

# Joint ASM/ACTM Parasitology Masterclass

## 6-7 March 2009, Hobart TAS

**The first joint Australian Society for Microbiology/Australasian College of Tropical Medicine Parasitology Masterclass was held in Hobart, Tasmania, in March. Early autumn in Tasmania provided a pleasantly cool and beautiful environment for this most successful event, which was attended by almost 150 delegates from both Australia and overseas. Most sessions were fully subscribed, emphasising the degree of interest Australia-wide in the discipline of medical parasitology.**

The program was designed to be accessible to people of all levels of knowledge and experience. In order to achieve this, the meeting was divided into three concurrent streams consisting of practical and theoretical sessions as well as updates on current research in the field.

The meeting began with a thought-provoking and highly entertaining discussion by Prof John Goldsmid of both the history and the current state of teaching parasitology and tropical medicine in tertiary institutions. This was followed by sessions exploring issues in malaria diagnosis by Dr John Walker, and updates on the current research activities of Assoc Prof Wayne Melrose and Prof Simon Foote into filariasis and malaria immunology.

Following a sumptuous afternoon tea, delegates attending the malaria sessions were provided with in-depth theoretical and practical training on the diagnosis of this important parasitic infection by Andrea McAdam, assisted by Dr John Walker, Dr Anup George and Andrew Hudspeth. Both malaria and other blood-borne infections such as Trypanosomiasis were discussed. Of particular interest were slides and discussion of the primate malaria *Plasmodium knowlesi*, which has caused sporadic

human infections in a number of parts of the world, provided by Dr Walker.

Whilst others attended the malaria and blood parasite sessions, the introductory and advanced class were treated to presentations on drug resistance in *Giardia intestinalis* by Dr Jacqui Upcroft, the role of serology in the diagnosis of parasitic infections by Dr Rogan Lee and a number of fascinating clinical cases in refugees and migrants by Assoc Prof Beverley Anne Biggs. The Friday sessions finished with an enjoyable welcome mixer, where delegates were treated to a smorgasbord of fine Tasmanian food and wines.

Fifty delegates attended the advanced parasitology session planned by Richard Bradbury, Dr Harsha Sheorey and Dr Norbert Ryan. Here they undertook a thorough practical session involving the identification of adult helminths, arthropods and insects of medical importance. Culture and identification of rhabditoid nematodes was discussed, as well as demonstrations of a number of rare and exotic helminth adults, eggs and protozoa. Many delegates had the opportunity to examine parasites that they may well not have previously encountered, such as *Bertiella studeri*, Trichostrongylid eggs and *Pentatrichomonas hominis*. This exploration of the exotic was balanced with the identification of adult hookworms, liver and intestinal flukes, and arthropods such as lice and bed bugs. Prominent Australian parasitologists such as Prof Goldsmid, Assoc Prof Rick Speare and Assoc Prof Wayne Melrose were present to interact with participants.



Norbert Ryan assists delegates in the advanced class practical session.



Prof John Goldsmid presents in the histoparasitology session.

This advanced class practical session was followed by a fascinating and comprehensive discussion of unusual protozoa from Dr Damian Stark and two exceptional classes on histoparasitology from Emeritus Professor John Goldsmid. The afternoon was dedicated to clinical and scientific case studies as well as updates on current research presented by Assoc Prof Richard Speare, Dr Walker, Dr Sheorey, Dr Norbert Ryan and Richard Bradbury.

Concurrent to the advanced session, an extremely informative and well-received introductory program was held. Drs Andrew Butcher and Graham Robertson dedicated a great deal of time and preparation into producing this most thorough program and were ably assisted in the practical sessions by Emma Bond. Participants were instructed on diagnostic techniques and stains, as well as the identification and clinical implications of many parasitic infections. Delegates were then taken through a thorough half-day practical session providing comprehensive instruction in all common parasitic infections encountered throughout Australia, as well as an introduction to the more exotic infections.

The conference was completed with a light-hearted 'tropical trivia' quiz provided by Prof Goldsmid and Richard Bradbury, which involved 'flying' bags of lollies and a host of other prizes. Further opportunity was provided to enjoy the culinary arts of Tasmania at the extremely popular Ball and Chain restaurant in Salamanca Place on Saturday night. Congratulations to the winner of the door prize.

Overall the Parasitology Masterclass was an exceptionally successful and well-received meeting. This success reflects upon the tremendous amount of hard work put in by the staff of the ASM, particularly Janette Sofronidis and Meg Lukies, as well as the organising committee (Drs Butcher, Sheorey and Robertson and Mr Bradbury). None of this would have been possible without the support and generous sponsorship provided by our corporate sponsors, Oxoid Australia, Bayer HealthCare, GlaxoSmithKline and the RCPA Microbiology QAP program. These sponsors chose to support a previously untried meeting and thereby ensured this tremendous success was a reality, for which the organising committee and all attending delegates involved are extremely grateful.

Following the success of this inaugural meeting, we hope to present an even more thorough and stimulating program for the next Parasitology Masterclass to be held in Melbourne in 2010. In order to assist with this, the organising committee would encourage all delegates who attended the Hobart meeting to complete and return the electronic feedback form for this year's meeting. I would encourage any individual with an interest in medical parasitology to attend next year's meeting for what seems destined in the future to become the premier annual event in Australian medical parasitology.



Delegates at the advanced class lecture sessions.



# Teachers' microbiology workshop

18 February 2009, QLD

Organised by Elwyn Oldfield, University of Queensland

**Twenty teachers and lab assistants attended an afternoon teacher microbiology workshop earlier this year.**

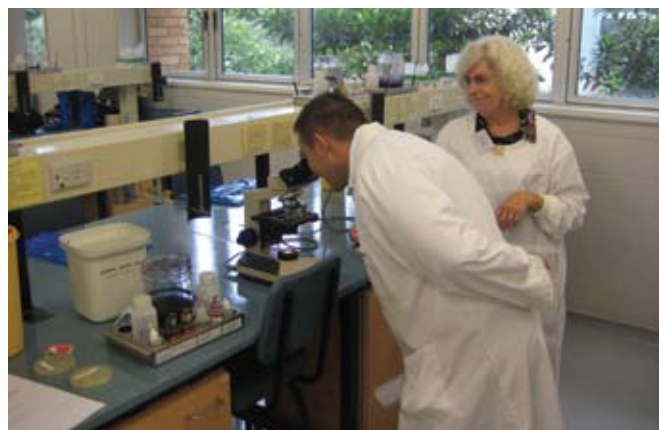
The workshop consisted of nine sections. These were set out on different benches so that the teachers could spend as much or as little time at each section, depending on their level of interest or need for each. The sections were:

- Preparing media.
- How do we find them? (inoculation techniques)
- How do we count them? (serial dilution, spread plates)
- How do we look at them? (microscopy, staining)
- What do they do? (eg pigment, fermentation)
- What inhibits them? (various inhibitory substances)
- How do we keep them? (slopes, glycerol)
- Discard
- Safety

With the assistance of two PhD students who were experienced tutors, we demonstrated and discussed techniques in each section, and materials were provided for the teachers to perform the techniques hands-on. At past workshops teachers have been a bit reluctant to get in and do it, but this time there was more involvement. A suggested improvement is to make the workshop a 2-day activity, where teachers could set up cultures then see the results the next day. A coffee break provided a valuable opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas amongst the teachers.

One of the biggest issues for QLD teachers in carrying out microbiological experiments is safety. A vast range of microbiology depends largely on the competence, confidence and support of the teaching staff at any given school. Current guidelines are presently being improved to more clearly indicate what can be done in Queensland schools.

Feedback from the teachers was very positive, indicating on the whole that, after having attended the workshop, they felt more enthusiastic and confident to introduce microbiological experiments into their classrooms.



# 2009-2010 meetings

Contributions listing relevant meetings are welcome. Please send to: [editor@theasm.com.au](mailto:editor@theasm.com.au)

## 2009 – Golden Jubilee Year

**17-21 May 2009**

**Philadelphia, PA, USA**

**109th General Meeting of American Society for Microbiology**

[www.asm.org](http://www.asm.org)

**21-25 June 2009**

**Hamilton Island QLD**

**10th International Symposium on Double-Stranded RNA Viruses**

Coordinators: Barbara Coulson & John Taylor

[www.dsRNA2009.org](http://www.dsRNA2009.org)

**28 June – 2 July 2009**

**Goteborg, Sweden**

**FEMS 2009 – Third Congress of European Microbiologists: Microbes and Man – Interdependence and Future Challenges**

[www2.kenes.com/fems-microbiology/Pages/home.aspx](http://www2.kenes.com/fems-microbiology/Pages/home.aspx)

**6-10 July 2009**

**Perth Convention Centre, Perth WA**

**ASM 2009 Perth – Annual Scientific Meeting & Exhibition**

Australia's largest microbiology event for 2009 celebrating ASM's 50th Golden Jubilee Year

**19-24 July 2009**

**Manchester, UK**

**24th International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology**

[www.yeastgenetics.org](http://www.yeastgenetics.org)

**26-30 July 2009**

**Toronto, Canada**

**SIM 2009 Annual Meeting and Exhibition**

<http://www.simhq.org/>

**25-28 August 2009**

**Christchurch, New Zealand**

**26th NRL Workshop on Serology**

Workshop Secretariat: National Serology Reference Laboratory

Contact: (03) 9418 1117

Email [alison@nrl.gov.au](mailto:alison@nrl.gov.au)

[www.nrl.gov.au](http://www.nrl.gov.au)

**29-31 October 2009**

**Hamilton Island QLD**

**Mycology MasterClass IV**

**[1 November 2009 – Additional MasterClass Workshop for laboratory staff]**

Convenor: Associate Professor David Ellis

Conference Management: Australian Society for Microbiology

Contact: Janette Sofronidis, Conference Manager

## 2010

**28 June – 1 July 2010**

**Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne VIC**

**11th International Symposium on the Genetics of Industrial Microorganisms**

Chair: Ian Macreadie

[www.gim2010.org](http://www.gim2010.org)

**4-8 July 2010**

**Darling Harbour Convention Centre, Sydney NSW**

**ASM 2010 Sydney**

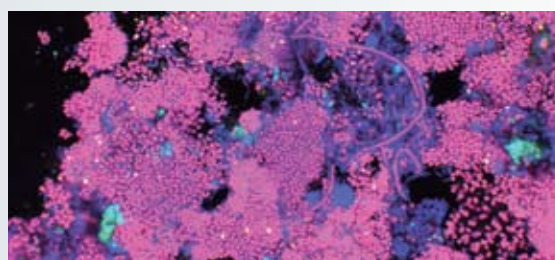
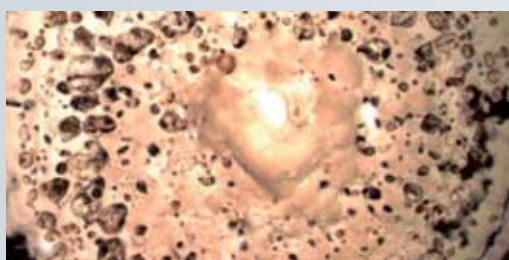
### MYSTERY MICROBE PHOTO COMPETITION

To celebrate the 50th Birthday of the ASM, Australia Post will release a commemorative pre-stamped envelope featuring a well known Australian Scientist and some famous microbes! The envelope will be on sale at the conference and we will be running a competition to see who can name the 5 mystery microbes. Only attendees of the Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth will be eligible to enter the competition and there will be a prize for the winner.

To wet your appetite we are running a Mystery Microbe competition in this issue of *Microbiology Australia*. Can you identify the microbes in the Images below?

Email your mystery microbe answers to [carol@theasm.com.au](mailto:carol@theasm.com.au)

The prize for the first winning entry received is one of the commemorative envelopes. Closing date for entries 30 June 2009.





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