New PACCAR Lab Opened

The official opening of the PACCAR laboratory within the Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology Group took place on 20th October. This laboratory was refurbished specifically to allow measurement of drug response biomarkers in clinical samples from patients on ‘first into man’ trials of mechanism based therapies within the Derek Crowther Unit. Studies are performed under strict regulations that allow the data obtained to contribute to clinical decision making and patient management. Ongoing studies include serial analysis of surrogate markers in patient blood samples to explore whether new drugs administered are inducing tumour cell death or preventing blood supply to nourish tumours. We are most grateful to the PACCAR foundation for their investment in this exciting development at PICR. Full story page 3
The opening of the PACCAR laboratories on 20th October is highlighted in the Newsletter. We are very grateful to PACCAR for such generous support and look forward to establishing a long-term relationship to facilitate the research we do and future development plans. We also had a visit this month from Herbie Newell, the Director of Translational Research at Cancer Research UK (CR-UK) and some of his colleagues to discuss a possible development of a drug discovery centre within the Institute. CR-UK has carried out a major review of their drug discovery and development activities and out of this review has come a Drug Discovery Science Plan. One of the recommendations of this plan is to establish at least 3 new major drug discovery centres and to locate these at CR-UK core-funded Institutes reflecting the long-term nature of this new investment. The development of such a Centre would represent a major new and exciting initiative for us and would complement the research that we currently do and plan for the future – the basic science programmes and the major investment in drug development. The anticipated investment in the Centre would be very significant. The first step would be to recruit a senior drug discovery scientist and plans for this will commence at the start of 2007.

Recruitment for new group leaders in the Institute is underway. We anticipate interviewing short-listed candidates at the beginning of the year and our goal is to recruit at least two new leaders during 2007.

You will all be aware by now that CR-UK have announced the departure of Alex Markham as CEO of the organisation next Spring. I would personally like to thank Alex for all the support he has given to the Institute and to the development of the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC). This support has been fantastic and without it the MCRC would not be the exciting development it is. I think Alex has done a great job steering the organisation to where it is now – it is an organisation we should all be very proud to be so closely associated with.

Finally, I wish all of you a very Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

The Paterson recently established its own Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC) to discuss policy and practice with the union (Amicus). Although the Paterson is part of The University of Manchester, we transferred to the University on our existing policies, which are different to those of the University, so there would not be much point in participating in their JNC.

However, Lynn Disley (Amicus representative) and I have retained our membership of the Christie Hospital’s JNC as many of the issues discussed are site specific and not organisation specific, such as those old favourites, the nursery, car parking and no smoking.

The Paterson’s JNC comprises three management representatives – Colin Gleeson (Health & Safety manager), Anna Pearson (HR Manager) and myself and three union representatives – Lynn Disley, Gail Bruder (Amicus member) and Cassandra Hodgkinson (Amicus member). We are ably supported by Laura Humes (HR Assistant).

At our first meeting we agreed that we would meet 4 times per year and discussed the draft Good Clinical Laboratory Practice (GCLP) policy and the Associate Scientist policy. As a result of the GCLP discussion the group arranged a visit to the PACCAR GCLP lab to gain a better understanding of the intricacies involved for the scientists in working to the stringent GCLP standards.
New PACCAR Lab

Senior figures from the national and North West cancer research scenes gathered at the Paterson Institute on 20 October to celebrate the official opening of the new translational research laboratory funded by the PACCAR Foundation.

The PACCAR Laboratory has been established thanks to a £250,000 donation through Cancer Research UK from the Foundation. PACCAR is a global technology leader in the design, manufacture and customer support of high-quality light, medium and heavy-duty trucks under the Kenworth, Peterbilt and DAF nameplates. It has over 1,000 employees at its world-class Leyland facility in Lancashire, and its charitable Foundation contributes to organisations in areas where it has a significant presence.

The official opening featured a plaque unveiling by Leyland Trucks Managing Director Stuart Heys who said: “We are delighted to be able to support the work of Cancer Research UK in Manchester. As a world-class company with a strong legacy in the North West of England, PACCAR supports initiatives that will make a real and positive difference to people in the region and throughout the UK.”

Stuart was joined in the opening ceremony by Professor Alex Markham, Chief Executive of CR UK, the charity’s Chairman David Newbigging, and senior figures from Christie Hospital NHS Trust, The University of Manchester and the Paterson Institute.

Nic Jones, Director of the Paterson Institute said: “The PACCAR Laboratory will provide a big boost to the cancer research efforts of the Paterson Institute and of Cancer Research UK. We are very grateful for this generous donation and the benefits it will provide. For instance, it greatly enhances our ability to carry out clinical trials working with the Derek Crowther Unit at the Christie Hospital to the rigorous quality assurance demanded by European standards on good clinical laboratory practice.”

Opening the proceedings Alex Markham explained why his personal “guest of honour” was his mother, Annie, who lives in the Manchester area. When he had first become Chief Executive of CR UK the Manchester Evening News had carried a picture of him with his mum “toasting” the appointment over a cup of tea and that had been one of the proudest moments of his life.

Building on the already-excellent laboratory and patient trials facilities in Manchester was vital to the development of the Manchester Cancer Research Centre, and he hoped that the relationship with PACCAR would continue.
Danny Bitton: I’m originally from the Holy Land (Haifa, Israel), but I have been enjoying the peaceful UK life for the last seven years. I’m working in the Bioinformatics group with Crispin Miller. I enjoy sailing, fishing, and cooking, and I am looking forward to exploring Manchester, preferably by a pub crawl.

Andrew Marriott: I’m Andy and will be working in Carcinogenesis. I’m from a village close to St. Helens which is famous for glass and its all conquering rugby league team. I will be working on the novel DNA repair protein, ATL, from S.pombe. Currently we know very little about this protein except that it has a role in protecting S.pombe from alkylation damage. There are many things that we would like to find out about ATL and, hopefully, over the next four years, that is what I will do.

Natalie Reeves: Hi, my name is Natalie Reeves. I have just started a 4-year PhD in Angeliki Malliri’s Cell Signalling lab. My project is to identify Rac effectors implicated in tumourigenesis. To do this I will be carrying out TAP-purifications and from these identifying interactors using mass spectrometry analysis. I graduated in the summer from my undergraduate masters degree in Biochemistry and Biological Chemistry at Nottingham University. Apart from at university I have always lived in Cheshire (near Frodsham) and I went to school in Northwich. I have just moved to Withington with my partner so I am enjoying the short walk to work!

Malgorzata (Gonia) Gozdecka: My name is Gonia. I’m a first year student working in the Stem Cell Biology group under the supervision of Dr. Georges Lacaud. The aim of my PhD project is to define the new potential target genes of Runx1 – the transcription factor critical for normal hematopoietic development. I come from Poland and so support the strong Polish group in the Paterson Institute.
Sarah Lewis: My name is Sarah Lewis and I am originally from Guildford. I have been living in Manchester for over a year and I love the city and surrounding countryside so I am delighted to be staying here to do my PhD. I am working in the Stem Cell Research group under the supervision of Dr Valerie Kouskoff, and my project involves studying two genes that may be important for specification of the haemangioblast.

Magdalena Przywara: Hi my name is Magda. As lots of you already know I’m the new Polish member of Karim’s Lab. I’m going to start the project about a protein called FACT and, what is surprising in our group, its role in the DNA replication ...and hopefully I will come up with a lot of facts about it.

Dorota Feret: Hi, I am Dorota and I have joined Iain Hagan’s group this year. I am Polish and finished my Masters degree in the beautiful old city of Krakow. I like all types of social activities such as cinema, pubs, concerts and also theatre. My big passion is dancing and I am looking forward to exploring Manchester, especially in this context.

Cristina Martin-Fernandez: I’m Cristina Martin-Fernandez. I’m from Asturias, which is in the North of Spain, therefore the ‘green part’ of Spain!! I did my undergrad in Sheffield and last year I did an MRes at the University of Manchester. Yes, I have been living in the UK for a few years... Doing 3 rotations during last year didn’t put me off so I decided to do rotations this year too. I’m currently undertaking my 1st rotation in Caroline Dive’s lab, studying the effects of the inhibition of PI3K in cell death. I will be doing my 2nd rotation in Nic Jones’ lab working on ATF-2 and if I’m still rotating by the end of it, I will be doing my 3rd rotation in Georges Lacaud’s lab working on stem cells.

Alex Smith: Hello I’m Alex Smith and I’ve just started my 3 year PhD working in Medical Oncology with Ellie Cheadle and Dave Gilham. I’m looking at the generation of a bystander immune response with chimeric T-cell immunotherapy. I’m from Bristol and have just finished my undergraduate degree at Oxford. I’m wondering if it will ever stop raining in Manchester.

Grazyna Lipowska-Bhalla: My name is Grazyna (Grace) and I am from Poland. I originally studied at the University of Gdansk and Medical University of Gdansk in Poland (MSc in Chemistry, MSc in Biotechnology). Afterwards, I took some time off from science to follow my other interests, in particular travelling and exploring new cultures. In the meantime, I also served as a military (Medical Support) and civil personnel (Emergency and Medical Evacuation Section) in a UN peace-keeping mission in the Middle East. Following that time I decided to come back to science and did my MRes degree (Functional Genomics) at the University of York, UK. I have now joined the Medical Oncology Group for my 3-year PhD project under the supervision of Dominic Rothwell. I am working on the development of chimeric immune receptors (CIR) for T-cell based therapies. I hope I will fit in perfectly up here!

Henna Cederberg: Hi, I’m Henna, an intercalating medical student now doing an MRes for a year. I am originally from Finland and this is my fifth year in Manchester! I’ll be working in the Stem Cell Biology group.

Alastair Greystoke: Hi, I am Alastair Greystoke. I am a clinician who is taking 3 years out to do a PhD in the Clinical & Experimental Pharmacology group. I am going to be investigating serum biomarkers for response to therapy, in particular markers of apoptosis. Originally I am from London but trained in Edinburgh and as well as working there I have worked in London, Newcastle and New Zealand (I should never have come back!). On a Saturday afternoon you can find me running around a rugby field blowing a whistle and shouting at 30 sweaty men.

Christy Ralph: I’m Christy and I’m doing a Clinical Research Fellowship with the Immunology group and Medical Oncology. My project is on the modulation of T regulatory activity for cancer therapy. The first part involves a clinical trial in patients with advanced gastric and oesophageal cancer. It is open and recruiting well. I came down from Scotland to take up the post, and have dragged along my partner and children, Ella (3) and Adam (14 months). Still making do with less sleep than we’d like.
Bioinformatics

The majority of the work in the Bioinformatics Group involves interpreting high-throughput gene expression data, most of it arising from the Institute's Affymetrix system.

The group is strongly interdisciplinary by nature (the team's backgrounds bring together a mix of computer science, mathematics, and biology), and we have designed and implemented a number of software tools. These include a microarray database, BioConductor packages for processing and quality control of Affymetrix expression datasets (simpleaffy and plier), and tools for visualization and analysis of probe to transcript mappings (ADAP T and X:MAP). Meanwhile, Laura Edwards is doing a Ph.D. looking at microarray data with me and Georges Lacaud, and Graeme Smethurst has recently submitted his Ph.D. thesis with Peter Stern and myself. Andy Sims, a bioinformatician working in the Breast Biology group with Rob Clarke, and Siân Dibben, with Stuart Pepper, also spend a lot of time with us. The aim is to maintain a friendly and collaborative environment, and to bring the informatics and biology together as much as possible.

When Carla Möller Levet joined us as a postdoc, it was in a joint position with Catharine West from the University of Manchester’s Academic Department of Radiation Oncology. Carla has been developing novel statistical techniques and applying them to the analysis of microarray data. Carla has a promising new method for finding correlations within gene expression, important because correlation based techniques are a fundamental set of tools for these sorts of data.

Michał Okoniewski, another postdoc in the group, began by considering the complexity of the relationship between genes, transcripts and microarray probes. He showed that they can result in interactions that have a significant and sometimes negative effect on the data, and that some types of data analysis techniques were more likely to be affected than others. Recently, Affymetrix released a new generation of microarrays that aim to interrogate every known and predicted exon in the human genome. The ability to investigate transcription at such fine levels of detail is clearly exciting, but makes some significant demands on data analysis, not least, because their interpretation requires access to a comprehensive description of the fine-grained structure of every gene of interest. Michał and Tim Yates, a programmer in the group, have been applying their expertise in databases and their understanding of probeset-transcript-gene relationships to these arrays for some time now, and have developed a set of software tools to support their analysis. We will be releasing them shortly, but in the mean time, Tim’s database, X:MAP, can be found online at http://xmap.picr.man.ac.uk. We are now starting to use their software to explore microarrays at the exon level, and have a number of collaborative exon array projects underway.

Underpinning this work was a validation study done in collaboration with Stuart Pepper and his team from the Cancer Research UK Affymetrix service, to consider how well these new arrays performed in comparison to the previous generation of expression arrays from Affymetrix. We found that with the right data analysis, high-correspondence could be found, and this gave us enough confidence to switch to using the new arrays. This work is currently in press, and will be appearing in January 2007.

Finally, in the last few months, Danny Bitton has joined us as a PhD student investigating novel transcriptional and translational events in microarray and proteomics data, and Páll Jónsson has just arrived as a postdoc to bring knowledge of protein interaction networks. The challenge is to bring all of these different strands together, and to continue to apply them to our datasets.

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Congratulations to:

Cathy Merry (Medical Oncology) and partner Pip Marrs on the birth of their baby son, Corben, on September 21st. Corben weighed in at a very healthy 7lb 13.5 ozs and Mum, Dad and baby are all doing well!!

Ewen Griffiths in the Academic Department of Radiation Oncology, who passed his MD on November 21st!!

Stephanie Carson (Structural Cell Biology) who was successful in gaining her PhD on 23rd November!

Vanessa Marchesi (Cell Cycle) passed her PhD viva in October

Welcome to:

Danny Bitton, a PhD student in Bioinformatics.
Henna Cederberg, an MRes student in Stem Cell Biology.
Dorota Feret, a PhD student in Cell Division.
Gemma Foley, an MRes student in the Academic Department of Radiation Oncology.
Malgorzata (Gonia) Gozdecka, a PhD student in Stem Cell Biology.
Alastair Greystoke, a PhD student in Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology.
Joely Irlam-Jones, a Scientific Officer (half-time) on a 4 year CR-UK TRICC-funded project VORTEX-BIOBANK in the Academic Department of Radiation Oncology.
Páll Jónsson, a Post-doc in Bioinformatics.
Sarah Lewis, a PhD student in Stem Cell Research.
Amanda Lomas, a Scientific Officer in Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology.
Andrew Marriott, a PhD student in Carcinogenesis.
Cristina Martin-Fernandez, a PhD student in Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology.
Magdalena Przywara, a PhD student in Functional Genomics.
Christy Ralph, a Clinical Research Fellow in Immunology and Medical Oncology.
Natalive Reeves a PhD student in Cell Signalling.
Alex Smith, a PhD student in Medical Oncology.
Grazyna Lipowska-Bhalla, a PhD student in Medical Oncology.
Elizabeth Sweeney, a Scientific Officer in Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology.

TRF

Now that the first part of the TRF is complete (except for the coffee room, which we don’t like to mention), funding has been secured for the completion of one floor of TRF2. The new building linking the hospital to the Paterson (obscuring windows on the 1st and 2nd floors of the Oak Road end of the Institute) comprises the Trust’s new Critical Care Unit (CCU) plus two “shelled” floors above. The money that has recently been secured is to complete one of these floors. We anticipate that work will start in Spring of next year, and hopefully will not be too disruptive!

If anyone would like to submit an article to the newsletter or has information for the ‘Staff News’ section, we would love to hear from you. Equally, if you have any feedback about the format of our newsletter or ideas for future issues, then we would really like to hear your views! Please contact Elaine Mercer on x3101, or via emercer@picr.man.ac.uk

Credits:
Photographs in this issue contributed by: Paul Cliff, Steve Royle, Mark Wadsworth, David Wiggins.
In each issue of the Newsletter, we feature a member of staff who will take the 'Spotlight' and answer a list of questions that we have put together. The next lucky individual to be featured is Lynn Disley of the Radiochemical Targeting and Imaging group.

**What is your favourite part of the UK?**
Anywhere where it’s not raining…..or if it is we have a favourite place in Okehampton, Devon where the weather is immaterial.

**What is your favourite book?**
For pure escapism, any of the Sharpe novels by Bernard Cornwell (this has nothing to do with Sean Bean!), and for inspiration, books by Joyce Meyer.

**What is your favourite film?**
Majority of the Bond films (and this has everything to do with Pierce Brosnan!)

**If you had to change careers tomorrow, what would you do?**
If I had the energy and longer arms I’d probably be a vet.

**Who would you like to be stuck in a lift with, and why?**
Pierce Bronson (oh come on!!)

**What is your greatest fear?**
I’m not very keen on flying.

**What trait do you most deplore in others?**
Cruelty in any form and I am constantly amazed by the creativity some people employ in hurting others.

**If you had to spend £1,000,000 tomorrow, what would you do with the money?**
After paying off our debts, (which are many!) I’d look at how many people’s lives I could input some happiness into ….form an orderly queue!!

Very many congratulations and grateful thanks to Chris Byron, Val Clarke, Mary Heffernan, Jane Johns, Maurice Luscott-Evans and Liz Pinder for raising £2,393 at a Coffee Morning on November 4th, in aid of the Paterson.

These funds were raised in celebration and remembrance of a dear friend, Rhoda Langmead-Smith (who became Luscott-Evans). She was a much respected local Health Visitor, colleague and friend. Rhoda was responsible for getting everyone together socially to learn/play bridge and so the group felt that they wanted to do something for the Paterson, which is now researching the treatment that Rhoda underwent in Hanover. Specifically, the money will be allocated to Professor Peter Stern’s Immunology Group.

The Coffee Morning was held at a local village hall, stalls were set out, a press release produced and the rest, as they say, is history. £1,643 was raised through the actual event, and through a friend of one of the group, matched funding for £750 was acquired from Barclays Bank. So thrilled were they when they counted the money that they all danced around Jane’s kitchen – what a result!

**What is the most important lesson you have learnt from life?**
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**What is your most important lesson that you have learnt from life?**
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**If you could change one thing in your past, what would it be?**
Learn to play a musical instrument….you can only play so much air guitar.

**What would be your perfect meal?**
Much as I would like to be able to name some exotic dish I have to say beef stew and dumplings made by my husband.

**What is the most important lesson that you have learnt from life?**
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**What trait do you most deplore in others?**
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**If you had to spend £1,000,000 tomorrow, what would you do with the money?**
After paying off our debts, (which are many!) I’d look at how many people’s lives I could input some happiness into ….form an orderly queue!!

**Which words or phrases do you most overuse?**
‘Now what!’, ‘currently’ and ‘technically’…

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?**
I’m perfectly happy right now……I try and find something positive in every situation.

**What keeps you awake at night?**
Just right now (I was going to say currently!!): absolutely nothing.

**What is your favourite book?**
For pure escapism, any of the Sharpe novels by Bernard Cornwell (this has nothing to do with Sean Bean!), and for inspiration, books by Joyce Meyer.

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MCRC Team Spread the word in Birmingham

The Manchester Cancer Research Centre core team spent three days in Birmingham in early October to spread the MCRC message at one of the most important events in the cancer research year.

They took it in turns to staff an exhibition stand at the second National Cancer Research Institute Cancer Conference in Birmingham and were so pleased with the results that they signed up for next year.

Over 1,500 delegates from the UK and overseas were at the conference at the International Convention Centre, including a good representation from the Paterson Institute and other partners in the MCRC.

The lure of fresh fruit, useful promotional give-aways and the chance to win an iPod shuffle, plus an eye-catching stand designed by our own Mark Wadsworth, attracted hundreds of visitors to our exhibition space. We ensured that most went away with an information pack to remind them of the verbal explanation of the MCRC’s goals and current state.

Pippa McNichol, Director of Operations for the Paterson and the MCRC, commented: “We found it a really useful way of starting to raise the MCRC’s profile amongst important audiences including basic and translational researchers, clinicians and patient representatives.

By the time we’re back there next year we’ll have made significant progress on recruitment, funding and buildings issues so we’ll have a much stronger story to tell”.

Pippa was joined on the stand by communications consultant David Wiggins and Esther Walker, the MCRC’s Operations Manager who was on her feet even longer than the others: she joined her former Cancer Research UK colleagues two days before the event started to help set up the conference.

Hi, I am Martin Brandenburg. After doing rotations in my first year, I settled down in the Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology group one year ago. Recently moved from the ground floor, you can find me now in the new first floor TRF labs. After some convincing, I volunteered to be one of the new student representatives; also having in mind to represent the minority of male PhD students. I hope to see all the students around for Friday evening drinks/meals. As one part of our student rep work, it is our pleasure to organise the student social event. The report of this event will follow in the next newsletter.

On the few occasions I am not in the lab I try to enjoy the landscape of the Peak and Lake District. I also try to play Badminton twice a week with a small group of people from the Institute (more players most welcome!) and with the University club.

Hi, my name is Katalin Boros. I moved here from Hungary last year, and having just finished my first year of rotations, I’m now in the Stem Cell Biology/Research group in the KK labs. I’m sure many people agree that Manchester is a great place to live/work/study, and when I have the chance, I like to go to the concert halls and theatres, or play badminton or tennis, or for a walk in the Peaks… I am happy to be a student rep alongside Martin this year – please let either of us know if there is anything we can do for you as a student here!

Hi, I am Martin Brandenburg. After doing rotations in my first year, I settled down in the Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology group one year ago. Recently moved from the ground floor, you can find me now in the new first floor TRF labs. After some convincing, I volunteered to be one of the new student representatives; also having in mind to represent the minority of

New Student Reps

Katalin and Martin - the new student reps.

I hope Martin and I will be able to get lots of you involved in the social/cultural activities we have planned for the next months - kicking it all off is the Student Social on Ice! Watch out for the next edition’s report on the Paterson students taking over Piccadilly ice rink!
Our Saturday Open Day in November started at first light with the Cancer Research regional team arriving loaded with posters, leaflets, tablecloths, biscuits, litres of milk and large jars of coffee.

Thanks to Martin and our ever-efficient porters the scene had been set with tables here and there ready for our coffee and science hungry guests. Over 80 CRUK Committee members from around the region, including 10 ladies from Bolton who are all breast cancer survivors and were special guests of the Breast Biology Group, arrived promptly for coffee and biscuits. A few had been waiting since the crack of 8.30. The coffee room was soon buzzing with expectation rather like the daily cycle when CEP descend on it!

Edith Laidlaw (Head of North West Community Fundraising) welcomed everybody followed by a review of this year’s achievements by Diane Connah. Respect goes to our fundraisers especially for the amazing and innovative activities that they dream up each year and the sheer amounts of money that they then collect doing them.

Geoff Margison gave a great plenary talk this year. Starting with some historical ramblings that many of the audience could relate to from previous visits over the past few decades, he went onto to show the building changes to the Institute over the last 12 months and outlined our joining with the University and the genesis of the MCRC. He waxed lyrically on the story of Patrin from early work in his lab to the gleam in Irish eyes of his chemical collaborators, the humble black country birth of Temozolomide to the growing clinical success of these drugs in the treatment of cancer and not forgetting the commercial development by Kudos and its lucrative sell out to AstraZeneca. Geoff finished on a rather feline theme to thunderous applause. Lunch followed with some of our guests talking to demonstrators, guides and, of course, Pippa and David who manned the MCRC “wall of blue” explaining the future to our guests.

Our 12 brilliant guides, some open day virgins, then took groups off to all corners of the building to have 12 areas of science explained by a host of Group and Facility Researchers. Everything went smoothly this year…. no old ladies spending the entire demonstration travelling between floors in the lift…. no fire alarms and a special thank you from Mary, the lady in the wheelchair, who was delighted that she could see the laboratories even on the top floor.

Final conclusions were that I think we all enjoyed the day. It should be fun and it was. Our supporters loved it and will go back to make even more money doing silly things and having fun doing it. I have a few months off from being Basil Fawlty although I warn you next years open day might be a few months earlier (May-June?). Finally I want thank everybody who helped or supported. Sorry; too many to mention by name but you know who you are by that “warm glow”. Please remember that those who didn’t help this year are now top of my volunteer list for next years Open Day!
From 1 October 2006 it will be unlawful to discriminate against people at work because of their age under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

Age discrimination can be explained as occurring when someone treats a person less favourably because of that person’s age, and uses this as a basis for prejudice against and unfair treatment of that person.

Age discrimination in employment can:
• affect anybody regardless of how old they are
• reduce employment prospects for older people, younger people and parents returning to work after a period of full-time childcare
• favour people in the age group 25 to 35
• prevent the full consideration of abilities, potential and experience of employees

What the regulations say – in summary:
The regulations cover recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training.

The regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of age to:
• discriminate directly against you – that is, to treat you less favourably than others because of your age – unless objectively justified
• discriminate indirectly against you – that is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages your particular age unless it can be objectively justified
• subject you to harassment. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates your dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for you having regard to all the circumstances including your perception of the issue
• victimise you because you have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of age
• discriminate against you, in certain circumstances, after the working relationship has ended.

Employers could be responsible for the acts of employees who discriminate on grounds of age. This makes it important for them to train staff about the regulations. Upper age limits on unfair dismissal and redundancy have been removed. There is a national default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified. You have the right to request to work beyond 65 or any other retirement age set by the company. The employer has a duty to consider such requests.

You are protected against direct and indirect discrimination. It is unlawful on the grounds of age to:
• decide not to employ you
• dismiss you
• refuse to provide you with training
• deny you promotion

• give you adverse terms and conditions
• retire you before your usual retirement age (if you have one) or retire you before the default retirement age of 65 without an objective justification

As with all other types of discrimination, the Institute will not tolerate such behaviour and considers that all employees have a duty to report witnessing or experiencing such behaviour.

Carer Leave and Compassionate Leave

Recently, there has been confusion over the difference between carer and compassionate leave so this month, I aim to clarify the difference.

Carer Leave – This is normally authorised in circumstances where an individual with responsibility for dependents (not just children), has an urgent and immediate need for time off work e.g. sudden illness of a dependent, a breakdown in the normal care arrangements or time to make longer term arrangements to cope with a problem. Please note: this does not apply where the individual has had advance notification of the need for time off (e.g. planned hospital appointments or aftercare).

Each situation is unique and it is difficult to lay down specific “rules” but as examples:
• If an individual is suddenly and unexpectedly called upon to care for a relative (e.g. sudden illness or injury), for whom care arrangements are not normally needed, he/she may need some time, possibly several days, to make suitable alternative arrangements.
• If care arrangements are normally needed and are already in place, the individual can reasonably be expected to have contingency plans for when these arrangements fail for any reason. Such an individual is likely to need less time, not usually more than 1 day, to put the alternative arrangements into place.

In either case, if the individual feels that he/she is the most appropriate person to provide the care, he/she should take annual or unpaid leave, following the initial period of carer leave.

Compassionate Leave – This is normally authorised in cases of bereavement where the amount of leave granted will depend on the individual’s personal circumstances e.g. his/her relationship to the deceased, the degree of involvement with arrangements to be made etc.

It can also be authorised where time off is needed to deal with an urgent personal or domestic crisis. This is in exceptional circumstances and should be agreed with the manager and HR Manager prior to taking the time off.

For both carer and compassionate leave, up to 5 days in any 1 leave year may be authorised. A further 5 days in the same leave year may be granted at the discretion of the Institute.

There are now forms on the intranet for individuals to complete to request these types of leave. The forms need to be signed by the manager and the HR Manager. In some cases, we realise that this form may not be completed until the individual returns to work in which case the leave may be granted retrospectively. The manager is responsible for entering this leave on the weekly absence sheets. If you have any queries relating to these topics, please contact me.
Breast Biology Pink Cake Sale

As members of the Breast Biology Group we all thought it would be a great idea to get involved with the Wear It Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. So it was decided that we’d sell cakes and make ourselves look foolish for all the lucky employees in the Paterson.

As predicted the cakes and biscuits all went down extremely well and we managed to raise a very creditable £141.

Thanks to all who purchased one of our sweet treats and we hope you enjoyed them and didn’t spend the rest of the day in a sugar and pink food colouring induced fug (like we all did)!

and the Institute Wears Pink.....

Stephen St George-Smith (right) encouraged the whole institute to join in the fund-raising and wear pink for the day. Carl collected the money on reception which totalled £207 to go with the £141 raised by the breast biology group.

Well done to everyone involved.