EMBL &cetera

22

August 2004

Newsletter of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory

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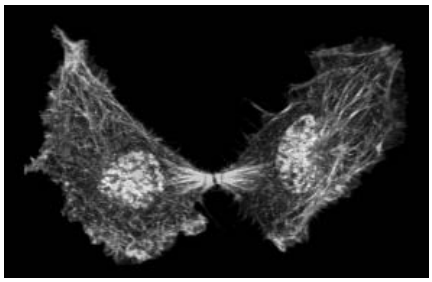

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Mattaj named next DG at Council meeting

Iain Mattaj will be the next Director-General of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. The decision was reached at a meeting of EMBL's governing Council, held in Rome on June 29. Iain will take office starting in May 2005, when the term of the current Director-General Fotis C. Kafatos ends. This was a highlight of the summer meeting of EMBL Council, which also announced an extension of the Lab's Scientific Programme and Indicative Scheme for an extra year and several other decisions that will have an important impact on EMBL. on page 2

EC grants major award to PhD Programme

EMBL's International PhD Programme has just been awarded one of the first Marie Curie Early Stage Training (EST) institutional grants from the European Commission for its proposal "Early-Stage Training in Advanced Life Science Research Across Europe (E-STAR)." The grant totals nearly 2.5 million Euros and will fund up to 18 graduate student fellowships over 2.5 years. EST grants are a key mechanism by which the EC is helping to provide young researchers with structured scientific or technological training opportunities under Framework Programme 6. on page 6

A wealth of information from a little fish

Members of Jochen Wittbrodt's group appear prominently in the latest edition of the journal *Mechanisms of Development*, a special issue devoted to the results of a major medaka mutagenesis screen. Following on the heels of the completion of a high-quality version of the medaka genome, the studies are producing a treasure trove of information about vertebrate development and the evolution of fish. on page 5

MitoCheck: on the trail of the cell cycle

EMBL groups will play a key role in MitoCheck, an EC-funded, high-throughput analysis of genes that contribute to the cell cycle. Eleven different institutes will participate in the 8.5-million-Euro project, which utilizes made-at-EMBL technology to investigate fundamental questions in a new way. on page 4

Chickens run rampant at the EBI

Yes, the EBI is working on the chicken genome, but fowl play a wider role in the daily life of the EBI. If anyone should know, it's Mark Green, Head of EBI Administration, and he does his best to keep us abreast of the situation. on page 9

Where in the world is... EMBL alumnus Davide Corona?

Four years after leaving EMBL, Davide Corona returns to his native Italy this summer to assume a junior investigator position at the San Raffaele Institute (Milan).

In this issue's alumni profile, Davide talks about the effects that moving between continents has on the life of a young researcher and his family.

While at EMBL, Davide worked as a PhD student in Peter Becker's group on proteins that remodel chromatin; he continued this work at the University of Santa Cruz in California and will take it further in Milan, using *Drosophila* as a model system.

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Key steps for EMBL taken at summer Council meeting in Rome: next DG named;

Decisions made at EMBL's semi-annual council meetings usually have a direct and long-term impact on the life of the Laboratory, but the effects are often subtle. Not so at this summer's meeting, held during the last week of June, generously hosted in Rome at CNR headquarters by Italian delegate Glauco Tocchini-Valentini. The Council made a number of extremely important decisions that will be felt in the near future by everyone at EMBL.

One major piece of news from the meeting was the announcement that Iain Mattaj, current Scientific Director and head of the Gene Expression Programme, will become the next Director-General in May 2005, when the term of Fotis C. Kafatos ends (see story below). The decision was unanimous and the announcement was accompanied by a standing ovation.

Another key decision was to extend the current scientific and financial plans of the Laboratory (the Scientific Programme and Indicative Scheme) an extra year. These plans are crucial because they ensure five-year stability for EMBL, a framework in which the management knows what resources will be available in making strategic decisions about overall funding and the development of specific projects. Adding a year to the current plan gives the new DG the time to settle in before submitting a detailed five-year scientific programme and budget, a big task for which support will have to be garnered from the Member States.

A central point of the meeting is always the Director-General's report on the status of the Laboratory, including scientific progress that has been made. Rather than reporting in detail himself, Fotis said, he would rather the Council get a direct impression from some of EMBL's scientists. In addition to presentations made by all of Monterotondo's group leaders, given during a half-day outing to the unit, Council heard presentations from Lars Steinmetz and Ernst Stelzer about ongoing projects in their labs.

Council members also heard a report from the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), which had recently reviewed the Gene Expression Programme in Heidelberg. The Programme was given "the most positive review" in EMBL history, with a special commendation to Programme Coordinator Iain Mattaj for having succeeded in bringing together a group of excellent scientists that are at the forefront of research on chromatin, nuclear assembly and transport. The Molecular Medicine Partnership Unit, run by Matthias Hentze and Andreas Kulozik (University of Heidleberg), also received a highly positive review.

Other themes that Fotis underscored included the establishment of an electron tomography group and a new electron microscopy facility in Heidelberg, and the development of protein expression and crystallization services at EMBL-Grenoble. He also reported recent developments in the area of partnerships and collaborations, highlighting the Chemical Genomics facility (in collaboration with the DKFZ), the renewed cooperation between DESY and EMBL-Hamburg for structural biology initiatives, the Partnership for Structural Biology in Grenoble, and the Molecular Medicine Partnship Unit (with the University of Heidelberg). These demonstrate EMBL's success at reinforcing ties with research initiatives in the Member States.

Another important development was the acceptance of a proposal to establish an "EMBL International Training Centre" (EITC). The project will bring together under one umbrella various training activities at EMBL (including the International PhD Programme, courses and workshops, postdoctoral training, sabbatical and other programmes for visitors, such as the European Learning Laboratory for Life Sciences). Establishing the EITC will help to improve the organization and promotion of all the aspects of EMBL's training mission.

Finally, two pieces of news from the Finance Committee that you've all been waiting for:

First, the following salary adjustments for 2004 were approved:

France 3.2%, Germany 2.0%, Italy 4.1% and UK 3.9%.

Iain Mattaj named next EMBL Director-General

Photo by Maj Britt Hansen

Iain Mattaj will be the next Director-General of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. The decision was reached and announced at a meeting of EMBL's governing Council, held in Rome on June 29. Iain will take office starting in May 2005, when the term of the current Director-General Fotis C. Kafatos ends.

Iain was born in Scotland in 1952 and was trained in the UK and Switzerland. He came to EMBL in 1985, where he has led a very successful Unit since 1990, becoming Scientific Director for the whole of EMBL in 1999. He is a distinguished scientist whose contributions have been recognized by his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society (London), Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Member of Academia Europea and Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Science, as well as by the award of the prestigious Louis-Jeantet Prize for Medicine in 2001. His early work focused on assemblies of RNA and protein (RNPs) in the cell, including those involved in messenger RNA production. Subsequently, Iain characterized mechanisms of macromolecular transport between the two major cellular compartments, the nucleus and the cytoplasm, and of the spatial regulation of structures and processes underlying cell division. He is a member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) and has helped make *the EMBO Journal* a highly successful international scientific journal, most recently as Executive Editor.

Iain says, "Having had a supporting role in the leadership of EMBL since 1999, I believe that much of the Laboratory's current strategic planning is on the right track. I hope to harness the creativity of the Laboratory and to build on the successful efforts of my predecessors by helping make EMBL a flagship for 21st century Biology, just as it has been a leader over much of the past three decades. But if there is one lesson I have learned here it is that the pace of progress in the Life Sciences is remarkable. The rate of change and the evolution of ideas within the Laboratory need to match this pace, and I will have to ensure that they do. I look forward to this challenge."

scientific programme extended; and a good time was had by all

The pension adjustments for 2004 will be:

France 2.2%, Germany 1.0% and UK 2.9% (no pensioners in Italy).

And secondly, the committee approved the construction of a new car park at the Heidelberg laboratory (!) to help ease the current crowded parking situation. Construction to provide 150 new spaces will begin at the end of 2004. Germany, as the host country of the Lab, will make a major financial contribution towards the construction.

In spite of all the work that got done at the Council meeting, the schedule included a little time for R&R under the hot Roman sun: few of those present will forget the vocal duet (and dancing) of Glauco Tocchini-Valentini and Fotis at the restaurant Pommidoro (although all of those present have been sworn to silence). Finally, on the last evening, CNR hosted a gala dinner at the Ambassador's Club on the banks of the Tiber river. A good time was had by all, especially the Portuguese and Dutch delegates who managed to duck out into the TV room to cheer on their countries in the semifinal match of the EuroCup 2004.

Photos by Marietta Schupp

Clockwise from left: Walter Witke explains his research as Council visits the Monterotondo campus; Council members tour the mouse facilities, Keith Williamson and Bernd-Uwe Jahn at work in the Monterotondo courtyard; dinner illuminated by the Roman sunset; Bernard Ehresmann (France), Marja Makarow (Finland) and Myriam Néchad (France) compare notes during a break between Council sessions.

Electron Microscopy Core Facility officially opens at EMBL-Heidelberg

Jürgen Roemer-Mähler from the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* (BMBF) and Anna Della Croce from the Italian Embassy in Berlin joined staff at EMBL-Heidelberg on June 18 to celebrate the opening of a new Electron Microscopy (EM) Core Facility. After a brief introduction by Director-General Fotis Kafatos, EMBL scientists Andy Hoenger, Claude Antony and Achilleas Frangakis outlined current and future high-tech applications of advanced EM technologies. The BMBF has funded a large portion of a new electron microscope for the facility – which has the most advanced features available today. This instrument will be predominantly used for high-resolution cryo-electron microscopy.

The EM Core Facility, led by Claude Antony, will provide up-to-date know-how on EM methods for cell biology and immunocytochemistry and will assist EMBL scientists in using EM in their research. The new Leica High Pressure Freezing (HPF) machine will be a prominent feature of the facility, allowing users to cryofix samples ranging from yeast cells to much larger specimens. The facility can accommodate simple experiments as well as long-term collaborations.

Photo by Maj Britt Hansen

Opening day for the EM facility: guests examine state-of-the-art equipment

It will also serve as a training centre for visitors from the member states. If demand exceeds capacity, researchers will be asked to submit project proposals that will be evaluated by a committee. Successful applicants will come for one to two weeks to use the equipment, taking home new expertise.

Claude and his team will also carry out their own cutting-edge research on yeast cells. They use EM methods to study mitosis in budding yeast and to look at microtubule organization in wild-type and mutant fission yeast cells.

For more information on the facility or to arrange a visit, contact Stephanie Weil at the EMBL-Heidelberg Visitors Programme (weil@embl.de).

– Trista Dawson

MitoCheck: a high-throughput approach to understanding cell division

Among the thousands of new molecules uncovered by the Human Genome Project, there are sure to be hundreds – maybe more – that play a role in cell division, or mitosis. Discovering these genes would be a great boon to biological research; among other things, it would give scientists new tracks to follow in trying to understand the causes of cancer and other diseases that result from disruptions of the cell cycle.

This is the goal of a project called MitoCheck that has just been launched by Jan Ellenberg, Rainer Pepperkok and their groups at EMBL, and researchers from eight other institutes across Europe.

MitoCheck is the fruit of discussions, initiated two years ago, between a group of scientists including Marcel Doree, Tim Hunt, Kim Nasmyth, Jan-Michael Peters, Eric Karsenti Iain Mattaj, Jan Ellenberg and Tony Hyman. They realized that although the major enzyme that causes the transition from mitosis to interphase, a kinase called cdc2 and its regulator cyclin, had been known for over 20 years (their discovery was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2001), there was still no comprehensive understanding about how all the proteins affected by this kinase work together to make a cell divide. MitoCheck, an Integrated Project for the European Commission's 6th Framework Programme, aims to close this gap. The project is funded at a level of 8.5 million Euros, making it the largest Integrated Project on cell cycle control within FP6.

The first step of the project, carried out by Ellenberg and Pepperkok aims to identify all the genes required for division in human cells. Once the most important of these genes have been identified, researchers from the other institutes across Europe will step in to analyze their binding partners, phosphorylation status and potential role in cancer diagnosis.

To screen for mitotic genes, MitoCheck weaves together several strands of biotechnology in an innovative way. Specific genes are silenced using interfering RNAs (RNAi) and cells are then analyzed for defects in mitosis using live cell microscopy. To achieve the level of throughput necessary to accomplish this enormous task for the whole genome, EMBL scientists Beate Neumann, Holger Erfle and Urban Liebel have developed a microarray onto which hundreds of RNAis can be printed. The chip is simply covered with living cells that absorb the RNA from the printed spot they grow on.

Once a gene is silenced, EMBL scientists will take a microscope movie of the cells on each spot of the array, a step that draws on technology that Rainer and Philippe Bastiaens have been busy developing. Their high-content screening microscopes will allow researchers to rapidly take pictures of cells at different locations in the array. As part of the new project, the concept of screening will be incorporated into confocal microscopes with the help of industrial partner Leica Microsystems (Mannheim).

The success of MitoCheck will undoubtedly lie in the expertise that each participating group will bring. The Max Planck Institute of Cell Biology and Genetics in Dresden will provide a vast library of about 20,000 RNAis. These will be used to suppress genes one by one on the chips made by the EMBL scientists. With the new screening microscopes, several hundred thousand movies will be produced to capture the full impact of silencing specific genes. Analyzing the enormous amount of data will be carried out in a close collaboration with Roland Eils's group at the DKFZ in Heidelberg.

The Heidelberg team hopes to achieve a nearly comprehensive list of genes required for mitosis in human cells, as well as a much deeper understanding of what happens when each of these genes is suppressed. All the data produced through MitoCheck will be made available to the scientific community and the public through databases at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, another partner.

"The project is an excellent example of a European research network," Jan says. "We have assembled a group of top scientists across Europe, each of whom is contributing an essential piece towards the common goal of understanding mitosis."

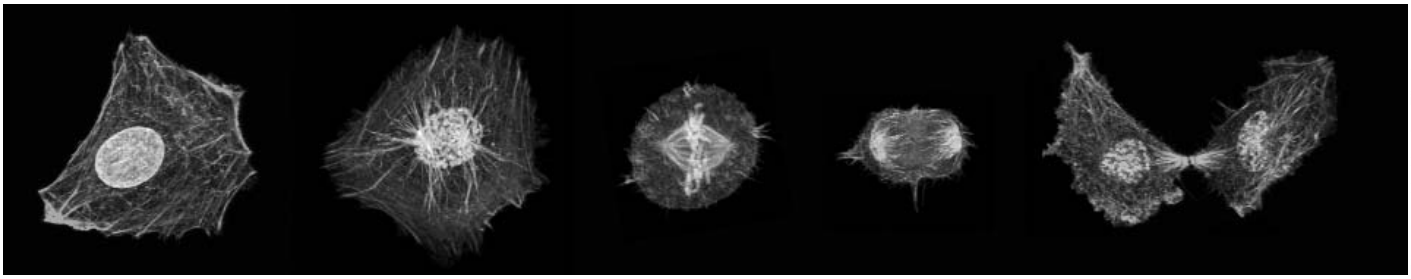

Photo provided by Jan Ellenberg

MitoCheck will use innovative "live cell arrays" combined with siRNA gene silencing in a high-throughput study of the effects of specific genes on the cell cycle.

Centre for Disease Mechanisms outlines plans for future activities

More than twenty scientists from EMBL came together for the first retreat of the EMBL Centre for Disease Mechanisms (CDM) on June 17. The event provided a great opportunity to discuss the scientific interests of the participants and also to draw an outline of the Centre's activities.

The CDM aims to support medically relevant research at EMBL by promoting the increasingly important application of basic research to the understanding and treatment of human disease. The activities of the Centre will be directed towards expanding the interface and facilitating translational research between EMBL groups and clinical research activities at Europe's medical institutions.

CDM webpages will provide an up-to-date account of EMBL research relevant to disease mechanisms, post notices of meetings and symposia and disseminate information about relevant publications by CDM participants. It will include a "matchmaking" service, facilitating contacts between external clinical researchers and EMBL groups. The CDM will continue to host the popular EMBL-organised symposia and workshops on medically oriented topics including the "Minisymposia on Molecular Medicine."

An MD-postdoc program will be hosted by the CDM; the aim is to attract young MDs to EMBL for postdoctoral training, so that they can apply basic science to the investigation of disease pathogenesis. Positions will be announced on the CDM webpages. Funds permitting, the CDM will also award fellowships to talented MDs who join EMBL labs to work on relevant projects.

To facilitate access to available genetic mouse models relevant for disease mechanism- oriented research, the CDM will create and maintain an up-to-date database of conditional mouse mutants, including both "floxed" alleles and Cre transgenic mice.

– Manolis Pasparakis

science
for teachers

In June, EMBL Education Officers Alexandra Manaia and Julia Willingale-Theune pushed their textbooks and notes aside to clear some space on their desks. They needed to make room for Silvia Boi, a postdoc-turned-science-teacher, arriving from Italy for a month-long visit. In addition to her research and teaching activities, Silvia is an avid science communicator, and has even translated a part of Stephen Jay Gould's last book into Italian for publication.

The opportunity for the visit arose when EMBL alumna Maria Luisa Tenchini began a collaboration with the European Learning Laboratory for the Life Sciences (ELLS) and suggested that Silvia travel to Heidelberg to learn the ropes of how to prepare for a teachers' course they will run in Milan in November. Armed with hundreds of hours of experience both at the bench and in the classroom, financial support from EMBL and the *Ufficio Scolastico Regionale della Lombardia* and lots of ideas, Silvia set off on her journey to Germany.

Silvia's main task was to develop teaching materials to be used at the workshop in November, which will focus on the relationship between genes and developmental phenotypes. She plans to have the teachers detect mutant fish by PCR using a protocol previously developed by ELLS with the help of PhD student Martina Rembold from Jochen Wittbrodt's lab. She has also translated and integrated texts into handbooks that teachers can take back into the classroom. A second segment of the course will focus on bioinformatics, so Silvia enlisted the help of postdoc Francesca Diella (Toby Gibson's team) to develop a new activity.

Photo by Marietta Schupp

ELLS visitor Silvia Boi

"Interacting with scientists like Martina and Francesca was a great experience," says Silvia. "They were really enthusiastic about the research they are doing, and managed to convey this excitement. It was contagious! I was also pleased to see how willing the scientists at EMBL were to share their research and time with teachers."

When organizing the course in Milan, Silvia plans to follow the example of ELLS LearningLABs. She'll use the tips and tricks she learned from Alexandra and Julia about how to put together a selection of activities – from hands-on experiments to discussion sessions – which will allow both teachers and their students to experience some of the excitement that goes inside a molecular biology research institute.

ELLS welcomes visiting teachers, scientists, and others. When participants return to their home schools or laboratories, they will take along plenty of ideas and practical materials, as well as a way of staying in contact with a network of people actively working to improve science teaching. If you would like to arrange a visit, please contact the ELLS staff at ells@embl.de.

Big secrets from a little fish: medaka mutants begin to talk

Normally *Mechanisms of Development* is a tidy publication of just over a hundred pages; in July a whopping double issue thumped down on our desks, 400 pages of revelations about the tiny fish *medaka*. Among the curious things to be learned: the Japanese have about 5000 names for the creature because it has no real economic value; it's too small to eat, so it doesn't need a standard name for the menu. People call it whatever they please. Children sing a song about schools of the fish – on their way to their own schools.

This belies the scientific value of the fish, which has long been studied by Japanese researchers and has rapidly become an important model organism for developmental biology. At EMBL, Jochen Wittbrodt has been the standard-bearer for medaka. The names of members of his group appear throughout the journal. Jochen has actively pushed for the completion of the medaka mutagenesis screen and genome (of which an extremely high-quality version was finished two weeks ago). His own work has been devoted to processes such as the development of the eye and brain. An important part of that work involves large-scale projects to introduce mutations and study their developmental effects through screens carried out in Heidelberg and Kyoto with Japanese collaborators.

"Medaka is attractive when you're working on developmental themes because it's almost transparent," Jochen says. "That makes it possible to study processes within the body in a living organism, in their real context. It's also a great help to have other fish and their genomes – zebrafish and pufferfish – on hand so that you can make comparisons and take advantage of what has been learned in a closely-related organism. Medaka's genome is about half the size of that of the zebrafish, which makes it handier in genetic studies; another factor is that a number of strains are available for use in both mutagenesis screening and genetic mapping."

Mechanisms of Development has now printed the first BAC map draft of the genome as well as many specific studies carried out by Jochen and others. Screens of mutations revealed developmental roles for genes that had never been observed in zebrafish. There are clear parallels between the two species – defective genes often produce the same phenotypes – but a new finding is that these mutations have their effects through different molecular pathways.

The list of discoveries goes on and on: the screens identified 60 mutants that affect retinal development, 25 genes affecting the formation of the forebrain, nine that disturb the segmentation of the body, five that disrupt axon pathfinding, etc. That's just a taste of what you'll find in the journal.

Jochen's group has also promoted the development of microscope techniques needed to obtain a sharp view of changes in the fish over time. The problem is obvious to anyone who has watched a medaka hatch – even when the film is greatly slowed down, the animal escapes from its egg in a flickering flash of its tail. Even early embryos are rippled by rapid contractions that make them hard to observe. Martina Rembold and Jochen report that an agent called *n-heptanol* blocks the contractions without interfering with development, permitting time-lapse imaging.

A further problem is resolution. Even though medaka is transparent, it's hard to assemble a detailed three-dimensional image of internal structures. Here Jan Huisken and other members of Ernst Stelzer's group have made a breakthrough; in a paper published in *Science*, they report their invention of a new microscope called SPIM. This instrument passes slices of light through the fish, illuminating layers that are rapidly assembled into a three-dimensional image, then rotating the sample to capture different angles. The method can be used on live samples up to 3-5 millimeters in size, capturing images up to 5-to-15 times sharper than conventional images of an organism's internal structures (See the article in EMBL*&cetera* 18).

Finally, Jochen and group member Thorsten Henrich have been behind the development of a new genetic screen database (GSD) to track their findings. The test version and software are available on the EMBL website (www.embl.de/wittbrodt/gsd); scientists can use it to enter their own findings. So the next time you notice something funny going on in your aquarium, and you don't have anything better to do...

– Russ Hodge

EMBL PhD Programme receives coveted Marie Curie EST grant

EMBL's International PhD Programme has just been awarded one of the first Marie Curie Early Stage Training (EST) institutional grants from the European Commission for its proposal "Early-Stage Training in Advanced Life Science Research Across Europe (E-STAR)." EST grants form part of the EC's 6th Framework Programme arsenal to provide young researchers with structured scientific or technological training opportunities. The grant totals nearly 2.5 million Euros and will fund up to 18 graduate student fellowships over 2.5 years.

Eligible to become E-STAR fellows are internally-funded EMBL students who have been in the programme for less than a year and who have successfully passed their Qualifying Assessment. The appointments will be made later this year.

"This is a significant development for training activities at the Laboratory and a welcome recognition of the outstanding quality and rigour of EMBL's graduate training programme," says Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Anne Ephrussi, who together with Matthias Hentze and Grants Officer Genevieve Reinke, led the efforts to secure the grant. "It opens up the door for EMBL to use its core funding to accept additional excellent students whom we would otherwise have to turn down." Other external funding agencies that support the EMBL PhD Programme include the Louis Jeantet Foundation based in Switzerland, which funds fellowships for students from East European countries.

"There were many factors that contributed to EMBL's success in obtaining this important grant," says Genevieve. "In addition to solid scientific excellence, the Laboratory offers many of the infrastructures necessary to support young scientists from across Europe and the world (accommodation, special visas, childcare facilities, and 24-hour on-site food services). EMBL also provides the perfect setting for students to learn skills to complement their research, such as communications, lab management and conference organization. In many ways EMBL is seen by the EU as a prototype for the way that training should be done in a European research institute."

EMBL has long-standing and internationally recognized experienced in training young researchers. In 1997, the EMBL International PhD Programme was granted the right to award its own PhD degree. Based on this right, the EMBL has established partnerships with universities across Europe, with whom it awards a joint PhD degree. E-STAR fellows will be particularly suited to contribute to a mission that the EU and EMBL share: fostering connections between PhD students and educational institutions across Europe.

The EMBL International PhD Programme brochure for 2005 is now available. To get a copy, send an email to predocs@embl.de. As of this year, applications will be online.

A test phase will run until the end of August. Input and suggestions are warmly invited.

Navigate your way through the research funding maze with the EMBL grants office

There's a lot of grant money for research out there, and every EMBL group depends on external money alongside the core funding it gets from the Laboratory. But money is not always easy to find. It's hard to wade through the text of calls to find the right match between a project and funding; you need a good feeling for the current scientific and political climate, and making an application can be horrifyingly complex. An insider's knowledge of how the process works can go a long way towards achieving success, and EMBL's grant office is there to provide it. Genevieve Reinke is on hand to help researchers out with everything from keeping an eye on relevant calls, to filling in forms, and even helping them through contract negotiations and getting projects rolling.

"Over the past five years, the Lab has more than doubled the amount of external funding for projects, from about 10 million Euros in 1998 to more than 22 million in 2003," says Genevieve. "EMBL scientists have been very successful at putting together major grant applications, allowing them to participate in important, large-scale projects." Externally-funded activities include EMBL-Hamburg's BIOXHIT, the BioSapiens project at the EBI, COMBIO (led by Luis Serrano in EMBL-Heidelberg), MitoCheck (see story on page 4), and even training projects such as E-STAR (see story this page), and the European Learning Laboratory for the Life Sciences (ELLS) just to name a few.

The EU is the largest source of external funding for EMBL, accounting for 25-50% of all external contributions. The first call of the 6th Framework Programme, in 2003, saw a total of 35 projects with EMBL scientists (as partners or coordinators) receive funding. Yet there are other sources as well: increasingly, scientists at EMBL are able to apply for national funding from individual European countries (for example from the DFG and BMBF in Germany, the MRC in the UK, as well as from other national funding agencies) or even the US. Significant funds are also available from private sector agencies, such as the Wellcome Trust and the Volkswagen Foundation, and many others.

So how does the Grants Office help EMBL researchers tap into these important resources?

"The first step is to identify potential funding sources," says Genevieve. "You need to know what is out there in order to be able to go get it." Genevieve collects information from funding agencies and makes it available to the EMBL community via the grants office webpage (www.embl.org/staffonly/financematters). She also keeps an eye out for calls she knows may be of interest to research groups, and will give them the heads up.

The second step is to put together a solid application that stands the best chance of success. For starters, Genevieve can help determine whether the objectives of a proposal meet those of the funding agency, or whether EMBL is even eligbile for funding from a given organization – potentially saving wasted time and effort. She also coaches scientists to help them develop grant writing skills, giving them tips and tricks on how to formulate applications and passing on experience that is likely to convince funding organizations. "Being able to put together good grant proposals is a key skill for any researcher," says Genevieve, "and success at raising research funds is regarded as an increasingly important part of a scientist's CV. We're here to help EMBL researchers gain these skills." Future plans for the Grants Office include organizing regular workshops and courses on research grant-related themes.

Once a proposal has been accepted for funding by an agency, there may be champagne and celebration, but there is still some work to do. Genevieve steps in to prepare and arrange negotiations, get the required signatures and ensure that the contract goes through as quickly as possible. She'll also make sure that legal and intellectual property issues have been explored by EMBL's legal advisor and EMBLEM.

"Once the contract is signed, there's nothing more satisfying than calling up my colleagues in the Budget Office and letting them know that we've got another grant in," smiles Genevieve.

the EMBO corner

EMBO celebrates the big "4-0"

Rumour has it the big '4-0' is not so big as it used to be. It seems 40 is young by today's standards – and even more so in the life of a scientific organisation. Nonetheless, at 40 years 'young', EMBO could not let this milestone pass by without proper celebration.

And celebrate they did at the EMBO 40th Anniversary Meeting on June 18-20 at EMBO in Heidelberg. EMBO members flew in from all over Europe to participate. Amongst them were many familiar faces – the first two Executive Directors of EMBO, Raymond Appleyard and John Tooze; many of EMBO's founding members; 5 of EMBO's 36 Nobel Prize winners; Wilhelm Krull, Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation; Peter Goodfellow, Senior Vice President of Discovery Research at GlaxoSmithKline; and of course, EMBC President, Marja Makarow and EMBL Director-General, Fotis Kafatos. Fond tributes were paid to EMBO's first chairman, Max Perutz, and first Secretary General, John Kendrew, who sadly are no longer with us.

During 3 days of presentations, discussions and festivities, EMBO took a look back at its origins and milestones in its history – the early days of the EMBO fellowships funded initially by the Volkswagen Foundation, the formation of the intergovernmental funding body, EMBC, in 1970 and the establishment of EMBL in 1974 – the primary objective of the EMBO founders. The shared history of these three partner organisations is grounds for further celebration in November this year, when EMBO, EMBC and EMBL jointly celebrate their 40th, 35th and 30th anniversaries.

Reports from EMBO members on their research and discoveries past and present highlighted the advancement of European molecular biology over the years and the role of EMBO in its development. Cell biology, microbiology, structural biology, plant biology, neurobiology, immunology, developmental biology and most recently systems biology are all now established disciplines of molecular biology, all of them represented by EMBO members.

The 40th anniversary event also showcased EMBO's more recent activities – the launch of *the EMBO Journal* in the '80s; EMBO lectures, sectoral meetings and the Science and Society Programme in the '90s; and since 2000, the launch of *EMBO reports*, the Young Investigator Programme, the Electronic Information Programme, the World Programme and activities supporting women in science. Open discussion on the final day of the meeting looked to the future of EMBO. A lively exchange on EMBO's role in European research ensued, with particular emphasis on the prospect of a European Research Council.

They say life begins at 40 – a fitting motto for EMBO as it moves forward. So much has been achieved over the past four decades, yet there is still so much to strive for. As the 40th anniversary festivities reached their climax in a spectacular firework display at Schloss Auerbach near Heidelberg, the mood in the air was very much that the best is yet to come.

– Frank Gannon

Photos by Maj Britt Hansen and Marietta Schupp

Clockwise from left: Peter Goodfellow listens in; EMBO Executive Directors past and present (Raymond Appleyard, John Tooze, Frank Gannon); Grand finale at Schloss Auerbach; Lively discussion (Ronald Plasterk, Chris Leaver, Gottfried Schatz)

European Course on Biotechnology Ethics gives EMBL PhD Student food for thought

Earlier this year, EMBL PhD student Fabian Filipp switched off his computer and headed to Genoa, Italy. His plan was to meet up with a group of philiosophy, social science and law students – something rather unusual for biochemist. He was taking part in a week-long course on biotechnology ethics, organized by the "BioTEthics" group and funded by the EC under the Quality of Life Programme.

The conference drew together students and experts from a variety of disciplines to discuss ethics in biotechnology. "As a student working in basic research in the life sciences, I wanted to get an update about applied ethics as well as juridical regulations in biotechnology." Other participants included students from the humanities, who often have a compulsory bioethics component of their graduate studies. This opportunity allowed them to interact one-on-one with scientists.

Fabian is no stranger to multidisciplinary discussions about science. As a student in EMBL's International PhD programme he has participated in many of the Lab's Science and Society activities, including a PhD course component which recognizes the need to expose students to the ethical framework of their daily research. "Although the PhD course's one-day-introduction gives a good taste of the importance of ethical issues in our research," says Fabian, "many students would benefit from gaining a deeper knowledge of ethical theory and practice. Courses like the one I attended provide a great opportunity for this."

One particularly useful session, says Fabian, allowed students from the different disciplines to gather in small working groups. They used their different backgrounds to develop ethical perspectives on real case studies, for example, nuclear transfer. If a human somatic nucleus is transferred into rabbit oocytes, how would you classify the cells that would develop? What is the judicial status of these embryos? "It was a challenging assignment, especially since to make any progress we first had to learn each other's languages," says Fabian. "One message that developed during the course was that questions like these might not always have clear cut answers; it's up to people working in different parts of society (law, science, health, *etc.*) to establish a dialogue so they can begin to ask the right questions."

The course is part of a three-year initiative which aims to improve the education of European doctoral students in the field of bioethics. The next one will take place in Oxford in the spring of 2005 and will focus on Bioethics and Public Perception of Biotechnology. Find out more at www.biotethics.org

Chromatic chromatin, medaka obligato, and the ion channel blues

In a break in the rehearsal, the flute player disassembled her instrument to run a cleaning rod through it, and asked the violinist if he couldn't help her take some nice electron microscope pictures of microtubules. A (very tall) bioinformaticist warmed up at the keyboards, as a (very tall) chemical biology group leader strapped on his bass guitar, and the research technician slipped off to put on a slinky red dress so that she could croon the night away.

If any of this sounds incongruous, you're out of the loop on the culture scene at Heidelberg, where music has been busting out all over. In February, members of the Lab launched a music club which now has 41 members and is sure to grow. The group has put on two concerts, provided music for the opening of the Electron Microscope Facility, and will certainly make an appearance at EMBL's alumni events in the fall.

A year ago, PhD students Caroline Lemerle (piano, violin, *etc*.) and Maiwen Caudron (flute) approached Director-General Fotis Kafatos (whose part in the orchestra hasn't yet been assigned, although there have been some recent, legendary incidences of singing and dancing) about launching the club. High on the wish list was obtaining a piano for the Lab – a lot of scientists play, but a piano is hard to bring along on international or intercontinental moves. "Fotis was very supportive but made it clear that we would have to come up with the money ourselves," Caroline says.

What better way to raise money than with concerts? The first program (March 5) offered music ranging from Mozart to Kodaly to Michael Nyman, featuring 15 lab members on the flute, violin, guitar, cello and piano. The second concert added a vocal number, stretching the repertoire from modern jazz back to the medieval and Baroque periods. Nobody is likely to forget the tangled "Story of Tango," from Maiwen on the flute and Sebastian Ulbert on the guitar, or the infinitely-accelerating "Hungarian Csárdás" whittled out by Sebastian and Gaspar Jekely, or the dark chords of Prokofiev's fourth sonata struck by Sarah Kafatou, or Simone Riedinger's performance of arias by Puccini and Mozart, or Massimiliano Mazza's soulful rendition of "La valse d'Amelie."

Proceeds from the concerts, topped up by generous donations from across EMBL, amounted to more than enough to secure the lease on a piano. It now sits in the Operon, ready for use in the intermissions of seminars and conferences. Now the only problem is finding time to practice, a daily struggle for students like Massimiliano who have to balance their artistic instincts with the rigors of doing a PhD. "I'm working on a piece by Chopin," he says. "It's very hard. I can only learn a measure a day." A sigh. "It's nine pages long!" Another sigh. "But I've always loved that piece."

To find out about upcoming concerts and other music-related events, get your name on the mailing list by contacting lemerle@embl.de.

Maiwen Caudron and Sebastian Ulbert unplugged.

la la-la-la-la, la la-la-la-la, Gloria in excelsis Deo...

Joining most choirs doesn't require getting your passport checked, but that's what happened as Alan Sawyer tried to slip past the Swiss Guards into the Vatican. Alan, Head of the EMBL Monoclonal Core Facility at the Monterotondo Outstation, was reporting to sing his first Mass with the *Coro della Cappella Giulia* (Choir of the Julia Chapel) on the Feast of Saint Peter, June 29. Immediately afterwards, he high-tailed it back to the Outstation in time to give a tour of the facility to Council members attending the summer meeting in Rome.

What you missed (or maybe you didn't!) at the annual EMBL-Staff Association summer party

Photos by Maj Britt Hansen. and Reinhold Kaluza

The dream of chickens – a modern fairy tale

Once upon a time, in the EBI courtyard, a new member of staff, not knowing any better, thought it would be a good idea to set-up a bird table to feed our feathered friends.

The site authorities saw the bird-table and complained that it contravened livestock at work regulations.

Some staff complained that the table was encouraging the wrong sort of bird, such as magpies, to visit the courtyard.

Some staff queried why the bird-table wasn't subsidised like the one in Heidelberg?

Some staff complained about the noise of the bird-song and how they could no longer work with their windows open.

Some staff complained that the bird-table was a distraction from the research and service provision of the Institute and created a bad impression to visitors.

And some staff complained about all of the above.

Some staff said how wonderful it was to hear bird-song. How joyous to help our feathered friends increase their numbers.

Some staff said what a positive image it created for the EBI, and how it helped make the place feel warm and caring.

The Administrator sighed. It was just so much more guano.

Discussion and debate ensued in corridors, over coffee, via e-mail. Argument and counter-argument raged back and forth. It even reached the ears of the Director-General, arriving for a Senior Scientists meeting. And it was decided to hold a grand convocation of all the EMBL senior scientists to agree what should be done with the bird-table in the centre of the courtyard.

And all through this the member of staff who had put up the bird-table continued to feed our feathered friends and to enjoy the bird-song. The Administrator watched as a swallow dived to the bird-table and thought "now there's a conundrum. Where would a swallow's home base be? In the UK where they spend six months of the year, or in North Africa where they spend the other six months? Tricky."

And the Senior Scientists talked and thought, and thought and talked until the cows, that had quietly been chewing cud in the field, had walked all the way home. And the only thing that interrupted their discussions was the loud and incessant din of the fire alarms as they were tested over and over again. And then the Senior Scientists repaired to the bar where they talked and thought, and thought and talked some more.

And this is what they decided:

1) The bird table would be extended to include a hen-house
2) The new arrangement would be used for Chickens only
3) The fire alarms would be replaced by the Chickens.
4) It would be funded by Ewan Birney's Chicken Genome research grants
5) The chickens, once raised, would be passed to the kitchens of the staff canteen
6) Responsibility for clearing guano would remain with the administrator.

This pleased the site authorities who were asked to advise on livestock regulations and benefited from the supply of cheap chickens for the staff canteens. No-one complained about the noise of the chickens any more as even the cock crowing at its loudest was a damn sight quieter than the fire alarms. The cost of construction and bird-food were met by research funds, so free to staff. The bird table and hen-house was formally designated an avian research facility, thereby making it a legitimate source of interest and distraction. And everyone was invited to the Grand Opening Ceremony and had a good time.

And the Administrator, who often had to take work home with him, found a use for the guano in his back garden. His roses are coming on a treat.

So, gentle reader, as with all good fairy tales, everyone lived happily ever afterwards.

– Mark Green

Graphic by Petra Riedinger

EMBLEM goes to BIO 2004

In the beginning of June, EMBLEM, the commercial subsidiary of EMBL, exhibited at "Bio 2004," the annual international convention of the Biotechnology Industry Organization. The largest annual biotechnology event in the world, this year's Bio event in San Francisco attracted over 16,000 participants and 1,375 exhibitors from more than 30 countries.

Attendees included nearly all large pharmaceutical companies as well as a virtual "who's who" of the biotech industry. Many came by to visit the EMBLEM booth and find out about the latest from the Lab, giving EMBLEM an important opportunity to promote EMBL's research to a broad variety of potential customers and opinion leaders, including journalists, politicians and investors. Among the visitors to the EMBLEM booth was German Vice-Consul Hansjörg Deng.

"Interest in EMBL technologies abounds and the event helped EMBLEM build new business relations, foster key accounts and touch base with our strategic partners from science and business," says Deputy Managing Director Martin Raditsch. "Bio 2004 impressively demonstrated that the difficult conditions of recent years may be coming to an end and that at least in the US, the biotech industry has matured into a booming part of the health-care industry."

– Gabor Lamm

EMBLEM's Martin Raditsch (left) and new business development manager Holger Schwarz (right) take a photobreak between business meetings at the EMBLEM booth at Bio 2004.

Full circle: after eight years abroad, EMBL alumnus Davide Corona returns to Italy

Four years ago, Davide Corona, freshly hatched from the EMBL International PhD Programme, packed up his belongings and with his wife Maria Crisci (quite pregnant at the time) left Heidelberg for the sunny shores of California and a postdoctoral position at the University of Santa Cruz.

Photo by Doug Young

EMBL alumnus Davide Corona

Davide, like his EMBL classmates, is no stranger to moving about. When it comes to being a scientist, mobility is a way of life. Students often find themselves moving halfway across the continent – or even the world – in search of the perfect postdoc position that will help them gain experience and establish reputations as great scientists.

When Davide started studying science as a teenager in his hometown of Palermo, Italy, he had little idea his passion would take him on an eight-year journey which would include a stop on the other side of the Atlantic. After receiving undergraduate training at the University of Palermo in 1995, Davide and Maria arrived at EMBL Heidelberg so that Davide could begin his PhD degree. He spent four years working with group leader Peter Becker on chromatin remodeling. After EMBL it was on to Santa Cruz, where Davide took up a postdoc position in John Tamkun's lab. Soon after their arrival in California little Matteo was soon born – followed by Marco two years later. Now the Corona family are coming full circle, and will move back to Italy where Davide will soon take up an assistant professorship at the San Raffaele Institute in Milan.

"The most enriching aspect of my research experience abroad was to be exposed to different cultures, experiences and life styles," says Davide. "Young researchers far from home might find it difficult to integrate into a new country and a new system – but it's definitely worthwhile. A few years of training abroad teaches you a lot, both scientifically and culturally. I found it extremely exciting and very constructive."

In addition to getting used to super-sized jugs of milk in the supermarkets and giant buckets of popcorn at the cinema (not to mention those pesky pre-recorded messages that bandy you about from operator to operator when you dial 1-800 numbers), Davide and Maria had to adapt to a whole new way of doing things. One early challenge for them was to obtain health insurance. "Maria was pregnant when we arrived," says Davide. "Insurance companies considered her to have a 'pre-existing condition' and refused to cover her. This was something completely new for us – we were used to the open model of health coverage in Europe. It caused a lot of stress, but eventually my boss helped to solve the problem through the University's benefits office."

Scientifically, moving around presents its own challenges, Davide acknowledges. "Very often the lack of research positions in your home country make the decision to get training abroad a 'one-way ticket,' especially if you have cut ties with the institute where you received your undergraduate training. When I left Italy I thought that returning to do research in a qualified position would be virtually impossible." Fortunately, Davide was wrong. Thanks to the programmes of funding agencies such as the Giovanni Armenise-Harvard Foundation, Telethon and HFSP, which aim to support young investigators at the beginning of their scientific careers in their home country, Davide has secured a position as a junior investigator at the San Raffaele Institute in Milan. In September he and Maria will once again pack up their belongings, and with Matteo and Marco in tow, they'll head back to Italy.

"I really hope that the joint effort between my host institute and my funding agencies will result in a scientifically productive period where I can finally give back the know-how I gained over this eight years of research abroad," says Davide.

In his new position he will focus his research on the role of chromatin modifications in human diseases. DNA, in higher organisms like humans, is associated with regulatory proteins in a dynamic structure called chromatin. Certain modifications of chromatin allow the DNA to be accessible to factors that "read" its information. It is now clear that alteration of "patterns" of chromatin modifications underlie many human diseases. He'll use the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster* as a model system to molecularly dissect some of the most interesting chromatin modifications that may be at the origin of human diseases.

Curious to know what your former colleagues are up to? Find out at the EMBL Alumni Association Reunion, November 26-28, 2004, at EMBL-Heidelberg. Register now at www.embl.org/aboutus/alumni/reunion04

A day in the life of the Staff Association

Although you may not be aware of this, keeping an eye on the interests of EMBL staff keeps your representatives to the Staff Association hopping. Here what a day in one of our lives sometimes looks like:

7:00	Arrive at Lab early to get some lab work done
7:15	Answer first e-mails concerning Staff Association business
8:30-9:00	Attend subcommittee meeting to discuss pensioners' HIS contributions
9:00-9:15	Attempt to go for coffee, waylaid by Staff Association colleague to discuss cost-cutting situation at Kinderhaus
9:15-9:30	Second attempt at coffee, stopped in foyer by staff member needing advice on leaving indemnities
9:30-9:45	Give up on coffee and go back to desk; too late to begin working now
10:00 –12:00	Attend weekly Staff Association committee meeting (ah, coffee!). Fifteen points on the agenda again, meeting goes overtime as usual
12:30-13:00	Grab a quick lunch. Joined by member of Administration wanting to discuss long-term care insurance
13:00-14:00	Answer more e-mails and multitask while working on documents related to Staff Association
14:00-15:00	Attend subcommittee meeting on revising the Staff Association statutes
15:00-15:15	Actually make it to cafeteria for afternoon coffee break! Someone stops at table with a "quick question about termination of his contract"
15:15-15:30	Help staff member look up regulations and give advice on how to proceed
16:00-17:00	Attend subcommittee meeting to prepare presentation to Council (or to one of the three working groups: HIS, Revisions to the Rules and Regulations and Terms and Conditions of Employment)
17:00-22:00	Finally sit down to work on own projects, colleagues have all gone home

OK, we've exaggerated things, but we do occasionally have days like this. Staff Association representatives are constantly working behind the scenes, even when it appears that nothing is happening. And seriously, folks, we're always glad to help our colleagues with their problems!

– Ann Thüringer

An update on www.embl.org

Here's what you need to know...

Information on personal pages: Staff can now decide which information appears on their individual pages. For example, you can decide whether your full email address is shown to external users or whether there is just a link to a tool which does not reveal your email address; whether your phone number is shown to external users; or whether your photograph is shown to internal and external users, only to internal users or not at all.

To change the settings, go to your personal page (you can get there by entering your name into the search field at the top right of any page and following the link to your name), and click on the "Edit page" link at the bottom. If you are at EMBL-Heidelberg, log on with your user name and password. If you are at one of the external Units, click on "log in via email". The system will send you an email with a link to authenticate you – click on this link.

Once you've logged in, click on "edit some info on your official person page," change the settings as you wish, and update. It's as simple as that. Oh, and don't forget to log out by following the "menu" link in the top right corner.

New Heidelberg Visitors Programme service: Applications from visitors interested in coming to EMBL are now put on the intranet for group leaders to check on a regular basis. Take a look at www.embl.org/staffonly/services/visitorsprogramme/recent_applications.html. If you are interested in hosting a visitor, please contact the Office of the Visitors Programme (Stephanie Weil, ext. 8276, room 408).

EBI to host symposium on alternate transcript diversity

A symposium at the EBI (November 22-23, 2004) will focus on alternative splicing, a major mechanism generating diversity in the human transcriptome. Its regulation is complex and is an important means of physiological control. Its disruption is associated with many diseases, including cancer, multiple sclerosis, heart failure and neurodegenerative disorders.

The increasing recognition that alternative splicing is an important way of controlling gene expression has spawned several large-scale efforts to create bioinformatics resources on alternate transcripts and protein isoforms. These include: computational methods and tools to delineate and characterise alternate transcript structures; databases of alternate transcripts and protein isoforms; and annotations that describe the physiology, pathology and evolution of alternate transcript generation.

These efforts require community-based collaborations involving bioinformaticians, computational and experimental biologists, and pharmaceutical researchers. "Alternate Transcript Diversity: Data, Biology and Therapeutics," in November, will bring together the community to discuss resources for alternative splicing.

On-line registration and abstract submission is now open and more information can be found at www.ebi.ac.uk/Information/events/atd-sympo

– Paul Matthews

Dive Club takes Waldpiraten kids on an underwater adventure

In July, members of EMBL's Dive Club organized their annual "try dive" session for kids participating in the Waldpiraten camp (run by the German Children's Cancer Organization and located across the street from EMBL-Heidelberg). This event has now become a fixed item, and a clear favourite, in the list of activities the children take part in whilst at their summer camp.

Because so many kids wanted to participate (24 this year, plus their minders!), we split up the dives into two sessions of 12 children each.

A few days before each dive we met with our young, soon-to-be divers over at the camp. We arranged them in a line, shortest to tallest, to figure out what sizes of equipment they would need. We borrowed masks, fins and wetsuits from members of the club and were ready to go. On the days of the dives, the club's kit room was buzzing with activity as volunteer divers and EMBL drivers loaded up the equipment into the Lab's vans and headed toward the swimming pool in Ketsch.

The camp welcomes children from all over Europe who are recovering from cancer, and this year there was a strong Italian contingent. This posed a special challenge: we had to translate our pre-dive briefing into Italian... (Does anyone know the word for "compressed air tank" in Italian?) Once we solved this little problem our instructors took the kids down one by one. Needless to say, all had great time, even the little Austrian girl who did not want to dive with an Englishman... bless her!

– Corinna, Pete and the EMBL Dive Club

news & events

Belarussian journalist Uladzimir Baranich spent the week of June 20-25 at EMBL-Heidelberg as part of the "European Initiative for Communicators of Science" (EICOS) programme. This initiative is designed to improve communication between researchers and journalists, and to promote feedback from the general public to the scientific community. Uladzimir first spent a week in the "Hands-on Laboratory," run by the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, before coming to EMBL.

In July, as in years past, EMBL welcomed students from Heidelberg's International Summer School, a science programme that brings in freshly graduated high school students from the Heidelberg partner cities across the world. This year's group of 14 young people got an insider's look at science and molecular biology including a day-long stay with Gareth Griffiths group, followed by cake and questions.

EMBL Alumna Zsusza Bôsze has been busy recently helping to organize the 30th FEBS Congress and 9th IUBMB Conference, to be held in Budapest, Hungary on July 2-7 2005. "The meeting promises to be a hotspot for the latest in protein research," says Zsusza, "and a good place to meet up with many of your former EMBL colleagues." She invites you to register for the meeting at www.febs-iubmb-2005.com

Time is the river which carries me away,
but I am that river;
time is the tiger that devours me,
but I am that tiger

– J. L. Borges, Labyrinths, 1970

Register now for the
5th EMBL/EMBO Joint Conference:

"Time and aging, mechanisms and meanings"

5-6 November 2004,
at EMBL-Heidelberg

www.embl.org/aboutus/sciencesociety

people @EMBL

faculty and other appointments

Elisa Izaurralde (Gene Expression) has been appointed Senior Scientist. **Stefan Fiedler** has been appointed Staff Scientist at EMBL-Hamburg.

There's a new face in the DG's office: **Olivera Mandic** has joined as a Deputy Personal Assistant, taking over from Manuela Brunner who left at the end of July to pursue a career in photography. We wish Manu well in her new adventures!

awards, honours &cetera

EMBL alumnus and current Director of the MPI for Molecular Genetics in Berlin **Martin Vingron,** has received the Max Planck Research Prize for 2004, together with Eugene Myers (University of California, Berkeley, USA). The 750,000 Euro prize was awarded in the field of bioinformatics. The purpose of this major distinction, which is given collectively by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung and the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, is to promote high-calibre projects between German and foreign scientists. It should permit the researchers to carry out, deepen and expand international cooperative efforts; it is also intended to call attention to specific disciplines in hopes that the community will follow the lead.

what's new in the kinderhaus?

Kids from the Blue Group at EMBL's Kinderhaus tell a lot of stories around the table about Grandpa and Grandma, cousins, mums, dads and siblings. The Kindergarten staff used this as a starting point for the "Family Project." Children visited each other at home, learned songs and poems about families and, of course, drew pictures. On the left is the Bork/Wade family; on the right are the Reunis/Roberts-Baldwins. Guess who is who...

from the photo archives

Former Director-General Lennart Philipson (left) lays the foundation stone for EMBL-Heidelberg's Operon Auditorium in this photo dating back to 1987.

This July the Operon turned 17 years old, while Lennart turned 75.

Happy birthday, Lennart!

Who's new?

Alison Barker (EBI Administration), Isabelle Behm-Ansmant (Izaurralde), Rochus Börner (Frangakis), Natascha Bushati (Cohen), Melanie Courtot (Computational Neurobiology), Silke Eckert (Cohen), Stefan Fiedler (Hermes), Javier Herrero (Birney), Nico Kümmerer (Serrano), Per Lilja (Array Express), Jacinta Lodge (Wilmanns), Olivera Mandic (DG Office), Angelika Scholz (Suck), Ilka Singer (EMBLEM), Jens Stolte (Genomics Core Facility)

events @EMBL

28 August - 1 September, 2004
EMBL-Heidelberg
6th EMBL Transcription Meeting

25-29 September, 2004
EMBL-Heidelberg
EMBO Workshop on the Cell Biology of Virus Infection

7 October, 2004, 14.30
EMBL-Heidelberg, Entrepreneur Seminar Series:
Rudy Dekeyser, VIB, Belgium
A Virtual Institute Creates Real Science and Technology: The VIB Model

14 October, 2004, 16.00
EMBL-Heidelberg
Distinguished Visitor Lecture
Don Cleveland, Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Univ. California San Diego, USA

16-19 October, 2004
EMBL-Heidelberg
EMBL/EMBO Functional Genomics Conference II: Exploring the Edges of Omics

10-13 November, 2004
EMBO Conference on Structures in BiologyEMBL-Heidelberg

For more events, see
www-db.embl.de/jss/EmblGroupsOrg/t_1

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