

BioPioneer Bootcamp a success with young entrepreneurs



LBIC and the Royal Veterinary College Enterprise Team successfully designed and delivered a two-day BioScience Bootcamp in July for twenty-eight entrepreneurs looking to start up their own bio-business and develop their skills and commercial confidence. BioPioneer was one of a series of industry-specific Bootcamps launched by the Mayor of London. Our sponsors were Capital Enterprise, the Royal Bank of Scotland, The Francis Crick Institute and the European Union's INTERREG IVB NWE programme.

The two-day training exercise was delivered by experts from LBIC's Business Support Network and other entrepreneurs, including CEOs of client companies. Topics covered included the pre-start-up, early trading and growth phases of technology businesses. Delegates came from the London academic and research community, small companies and big pharma. With recent uncertainty across the sector, timing was right for the

venture, which began with an evening dinner and ice-breaker at the Wellcome Trust, courtesy of the Francis Crick Institute.

"The whole event has given me the confidence to know that I could start a business in London and know where to go for the right support. It no longer appears to be a daunting prospect to start my own business." – delegate

The prize of a six-month LBIC virtual office was awarded to the three delegates who showed the greatest potential and business need. Two of the three prize-winners to date have registered companies at LBIC; both of which are actively seeking funding opportunities. The winners were Sean Ward of Synthace, Massimo Marzorati of ProDigest and Soumya Palliyil.

Feedback was excellent and we are planning a similar event for March 2012. Watch this space!

Find out more about one of our award winners on page 7.

WELCOME

The last six months have seen us bring on board seven new client companies, three of those with head-offices outside the UK and actively seeking a London base. Our new collaboration with the membership organisation One Nucleus will provide additional benefits both to existing and new clients, eager to develop contacts within the UK. Many of our clients are also collaborating with LBIC's parent institution, the Royal Veterinary College, to mutual advantage, as you will read throughout this issue.

We interview Mike Whelan from iQur as well as focusing on Octagon Research and ProDigest. We also glean some useful marketing tips from Sciad about making the most of your online presence – something that is becoming of increasing importance to every business. We wish our readers a happy and productive 2012.

Paula Burton
Editor

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THE CLINICAL DATA AND REGULATORY EXPERTS





Lipoxen becomes 'Xenetic'

Lipoxen has changed its name to Xenetic Biosciences plc. As a result of new financing deals, the company has developed its clinical and operational capabilities and has signed a new agreement with the Russian nanotechnology company SynBio LLC. Xenetic has also refined previous arrangements with the Serum Institute of India (SIIL) to access development rights of drug candidates and has acquired German company SymbioTec GmbH, whose technology relates to the use of histones for cancer treatment.

Plasticell wins Technology Strategy Board funding

The Technology Strategy Board has made a further investment in Plasticell's flagship technology, CombiCult™, the high throughput technology designed to solve the major bottleneck in stem cell research and development.

The grant of around £750k will go towards a £1.5 million project to tackle the challenges of cost, scale-up and regulatory compliance. This will lead to the delivery of a system for the rapid identification of novel, optimised stem cell expansion and differentiation protocols that can be taken up for production of materials for patient use.

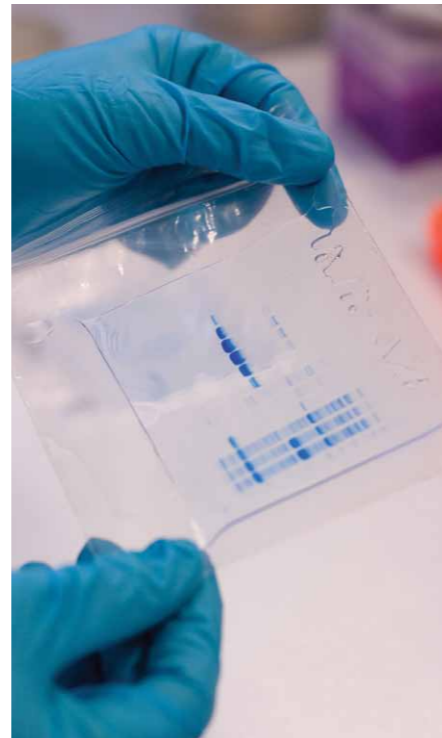
PolyTherics' Success

PolyTherics has raised £2.15 million of new financing, the result of a bid led by Imperial Innovations Group plc, with participation from current investor The Capital Fund (managed by YFM Equity Partners), and Proven Health VCT PLC. This latest round of funding will enable commercialisation of technologies to develop better biopharmaceuticals.

Through its various collaborations, including research programmes, feasibility studies, exclusive options and licence agreements, PolyTherics is working with a number of companies to develop new medicines.

Domainex awarded Technology Strategy Board funding

Domainex has been awarded a £250,000 grant by the Technology Strategy Board to support development of a new drug for the treatment of common cancers. Domainex's novel drug inhibits two closely-related protein kinase enzymes, TBK1 and IKK. The initial focus will be on breast and ovarian cancers, but these enzymes are also important in inflammatory diseases including obesity and Type 2 diabetes, so the drug could have exciting wider applications.



LBIC welcomes the companies listed below, who have joined the Centre as virtual, office and/or laboratory clients over the past six months.

- Mucokinetica
- Rethink Orthopedics
- Sciad
- Synthace
- ProDigest
- ProtAffin
- Vasgen

Francis Crick Institute: strengthening London's biomedical research capacity



A short walk from LBIC, construction of a new world-leading centre for biomedical research and innovation is well underway. The £600m Francis Crick Institute is due to open in 2015. Next door neighbours include the British Library and St Pancras International. The Institute's first Director and Chief Executive is the Nobel laureate



Sir Paul Nurse, who is also President of the Royal Society. His vision is of an institute that promotes connections between researchers, between disciplines, and between academic institutions, healthcare organisations and businesses. The plan is to forge links with nearby clinical centres, and foster a culture that values and promotes active translation. The aim will be to drive discovery through to application. Clinical liaison and technology transfer will be encouraged and valued as highly as discovery research.

The Institute is continuing to develop its strategy for successful translation, technology transfer and innovation.

A meeting of experts earlier this year identified the factors which are being considered by the Institute's Executive team. Find out more at www.crick.ac.uk/news/science-news.

LBIC has already forged strong links with The Crick. Planning permission was granted last December at a meeting of Camden Council's planning committee at

which LBIC Chief Executive, Ken Larkin, spoke in support of the Institute and in July, the Institute hosted the introductory dinner for LBIC's BioPioneer Bootcamp. Dr Larkin comments, "We see this as an exciting new development for London and a real opportunity to forge links between researchers within both LBIC and the Royal Veterinary College".

Find out more about The Francis Crick Institute and opportunities to drop in at the visitor centre at www.crick.ac.uk.



iQur Interview: Mike Whelan

"Other companies should take advantage of the benefits that links with the Royal Veterinary College can bring, in terms of equipment, interns and collaboration."

iQur joined LBIC in June 2011. For Mike, this was something of a homecoming, as his links with the Royal Veterinary College go back almost twenty years. Not only does he come from a veterinary background (his father is a vet), but he published with RVC scientists as a post-doc at the Institute for Animal Health on Equine Herpes Virus. Mike's previous company, Onyvax Ltd., had a laboratory at LBIC.

Mike has long been keen on collaboration with academic and industrial partners. He firmly believes that given the extreme pressures the British biotechnology industry is currently under, a consolidated approach is the only way forward. In his view, LBIC is an ideal place to build such relationships.

What is the background to iQur?

iQur was spun-out from the University of Southampton in 2003. It was founded by Professor William Rosenberg, initially as a liver diagnostics company which was then supplemented with a therapeutics division. I joined in 2007 to run "the more interesting bit" of therapeutics and became involved in the vaccine development project. This uses technology licensed from the University of Leeds and represents an exciting new vaccine platform.

A year after I joined the company, Professor Rosenberg took up a new Chair at UCL. Given that I have studied and worked in London for much of my career, I did not need much encouragement to return.

What prompted the move to LBIC?

I knew LBIC well and so it was high on my list of potential new facilities. The move was very last minute (our building at UCL was scheduled for imminent demolition), and our

thanks go to the LBIC management team for relocating us so quickly.

LBIC had several strong plus points, one of the key ones for us being the client access to the College's contract research services. RVC has one of the best facilities I have used in London. It is unusual to have a facility on site, rather than forcing occupants to use more expensive outsourcing. *In vivo* testing is an absolute requirement for vaccine development. In addition, LBIC's laboratory facilities and service were such that the company was able to move in and be back up and running within two days.

What is the focus of iQur's work?

The vaccine iQur works on is a virus-like particle (VLP) platform system called tandem core®, based on some of the unique biological properties of Hepatitis B core protein. As the name suggests, virus-like particles closely resemble a natural virus, but with the significant difference that they do not contain viral nucleic acid, making them inherently safe.

There are several VLPs currently on the market, one of the most well known being Gardasil, the human papillomavirus vaccine. iQur's vaccine differs in that it can express at least two vaccine targets simultaneously.

iQur is working to develop a single protein recombinant vaccine for Hepatitis A and B as our lead candidate. We believe that the technology will be widely applicable and are also looking at other applications, including several other infectious diseases and treatments for cancer.

What stage are you currently at, and what do you see as the next step for iQur?

Our vaccine development process has been complicated; ensuring vaccine safety is of the utmost importance. Our initial process expressed tandem core® in bacteria, but work with a contract manufacturer, funded by a grant from the Technology Strategy Board (TSB), showed that levels of bacterial contaminants exceeded acceptable limits.

We have had to re-derive the constructs for expression in yeast. These are more complicated organisms and accordingly the purification required is more complex. We have made significant progress, again co-funded by TSB, and are close to finalising our lead candidate and purification process. Once this is complete, we will begin commercial manufacture in advance of a Phase I clinical trial.

Has a base at LBIC brought any other benefits?

As well as collaborating with the RVC's Contract Research Unit, we have taken in an intern from the College (see page opposite). We regularly take on interns and students and find it mutually beneficial. It is certainly our belief that regular contact with academics is a useful exercise and can often provide expertise that we may lack in-house.

The collegiate atmosphere within LBIC allows for interaction between client companies. This can range from simply borrowing reagents, to shared use of another group's equipment. We have even investigated more formal collaborations, with deltaDOT for example, in order to assess whether their technology may simplify our vaccine characterisation process. We have found the vast majority of LBIC clients to be helpful and willing to assist us; we are all members of an industry going through hard times and a united front is crucial!



The Client/Intern Relationship



Intern Chris Barkway

Two LBIC clients have played host to RVC interns this year

Two third-year RVC students have been working with LBIC clients Proxima Concepts and iQur. The internship gives students an introduction to business, provides opportunities to learn new skills and access specialised equipment rarely found in teaching labs. Both companies are finding the internship a positive experience. Mike Whelan and Chris Barkway, a third year BioVeterinary Science student, give us their views:

• Chris reports "As a BioVeterinary Science student, I chose to work in a lab environment during my studies and spent time with iQur. This meant I was able to

develop new skills which will stand me in good stead for the future".

• Mike Whelan of iQur comments "We've always been keen to host interns. I see it as an extremely worthwhile relationship. From our perspective, we are getting an extra pair of hands, while at the same time we have trained someone in specific techniques so that he or she becomes much more employable by the end of the internship."

BSc Careers Week

In February 2012, RVC is running its annual careers week for undergraduate BioVeterinary Science students.

Careers week gives students an overview of options for science graduates; everything from working in a start-up biotech to training as a science teacher as well as including presentation and employability skills sessions. We welcome representatives from the life science community who would be able to volunteer an hour of their time to get involved.

Contact Dr Jim Gazzard if you are interested in finding out more about the benefits of hosting an intern or would like to get involved with Careers Week jgazzard@rvc.ac.uk

Search Engine Optimisation Tips: Deborah Cockerill, MD of Sciad



Why does SEO (search engine optimisation) matter? A question often asked by companies who don't have marketing resources in-house, yet feel uncomfortable about investing in online communications.

Everyone uses search engines to find information. Your website is the focal point for your communications and you need to make sure that your clients, prospects, investors and stakeholders can find your site easily.

So, how do you do this? It's really very straightforward as there are now text-book style rules to follow, to help you optimise your website. The key to successful SEO is always excellent keyword research. Whilst you might think that particular keywords are important, it is the words your audience uses to search for information that matter and which may differ.

- Make sure you are updating your content regularly and if possible optimise all press releases and use blog engine software for your news and updates.
- Google AdWords is a great way to complement your SEO by using pay-per-click to boost your rankings and traffic. Your budget can be linked directly to results, visit lengths and revenue by linking your AdWords account to Google Analytics.

If you're not using SEO to reach your audiences then you're missing a trick and you'll be surprised how easy and cost effective it is. Why not optimise your website and use Google Analytics, statistics and results to help guide your online communications strategy? Deborah can be contacted at deborah@sciad.com.

Focus on Octagon Research

Octagon Research Solutions, Inc., headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with European operations in London, UK, and Asia/Pacific operations in Bangalore, India, is a leader in providing outsourcing, software and services to pharmaceutical and biotech companies. We work with more than 350 life science clients of all sizes on three continents, including 17 of the top 20 global pharmaceutical companies. With a foundation in data standards and integrated technologies, Octagon's eCTD and CDISC-enabled solutions provide all of the resources required to optimise drug development from clinical data collection to regulatory submission.

Octagon was founded in 1999 as a development partnering organisation, providing regulatory services to the life sciences industry. As the company grew, the Octagon team expanded the service offerings upstream to include outsourcing services in the clinical area and process consulting services across the submission process. Octagon is also working with CDISC, ScenPro and the FDA to support the FDA's large-scale complex project of converting legacy study data to an electronic standard format(s). The conversion of these legacy data into standardised format(s) will enable the information to be processed with modern analytical software tools and to be merged with other, more recent, clinical study data. This larger collection will provide researchers with a broader view of how medical conditions affect different individuals and how they respond to various treatments.

Octagon's combination of deep domain knowledge, cross-functional electronic submission expertise and holistic process approach utilising integrated solutions sets us apart as a total solutions provider and partner to our valued customers. Our leaders not only stay on the cutting edge of industry trends that are affecting the life sciences industry, but assist in shaping them.

By maintaining multiple leadership positions with organisations like the Clinical Data Interchange Standards Consortium (CDISC), DIA, SCDM and TOPRA, among others Octagon is able to advance its leadership position as the clinical data and regulatory experts.

For more information on Octagon's consulting, outsourcing and software solutions, contact us at info@octagonresearch.com or visit www.octagonresearch.com.



Interview with Massimo Marzorati, founder of ProDigest and winner of the BioPioneer Bootcamp award



Jim Gazzard, John Spindler, Massimo Marzorati and Ken Larkin

What do you do?

ProDigest was founded in 2008 as a spin-out from Ghent University, Belgium. We provide customized gastrointestinal research solutions for the food, functional food and pharmaceutical industries, utilising the SHIME (Simulator of Human Intestinal Microbial Ecosystem) and its related technology platform.

What impact could your technology have on the sector?

Our *in vitro* technology platform complements human trials designed to understand the action of a given product. Regular improvements ensure results are as reliable as possible, reducing the need to experiment on animals.

Why did you attend the BioPioneer Bootcamp?

Our customers are mainly in Europe and the US. We had not entered the UK market, which is potentially an interesting market for us and we thought that participating in the Bootcamp might help.

What was your experience of the Business Bootcamp?

I picked up a lot of useful information to help in starting up a new business, as well as many useful contacts. The programme had a real entrepreneurial vibe.

What was of particular benefit?

The opportunity to discuss and network with more experienced entrepreneurs helps you to understand how long the road to success is and how failure is sometimes part of the game. The most important thing is never to give up!

How did the Bootcamp help your business, and what does the award mean to you?

My target was to identify an opportunity to expand our business in the UK. Winning a 6-month virtual office at LBIC was perfect. We have opened our office and will be meeting potential customers. If all goes to plan, we may well set up a permanent office in central London.

RVC launches Large Animal Facility at Hertfordshire site

Life science companies are now able to benefit from the RVC's unique new high specification facility for scientific research on poultry and large animals, which houses animals in one purpose-built unit.

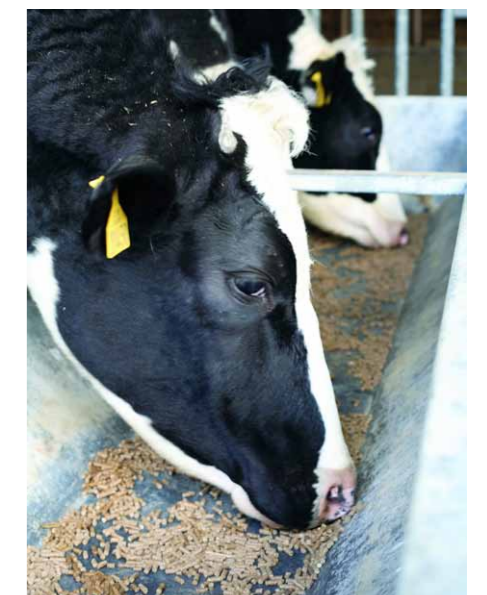
The facility comprises ten individual climate-controlled rooms across two large cross sections of a livestock building, with fully automated feed and drinking systems. Research can be carried out in environments where climatic conditions, feeding strategy and pollutants need to be tightly controlled, or managed to suit the trial.

The facility will also benefit companies seeking to run factorial trials and draws on

the expertise and research excellence at the College's Centre for Animal Welfare.

The College's Contract Research Unit offers research services for biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, ranging from routine animal husbandry and laboratory services to GLP study design and management. The service offers access to relevant world-class RVC scientific expertise, which makes it stand out from other CROs. Preferential rates are available for LBIC clients.

For further information, contact cru@rvc.ac.uk or telephone: +44 (0) 1707 666 241.



PraxisUnico: support for young and emerging businesses

PraxisUnico is the UK's leading organisation for commercialisation professionals - those working at the interface of business and academia in what is dubbed Technology or Knowledge Transfer.

PraxisUnico has been offering training for those active or interested in research commercialisation for nine years. 2,500 delegates have attended one or more courses, which has equipped them with skills to support business-focused activities ranging from intellectual property protection and commercialisation, to 'spinning out' companies and setting up consultancy services.

PraxisUnico is a member organisation, acting as a voice for the research commercialisation profession and facilitating the interaction between the public sector research base, business

and government. Regular workshops and events are run for members.

The Young & Emerging Healthcare Business – Delivering the Future event takes place on 1 March 2012 at Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst – the UK's first open innovation bioscience campus. It will give life sciences academics and start-ups an insight into the skills and tools needed to start and grow firms, as well as to give visibility to the businesses that universities help create.

To find out more about PraxisUnico and its events, visit www.praxisunico.org.uk

LBIC clients benefit from membership of One Nucleus

LBIC has joined forces with the life sciences membership organisation One Nucleus, to offer a range of membership benefits for its client companies.

As One Nucleus members, LBIC clients will be able to access a range of networking and training opportunities and take advantage of the One Nucleus group purchasing scheme.

Both LBIC and One Nucleus are committed to playing an active and supportive role in assisting in the success of life sciences companies in the London area. LBIC was a

founding member of the London Biotechnology Network, now part of One Nucleus.



Ken Larkin, Tony Jones and Harriet Fear

Contact us

LBIC has been supporting life sciences companies since 2001. Today we host over 40 companies ranging from entrepreneurial start-ups to more established UK companies and overseas subsidiaries from the US, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Denmark.



The Centre is a 10-minute walk from St Pancras International, for Eurostar services to mainland Europe. For further information, or to enquire about availability of laboratory or office space, contact:

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Our management team is based in LBIC and comprises:

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Marketing Manager

Lucy Garnsworthy:
Assistant Operations Manager

Joanna Skarviken & Mariane Meyer:
Reception Services



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