Local Ambassador – Vicky Jones

Vicky Jones is a senior lecturer in cell biology at the University of Central Lancashire. Her lab specializes in investigating astrocyte dysfunction in neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer’s and motor neuron disease, and in biomarker discovery for brain tumours.

What motivated you to become a scientist?
It might be a cliché but I’ve always loved finding out how things worked. I pursued my undergraduate degree in biochemistry and remember very clearly the day I asked a question and was told that nobody knew the answer yet. Reaching the end of what the textbooks can teach on a subject put into perspective how much there is still to find out about ourselves, the world around us and beyond. That was the day I decided that I had to be a scientist—so I could help provide new answers.

What inspires you about molecular bioscience?
That no matter how much smaller you go, things are no less complicated!

What are you reading at the moment?
A colleague and I are currently undertaking a systematic review so I have a whole stack of papers. Other than that it’s My Little Pony books for my daughter!

What’s on your lab bench/desk right now?
My desk is quite tidy. I’m not naturally a neat person but I cannot work in a mess. I have a line of hideous mugs (I challenged some friends to buy me the worst mugs they could find for Christmas last year (keeping it clean) and boy did they deliver!), a plastic plant (real ones do not survive long), the ubiquitous stack of papers to be read and photos of my family.

What’s been the greatest challenge in your career so far?
The transition from postdoc to lecturer was harder than I expected. All of a sudden there are so many other jobs competing for your time: teaching, marking, meetings etc., I longed to get back in the lab! Things are more settled now—I have a great group working in my lab and get all the advantages of seeing nice data without the frustrating bits of making the experiment work!

What is your advice for someone who would like to pursue a career in molecular bioscience?
Conversations are the basis of collaboration. Talk to everyone you can about their work and yours, and when you see an opportunity, make it happen.

What do you do in your spare time?
I spend time with my family. I have a young daughter and another one on the way. It’s hard work but important to enjoy the simple time you spend together. Aside from that, I love to binge-watch terrible TV box sets and fail at gardening.

Ambassadors are a key group of members that help us to raise awareness of the Biochemical Society, promote its activities, recruit new members and act as the Society’s point of contact at their institution. If you would like to get involved as an Ambassador, please contact: membership@biochemistry.org.