



Flow Cytometry Section Report 2019-2020

Mr Derek Davies

This is the end of my third and final year as Chair of the Flow Cytometry section. Last year, at the AGM during mmc2019, I was able to give a review of all the meetings and courses that we put on. Of course, I don't need to tell you that this year has been rather different! However, that is not to say that we have not been active again. Prior to the lockdown in March 2020, we did have some face-to-face meetings. In July 2019, we ran a very successful “High dimensional cytometric data analysis” day at the Francis Crick Institute which attracted over 50 delegates to hear state-of-the art talks from both academia and companies. It was organised by Derek Davies and Gareth Howell and was a great meeting for those new to the field and sparked a lot of collaborations. We did run our annual Flow Cytometry course at the University of York where 34 delegates were treated to a week of basic introduction and then specific applications in both the clinical and research cytometry fields.

In September 2109, along with the LM and EM sections, we introduced a new course specifically for new Core Managers or those who were interested in learning more about the administrative aspects of facilities. This was run over 2 days for 20 delegates from a cross-section of core facilities. It was over-subscribed so the plan is to keep this in the meeting's agenda in future.

flowcytometryUK2019 was held in November at the Babraham Institute in Cambridge. This was the first time this one-day meeting has been held outside London and it was great success with almost 100 delegates and a large exhibition. It was also the opportunity to present the Flow Cytometry section medal to Dr Andy Filby (University of Newcastle).

January saw the third Flow Facilities meeting this time in Newcastle organised by Andy Filby and his team. Spread over two days, this is now an established meeting where all delegates are equal and, as usual, there were some inspiring talks and a chance to get an update from relevant Societies and funding bodies.

Things rather ground to a halt after the announcement of the first lockdown in March 2020 but we realised that we need to provide both information and educational opportunities to our members. Initially this was via a series of virtual meetings to discuss the impacts that the COVID-19 situation had had on facilities and how this would impact us all in the future. We ran three of these (15 May, 12 June, 17 July) and they were attended by well over 300 people in total and were extremely interactive and the fact that this was run via Zoom meant we could attract a worldwide audience and indeed we had attendees from almost 30 countries.

We had to postpone *flowcytometryUK2020* which was due to be held at the University of Birmingham in July but we have re-scheduled this for July 2022 at the same venue.

Regrettably we also had to cancel the annual Flow Course but in its place we ran a data analysis course held over four afternoons in September. This was very much an experimental course and put together very quickly but it was well-received and as we now have the experience in running in this format it gives us another offering that can be run enabling us to attract delegates who maybe could not afford to travel. The organisers were Peter O'Toole and Karen Hogg (U York) Derek Davies and Sukhveer Purewal (The Francis Crick Institute). In parallel a very successful clinical flow day was organised by Stephen Couzens (U Cardiff), David Bloxham (U Cambridge) and Dan Payne (St James's Hospital, Leeds). We would especially like to thank Tor Masters and Katie Reynolds in the Office for their help with setting this up so quickly.

Of course, we hope to return to face to face meetings in 2021 but we have already planned two virtual meetings for January. The Flow Facilities meeting will be run over two afternoons and we have enlisted co-organisers from the USA to help us expand our audience. The Core Managers course that we ran in association with the LM and EM sections will also run virtually. Details of all forthcoming course are available on the RMS website. Also on the website, we have the Facilities database (<https://www.rms.org.uk/network-collaborate/facilities-database.html>) and there are now over 25 flow facilities represented, so if yours is not there, now is the time to add it!

Later in the year, we have two sessions planned at mmc2021 on imaging flow cytometry, and quantitative spatial cytometry; and we hope that *flowcytometryUK2021* will again be held at the Babraham Institute. At the latter meeting, we will present the Flow Cytometry Medal to Gert van Isterdael (VIB-UGent Center for Inflammation Research Ghent, Belgium).

Lile all Sections, and the Society itself, we are extremely grateful to the many companies that sponsored events during this year, this is a difficult time for them to and we are grateful for their continued support.

As well as this being my last action as Chair, we are also saying goodbye to several Committee stalwarts – Ian Titley, Andy Herman, Andy Filby and Richard Grenfell. The new Committee will step in after this AGM and will be led by Karen Hogg (Chair, University of York) and Gareth Howell (Vice-Chair, University of Manchester)

Finally, I would like to thank all the Section Committee members who have worked extremely hard to provide a series of scientific and educational offerings in challenging times and at a time when they are also needed in their workplaces; the Society works hard at providing appropriate educational offerings and I am proud that the Flow Cytometry section has contributed fully to this. Of course none of this would be possible without the fabulous team in the office led by Allison, I have greatly enjoyed my interactions with everyone and will be sad to step down, but I am looking forward to continuing helping with events in the future.

Derek Davies, Chair, Flow Cytometry Section
November 2020