

# Celebrating women in biochemistry in 2013

Amy Cox (Communications Manager)



Celebrating women  
in biochemistry

Throughout 2013, the Biochemical Society will be running a series of initiatives and events celebrating the role of women in the molecular biosciences. The year will be launched with a reception at the Royal Institution, London, in February 2013. The event will showcase the Society's broader women in science work and our events throughout 2013.

## The past

In February 1913, almost 100 years ago, the first women were admitted to the Society: Harriette Chick, Ida Smedley and Muriel Wheldale. Ida Smedley would go on to become the first woman to Chair the Biochemical Society in 1927.

As part of the Society's Centenary celebrations in 2011, a research project was conducted in collaboration with the University of Warwick. This project provided insight into the work and lives of female biochemists in Britain from the inception of the *Biochemical Journal* in 1906 to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Our celebrations in 2013 are providing an opportunity to extend this work and we are undertaking a research project that will focus on the period after 1945. Look out on our blog and in future issues of *The Biochemist* to keep up to date with how the project is going.

## The present

Early in 2012, the Society undertook a survey concerning a number of issues surrounding women in science including awareness and value of our current activities and the working life of a female researcher.

One of the main themes running through the responses was the challenge that scientists face balancing a career and having a family and this has shaped some of our activities for the year including our newly launched Stay Connected Bursary scheme.

The bursary is intended to facilitate scientists to 'stay connected' by supporting the attendance

of members at Society conferences on a period of parental leave or who require the attendance of partner to provide childcare support. Successful applicants will receive free registration for a Biochemical Society conference of their choice. The bursaries will be available for Focused Meetings, Harden Conferences and the Annual Symposium.

At Biochemical Society conferences from January 2013, there will also be networking events for female delegates. The aim of these will be for women at all stages of their career to get together to discuss the issues women face in science. These will take place before the start of the conference, or over breakfast. More information will be available on each conference website.

## The future

The Society will be organizing a special series of HighSci Lectures for schools, to be delivered by female biochemists. These events will aim to raise the profile of women in biochemistry with school students, highlight positive female role models working in science today, outline career paths into science and celebrate excellent scientific research.

So far, Frances Ashcroft (University of Oxford, UK), Cait MacPhee (University of Edinburgh, UK) and Sarah Rankin (Imperial College London, UK) have all agreed to speak in schools and we will be making short video interviews, to be available on our website. ■

### Women in Biochemistry 2013 in *The Biochemist* and further information

Throughout 2013, a series of articles will be commissioned for *The Biochemist* focusing on women in science. Topics will include work-life balance, career breaks, Athena Swan and more.

For further information on any of our activities throughout 2013, please visit [www.biochemistry.org/womeninbiochemistry2013](http://www.biochemistry.org/womeninbiochemistry2013).

For information on our policy work on women in science, visit [www.biochemistry.org/SciencePolicy/Womeninscience](http://www.biochemistry.org/SciencePolicy/Womeninscience).

On Twitter, follow #WIB2013 to keep up to date with all the latest news.