



## **Life Sciences Section AGM Update 2020**

**Dr Theresa Ward**

This year has not been a normal one. Firstly, Claire Wells handed on the baton of Chair of the LS committee at last year's AGM at the MMC. I would really like to thank Claire for all her work leading the committee over the previous 3 years, she did a fabulous job energizing the committee and keeping us in touch with all the other arms of the RMS.

And what a year to hand over. We started with a calendar full of activities, including events that engage with other societies and scientific meetings. The RMS provided £100 sponsorship towards Glasgow Imaging at Work meeting for students in August 2019; the meeting was very successful and highly attended, co-organised by Liam Rooney, the LS Early Career committee member and now very active Early Career Committee Chair; we again sponsored the Bristol actin meeting, awarding a prize for best imaging in a talk; and an RMS-sponsored session at the British Society of Immunology annual meeting last December, together with a prize for best imaging in a talk.

Come March's upheaval, many meetings were initially postponed to the autumn, with the hope of being able to run face-to-face by then, or have now been bumped for a year. We are looking forward to this year's Frontiers in Bioimaging due to start online on 17 November, organised by Mark Leake from the LM section, Leandro Lemgruber Soares from EM, and myself. It features many high profile speakers and we are really happy that after its initial postponement we will get to see everyone virtually. Following on from the success of 2019's High Content Screening workshop run by Steven Briddon, Jacqui Bond and Sam Peel, they are hoping to run this online in the new year. Stephen Thomas who is LS representative on the training interest group is looking at feasibility of an online light sheet course, following the success of the recent Light Sheet meeting. And the European Cytoskeletal Forum meeting with organizers Michelle Peckham, Jan Faix and Stefan Linder, our outgoing and incoming European representatives respectively, also coming up in 2021 after being postponed from this year. And of course we are looking forward to next year's MMC2021 where members of the LS committee are session organisers. Further down the line we look to future events including Abercrombie meeting, co-organised by LS committee member Brian Stramer, in 2022, hoping to return to a more normal format. The committee has also been pleased to award the Life Sciences medal this year to Yanlan Mao from University College London who we will look forward to seeing at MMC next year, and the Mid-Career Scientific Achievement Award to Serge Mostowy from London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine who is speaking later this afternoon.

As every year, we are happy to welcome new members, and it has been a particular shame to see the departure of some previous members of the committee without a goodbye in person, though of course we hope to see them at meetings in the future. We extend our warmest thanks to Jan Faix, our European representative, to Imogen Sparkes, who we will see again at the Botanical Microscopy conferences, and to Will Jackson who is kindly helping the committee by sending some training histology slides in response to a school request. We are very happy to welcome onto the committee Liam Rooney as our Early Career representative, Dr Emanuel Derivery from MRC-LMB, Dr Izzy Jayasinghe who has been moving her lab somehow this summer to Sheffield University, Dr Mark Rigby from Nikon as an industry representative, and Professor Stefan Linder from UKE in Hamburg.

In this particularly difficult year, I would really like to commend the adaptability of the RMS staff, the committee, and our extended community to embracing online connectivity. The increased accessibility to our international colleagues as small departmental seminar series have had to upgrade their zoom licenses to accommodate the huge audiences has been eye-opening as a communication tool. The fantastic meetings held by the RMS in May directing the safe working practices in facilities certainly paved the way for opening up research again in my institute following lockdown and, judging by the attendance, by many many others, really underlining the pivotal role the RMS has in the technical community. But nonetheless we miss our face-to-face meetings, the nuanced comments, the audience feedback and interaction, the 10 minute chats over coffee. So we really hope that the longed-for silver bullet might really be this vaccine and fingers crossed for MMC2021 and I look forward to seeing you all there.