7th International ELMI Meeting

7th International ELMI Meeting: Light Microscopy, complementing the systematic approaches of molecular genetics, has become one of the most powerful and important tools for modern biomedical research. Focused on the progress in this sparkling field, this years ELMI (European Light Microscopy Initiative) meeting was held at the unexpectedly sunny National Science learning Centre on the University of York campus between 17-20 April. The meeting was excellently organised by Peter O'Toole, Jo Marrison (both York) Daniel Zicha (Cancer Research UK), Maria Smedh (ELMI headquarters Gothenburg Sweden), and the Royal Microscopy Society (RMS).

On this 7th annual meeting, 188 delegates supported by the strong presence of manufacturers of all kind of imaging and microscopy tools (Carl Zeiss, Perkin Elmer, Leica Microsystems, Intelligent Imaging Innovations, Molecular Devices, Bitplane, Andor Technology, LaVision Biotech, JPK Instruments, Nikon, Visitech International, Olympus, Invitrogen, Huygens - SVI, Definiens, GIT Imaging & Microscopy, BD Biosciences, CoolLED, Invitrogen) managed to empty 648 pints (about 368 liters) of local beer plus 180 bottles of wine during the welcome reception (sponsored by Leica), the poster session (sponsored by Andor) and the conference dinner (table wine sponsored by Zeiss). The conference dinner itself was held at the spectacular National Railway Museum, the world's largest collection of locomotives and associated hardware, with the meal taken seated on the indoor platform between engines and royal carriages.

While the bare statistics may sound less spectacular, they nicely reflect some, although not all, of the very special characteristics of ELMI meetings in general. ELMI meetings are very focused and relatively small in terms of number of participants, which on the one hand makes them a unique place for people with quite different affiliations and backgrounds, like scientists, engineers and companies to connect. On the other hand, founded as an offspring of the EMBO organisation, the meeting is very international and attracts many experts in the field of applied optics, but also scientists that base their research on new powerful instruments, so it has become a kind of trade fair for new ideas and projects that profits from the expertise of both sides.
Importantly, ELMI is based on a very good and close cooperation between scientists and manufacturers with generous sponsoring by the companies, which preserves the extremely pleasant atmosphere of the meeting for the participants. ELMI is also very successful for the industry, mainly because company presentations and workshops are not pushed aside and separated from the scientific presentations but comprise an integral part of the meeting programme. The workshops provide an excellent opportunity to familiarise with the latest instrument developments as well as to discuss users' needs. Last not least, the ever changing locations of the meeting ease access to newcomers. ELMI meetings surely give an excellent opportunity to become updated on who is who and what is going on in microscopy within Europe.

Though the meeting is relatively brief, its scientific program is outstanding, which again was the case this time. 33 oral presentations and 35 posters were grouped into the following session topics: New Applications/Technologies, Live cell imaging, High content imaging, Fluorescent Proteins, Subcellular signaling/Molecular imaging, Correlative imaging, Single molecule studies/High resolution microscopy, Analysis: Stereology. With invited speakers Tony Wilson, University of Oxford, UK; Bas Ploem, Leiden University, NL; Ernst Stelzer, EMBL Heidelberg, DE; Peter Kner, UCSF, USA; Erik Manders, University of Amsterdam, NL; Mike White, University of Liverpool, UK; Paul French, Imperial College, London, UK; Erik Manders, University of Amsterdam, NL; Philipp Kukura, ETH Zurich, CH; Carsten Schultz, EMBL Heidelberg, DE; Paul Monaghan, Pirbright Laboratory, Surrey, UK; Justin Molloy, MRC National Institute for Medical Research, London, UK; Rainer Heintzmann, King's College London, UK; Sinan Yuruker, Hacettepe University, TR; (for more detail please visit [http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/biol/tf/ELMI/index.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/biol/tf/ELMI/index.htm))

During the workshops, a number of new developments were presented by the companies, for example new LED illumination technology by CooLED 'preciseExcite' and Carl Zeiss 'Colibri', an automated 'Matrix' platform for confocal
screening approaches by Leica and a new low light and luminescence microscopy system ‘LuminoView LV200’ by Olympus. (more info at http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/biol/tf/ELMI/workshops.htm)

The new directions of ELMI after this excellent meeting will be towards the construction of a European network of excellence centers, which will guarantee access to the very high end of expertise and instrumentation. For the next meeting, York passes on the ball to Davos in Switzerland, where the 8th ELMI Conference will take place during May 27-30th in 2008. See you there! Updated info on the meeting can be found at www.ssom.ch and http://cci.sahlgrenska.gu.se/ELMI/

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