

Meeting Report

The 4th International Biennial meeting on La and Related Proteins (LARPs)

14-17 September 2016, Stockton House, Wiltshire (UK)

The meeting was held in Stockton Hall, Wiltshire and brought together 38 scientists from UK, USA, Canada, France, Belgium, Germany, working on La and La-related proteins from across different areas of biology, including 20 principal investigators and 18 graduate students and postdocs. The meeting was hosted by Nick Jenkins and organised by Sarah Blagden (Oxford, UK), Cécile Bousquet-Antonelli (Perpignan, France) and Maria R (Sasi) Conte (London, UK) and assisted by the LARP Society committee.

The LARP Society (LARPSOC) is a UK registered charity founded in 2010 to promote research into La and La-related proteins. Since formation of LARPSOC, the research output on LARPs has risen more than ten-fold (comparing publications covering La related proteins from 2010-2015 to 2005-2010) and these proteins are now recognised as important factors in cell signalling, regulation of gene expression at translational level, RNA metabolism and biogenesis, DNA transcription and oncogenesis. Therefore, the talks and poster presentations at the conference conveyed a broad spectrum of topics in RNA biology and presented exciting new aspects of the LARP biology, featuring predominantly unpublished results.

The 23 talks were divided in 5 themes sessions, and 8 young scientists were given the opportunity to give oral presentations. Four F1000 prizes were awarded to best young scientists talks, including: John Brogie (from David Price's laboratory, University of Iowa, USA) "*In vitro* reconstruction of a functional 7SK snRNP containing P-TEFb"; Daniele Hasler (from Gunter Meister's laboratory, University of Regensburg, Germany) "The Lupus autoantigen La prevents mis-channelling of tRNA fragments into the human microRNA pathway"; Emily Baldwin (from Sasi Conte and Corinne Houart's laboratories, King's College London, UK) "In vivo investigation of the LARP4 family"; Sandy Mattijssen (from Rich Maraia's laboratory, NIH, Bethesda, USA) "tRNA-HySeq reveals that tRNA levels and synonymous codon use within a coding region element of instability determine LARP4 mRNA and protein expression". A Nucleic Acids Research prize was awarded to Roni Lahr (from Andrea Berman's laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, USA) for her talk and poster "LARP1 interacts directly with 5'UTRs encoding translation machinery". LARPSOC also provided travel awards for this conference to 2 PhD students, Daniele Hasler and John Brogie).

During the meeting, on 16th September, the LARPSOC AGM was held and was well attended. Alongside the excellent science presented, there were many opportunities for the participants to socialise, network and discuss potential collaborations in the stunning setting of Stockton House gardens and facilitated by the guided tour of the surrounding countryside in Stockton.

A great number of attendees expressed their satisfaction with the meeting, not only in terms of scientific work presented, but also for fruitful discussions and collaboration opportunities.

The organisers are very grateful for the generous financial support of the LARP Society, Biochemical Society and our sponsors (Generon, Merck, Promega, IBA, CRUK and Nucana).