate at Monash University in Melbourne. He then moved to Canada and took a year of studies where he was inspired by the ecological parasitologist, John Holmes. Russ then completed a Masters in Science (Zoology – Parasitology) at the University of Alberta and studied with Bill Samuel.

***What interests you about working in this area?***

"Parasitology gives you such a wide open field of research options, especially taxonomy and wildlife parasitology" says Russ. "There are also some great people who work in parasitology, especially in Australia. The Australian Society for Parasitology is a very friendly and embracing group of scientists and this helps to keep me motivated to work on parasites."

***How do you see your research developing?***

Russ will be retiring early in November and hopes to get some more parasitology research done during his retirement, as he will be free of administration incumberments.

***Tell me about your involvement with the ASP?***

Russ said, "After returning from Canada I worked at the University of New England and was involved in marine research with Claus Rohde. I first joined the ASP soon after moving to work at Murdoch University in 1986. I was secretary of the ASP in 1989/1990 and started the ASP Newsletter during that time. I was WA rep for a few years and then became the Newsletter Editor for 5 years, had a break and became WA rep again and finally I was the ASP webmaster for a few years".

***Tell me about the highlight of your science career so far?***

"My science career highlights would have to be two field trips; one to Ukon as part of my Masters Degree and another to Antarctic scuba diving to collect marine specimens during my time at University of New England".

***How does it feel to be made an ASP Fellow?***

Russ said, "Personally it means a lot to me to be – and I feel greatly honoured to be made an ASP Fellow. I think the Society is wonderful with a fantastic group of people."

***What would you like to do in the future?***

"I want to get back into my parasitology research, keep in touch with my parasitology colleagues, and do other things – bushwalking, sea kayaking, and learn a musical instrument." (Russ's wife is a violinist)

## DNDi Announcement

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) has received a USD 25.7 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to research and develop new medicines to treat human African trypanosomiasis (HAT), also known as sleeping sickness, and visceral leishmaniasis (VL).

The grant, to be disbursed to DNDi over 5 years, will provide critical funding for the research and development of new drug candidates for HAT and VL. DNDi will foster the development of the drug candidates through the preclinical stages and select one lead candidate for each disease to advance into Phase I human clinical trials.

For more information, please consult <http://www.dndi.org> or contact: Ann-Marie Sevcsik at [amsevcsik@dndi.org](mailto:amsevcsik@dndi.org) or +41 (0)79 814 9147.

## Positions Vacant

### **MQRES Molecular Ecology of *Cryptosporidium* in Rural and Urban NSW PhD Scholarship**

Applications are invited for a Macquarie University PhD scholarship, in partnership with NSW Health, to identify the risk factors associated with on-going transmission of cryptosporidiosis in regional areas, enabling NSW Health to develop effective management strategies for disease prevention in rural Australia. Further details can be found at [www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/jobs](http://www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/jobs) or by contacting Michelle Power (+61 2 9850 9252; [mpower@els.mq.edu.au](mailto:mpower@els.mq.edu.au))

### **Veterinary helminthology - PhD Opportunity**

The Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences, Massey University, is offering a PhD project to investigate the population dynamics of the nematode *Cooperia oncophora*, both on pasture and in the bovine host. A stipend (tax-free) of NZ\$25,000/annum for 3 years is offered. For further information see [www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/jobs](http://www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/jobs) or contact Professor Bill Pomroy, Massey University ([w.pomroy@massey.ac.nz](mailto:w.pomroy@massey.ac.nz)).

### **PhD Scholarship in Immunology**

Want to understand how pathogens can manipulate the human immune response? Want to learn leading edge technologies in cellular immunology including multi-colour FACScan analysis, multi-cytokine bead arrays, as well as gain a solid grounding in fundamental immunology? Then you should consider a PhD scholarship being offered by the Burnet Institute and Monash University, under the supervision of Dr. Li and Prof. M. Plebanski. Contact Professor Magda Plebanski for more details ([Magdalena.Plebanski@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:Magdalena.Plebanski@med.monash.edu.au)). The deadline for applications is February 12, 2008.



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