

New Year: New Events Calendar

The 15th December saw SYBEN hold its last networking event of 2004, in the historical settings of Hellaby Hall, Rotherham. The event, focusing on the advancements in regenerative medicine, was attended by over 70 guests, including individuals from industry, academia and the public sector.

The event concluded a busy calendar of SYBEN events in 2004 that included: 'From Academia to Industry' an event for post-docs highlighting transition from research to careers outside of academia, 'Orthopaedic Advancements', highlighting novel applications of bionanotechnology and tissue engineering in the orthopaedic industry, and a 'Venture Capital Briefing', with Avlar BioVentures.



Dr Fred Wright

Delegates at the Regenerative Medicine event heard presentations from CellTran, Smith and Nephew, Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering Centre of Industrial Collaboration, Centre for Stem Cell Biology and Intercytex, providing a unique opportunity to discover recent advancements in the regenerative medicine field. Feedback from delegates has been very positive; with many guests making new and valuable contacts and at least one of the speakers looking into a potential new collaboration as a direct result of this event. After an opportunity for networking, upbeat jazz music and mulled wine, the afternoon was followed by the Bioscience Yorkshire Christmas Dinner. Dr Fred Wright, Chief Executive of the Centre for Excellence in Life Sciences in Newcastle, brought the evening to a close with a stimulating after dinner speech on his experiences in the world of biotechnology.



Event conference

SYBEN NETWORKING EVENT: Science Communication

16th February 2005: 16.00 for 16.30 start - 18.00 (followed by refreshments) Hilton Hotel, Victoria Quays, Sheffield

EVENT SUMMARY

This meeting will focus on the importance of good communications for bioscience companies. The event will give an introduction to:

- **Marketing communications strategies for science-based companies**
- **Promotion of leading edge products, technologies and services**
- **Making the media work for you**

For companies with innovative science at their core, messages are often complex. Being heard above the noise is a huge challenge but being understood is a much greater one. Start-ups especially often have an urgent need to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders, from finance, business, industry, government, academia, the medical profession and the public. Effective communications can be a vital tool to establish and develop a strong corporate

presence, drive company value and help to promote leading edge products, technologies and services. In addition, by engaging with the media scientific companies can use it as a tool to ensure the public receives a positive message when science hits the headlines.

EVENT SPEAKERS

Peter Colley, Director and Co-founder, Northbank Communications.

Northbank Communications is a full service communications consultancy focused on science-based companies. Peter has many years experience of marketing communications, after an industry career including six years as managing Director of Applied BioSystems.

Dr Claire Bithell, Science Information Officer, Science Media Centre.

The Science Media Centre is an independent, non profit venture working to promote the voices,

stories and views of the scientific community to the news media when science is in the headlines.

Academic Case Study (Dr. Allan Pacey, University of Sheffield)

Dr. Pacey is an expert in male fertility and has used the media at several points in his research career to generate interest in his work. He is currently the media spokesperson for the British Fertility Society for matters concerning male fertility and sperm donation.

Biotechnology Company Case Study (TBC)

To register for this free event, email syben@shu.ac.uk or telephone, Rachael Calvert or Lisa Pennington on 0114 225 4203 or 3684.

www.syben.org.uk

SYBEN - south yorkshire bioscience enterprise network

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BIONEWS

news & views from south yorkshire's innovative bioscience cluster

Plasso secures \$2.8 million investment for coating technology

Plasso Technology Ltd has secured \$2.8m (£1.5 million) second round funding from a Boston-based institutional investor which focuses on discoveries within UK academic institutions in the life sciences and physical sciences.

Plasso was formed in 2003 to exploit surface modification techniques initially developed at the University of Sheffield. Its expertise and understanding of surfaces in a biological context are built on fifteen years of research.

The company's core technology involves advanced surface engineering, and provides tailored coatings to consumables such as microarrays, lab-on-a-chip, sensors and microtitre plates used in life sciences research and diagnostics. The unique properties of these coatings provide a marked increase in sensitivity and specificity for assays within these markets.

Plasso has successfully forged a number of commercial partnerships with equipment manufacturers in the life sciences and is also developing its own product portfolio aimed at the bio-instrumentation, bio-sensors, arrays and emerging diagnostics sectors.

The new funding will provide the company with working capital to enable it to accelerate its research programme and product development. Commenting on the investment, Sameer Kothari, Plasso's Chief Executive Officer, said:



www.plasso.com

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WEB CONTACTS

www.plasso.com
www.yfrtd.org/
www.shu.ac.uk/syben/support/eventfund.html
www.themedicalhouse.com
www.syben.org.uk

achieve this. Biofusion will initially hold shares or an economic interest in nine University spinout companies - including Plasso. The University of Sheffield is believed to be the world's first to approach spin-out commercialisation in this manner.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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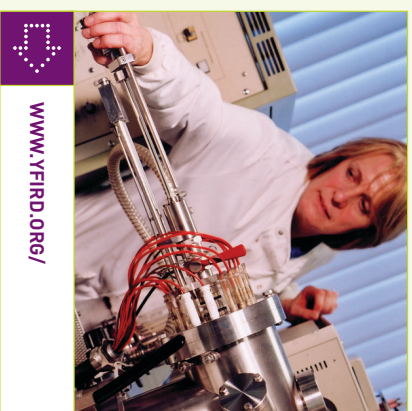
18 million boost for regional R&D

Yorkshire Forward is pleased to launch the first English Regional Industrial Research and Development Award for Large Companies.

They are now encouraging 'Expressions of Interest' (EOI) from companies seeking funding in undertaking Research and Development projects.

Yorkshire Forward's 'Industrial Research and Development award', the first of its kind in the UK, is a scheme to help companies with more than 250 staff develop new products and processes to increase their competitiveness in any global market place.

You can be kept informed on all related news and important dates, by signing up for regular programme updates via the scheme's website, www.yfirfd.org/



www.yfirfd.org/

SYBEN welcomes new starter, Lisa Pennington

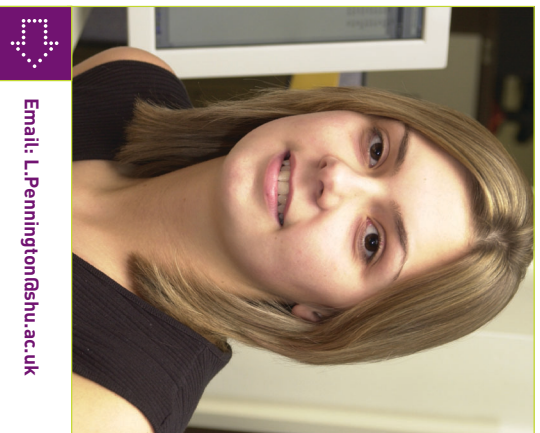
Lisa Pennington joined us on the 29th November 2004, and will be working as the new SYBEN Assistant. She has recently graduated from Sheffield Hallam University where she studied for a BSc (Hons) Human Bioscience.

During her degree Lisa completed a year in industry with Pfizer Ltd, Kent, where she worked in the Academic Liaison Department. The department worked closely with local schools and colleges to encourage a greater interest in and understanding of science.

Lisa was primarily responsible for 'two science education programmes: "The Link Scientist Scheme" and "The A-Level Mentoring Scheme" which were introduced after an approach by a local teacher as it was felt that was a need for an external source of support for students.

Lisa will be working with SYBEN Co-ordinator, Rachael Calvert, and will be on hand to assist in supporting the South Yorkshire Bioscience community.

If you would like to contact Lisa for further information on any of SYBEN's projects her contacts details are: Email: L.Pennington@shu.ac.uk Tel: 0114 225 3684



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Call for Applications to the SYBEN Event Fund

Bioscience companies located in South Yorkshire could be eligible for up to £1000 of financial assistance to subsidise the costs participating in national and international events for the purpose of business development (such as scientific conferences, trade fairs, investor forums and trade missions).

Up to 50% of costs (including travel, accommodation, registration fees, exhibition costs) can be claimed. Successful applications to the SYBEN Event Fund include CellTran Ltd (The Application of GMP to Tissue Banks, London), Fluent Europe Ltd (Drug Delivery - Latest Technology and Strategic Partnerships, Germany), Dew Remediation (International Clean Up 2004, Birmingham), Axordia Ltd (International Society for Stem Cell Research Annual Meeting, USA) and Sincyp Ltd (15th International Symposium on Microsomes and Drug Oxidation 2004).

To find out how you can access this grant, contact SYBEN on syben@shu.ac.uk or visit www.shu.ac.uk/syben/support/eventfund.html

The Medical House PLC announce multi million pound partnership with Serono

Medical House PLC, the Sheffield based orthopaedic devices and drug delivery company, announced on 10 January 2005, details of their ground-breaking agreement with global biotechnology leader, Serono, expected to reach up to £4.3 million.

Serono is The Medical House's partner in a five year contract under which the Sheffield company will manufacture and supply a reusable, user filled needle free injection device and related consumables to deliver Serono's human growth hormone.

Serono has a strong market position in metabolism and growth, in addition to being the world leader in reproductive health, and currently has eight biotechnology products on the market along with a strong pipeline based on both proteins and small molecules.

Thierry Dalmas, Vice-President of Global Metabolic Endocrinology at Serono, said: "We expect the new needle-free injector being developed by The Medical House will be popular with patients who receive human growth hormone daily."



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, Contact Ian Townsend, Chief Executive, The Medical House PLC on 0114 261 9011 or visit the website www.themedicalhouse.com

University of Sheffield plays crucial role in sequencing chicken genome

Scientists at the University of Sheffield have played a major role in sequencing the chicken genome, published in Nature and Genome Research on Thursday 9 December 2004.

The Chicken became a member of an exclusive club in December when the Chicken Genome Sequencing Consortium published its complete genome sequence. It is the first farm animal to be successfully sequenced, as well as being the first bird.

As chickens are thought to be the modern descendants of dinosaurs it is hoped that this breakthrough will enable scientists to have a better understanding of mammalian evolution.

It will be of particular importance to agricultural researchers, chicken breeders, genome-sequence producers and geneticists who are trying to accurately identify functional regions of the human genome.

The Sheffield team were responsible for determining the sequences of messenger RNAs, which have allowed an international team of scientists to analyse the chicken genome sequence and identify most chicken genes. The team have also contributed to an analysis of the genetic differences in three types of chicken, which has implications for the food industry. This research found that, despite many years of intensive breeding, modern food production chickens retain much of the genetic diversity found in their wild ancestors.

Dr. Stuart Wilson, who led the Sheffield team explains, "Completing a genome sequence for a species is only half the battle. Once this is completed, you are left with the task of actually finding the genes themselves, which make up only a fraction of the whole sequence.

"This work is hugely important for both agriculture and biomedical scientists, and allows researchers to fill an important evolutionary gap between the genome sequences of fish and mammals that have already been determined."

Did you know? Top 5 Chicken Facts!

- A fear of chickens is known as Alektorophobia
- There are more chickens in the world than people
- The closest living relative of the T-Rex is the chicken
- The greatest number of yolks in one chicken egg is nine
- The term 'Chicken Pox' didn't come from people believing that they came from chickens, it came from Old English term 'Glean Pox' which means itching pox.