

## **Biographies - Birdshot Day 17<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

(in alphabetical order)

### **Colin Chu PhD, FRCOphth, MA, BM, BCh**

Colin Chu is a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Academic Clinical Lecturer at the University of Bristol and Bristol Eye Hospital, working with Professor Andrew Dick on gene therapy and ocular inflammation (uveitis). During ophthalmology specialist training he was awarded a Medical Research Council (MRC) and Fight for Sight Clinical Research Training Fellowship, gaining his PhD with Professor Robin Ali at UCL Institute of Ophthalmology. He has previously undertaken research at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine in Oxford and at the Save Sight Institute in Sydney.

### **Professor Alastair Denniston, MA, MBBChir, MRCP, FRCOphth, PhD**

Alastair is Consultant Ophthalmologist (Uveitis and Medical Retina) at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Honorary Reader at the University of Birmingham, UK. Alongside Prof Philip Murray, he leads the Birmingham Regional Birdshot Uveitis Clinic which is utilising novel means of imaging to try to improve detection of active disease. He also leads on the development of the National Birdshot Biobank and the Birdshot Registry (database) with Charlotte Radovanovic, Birdshot database project manager. He was awarded an MRC Clinical Research Training Fellowship in 2006, and completed his PhD in Ocular Immunity in 2009. He regularly publishes research papers in scientific journals and is active in research related to birdshot, with a particular emphasis on improving our ability to monitor the activity of birdshot and other forms of uveitis. To further this work, he established the EQUATOR consortium ([www.equator.vision](http://www.equator.vision)) in 2013 with Mr Pearse Keane. Alastair is keen to promote public awareness and patient engagement with ophthalmic research and has been actively involved with the Medical Research Council (MRC) Max Perutz Science Writing Prize and the British Science Festival.

**Professor Andrew Dick BSc(Hons), MBBS, MD, FRCP(Ed), FRCS(Ed & Lond), FRCOphth, FMedSci, FRSB, FARVO**

Andrew is Duke Elder Chair and Director of University College London (UCL) Institute of Ophthalmology, Faculty of Brain Sciences. He is Head and Chair of Ophthalmology, University of Bristol, and the lead clinician for the Regional Ocular Inflammatory Service, South West England. He also serves on Faculty and is Theme Lead for Inflammation and Immunotherapeutics, Biomedical Research Centre - Ophthalmology, Moorfields Eye Hospital and UCL Institute of Ophthalmology.

His research and clinical expertise concentrate on the understanding of inflammatory responses in the eye and treatment of retinal disorders. His endeavours and scientific success have led to the esteemed award of Fellowship of Academy of Medical Sciences for exceptional contribution to the advancement of medical science, and the International Alcon Research Award.

He has written two textbooks: *The Eye: Basic Science in Practice*, with John Forrester and colleagues, which still remains the best-seller in its field, and *Practical Manual of Intraocular Inflammation*, plus over 18 book chapter contributions. He has over 290 peer-reviewed publications spanning basic to clinical science, with over 10,000 citations.

**Annie Folkard, Director, BUS.** Annie was diagnosed with birdshot uveitis in 2004. With Rea Mattocks, she set up the Birdshot Uveitis Society (BUS) in October 2009. Annie is married and continues to work full-time running a small company while also running BUS.

**Professor Russell Foster CBE, FRS, FMedSci**

Russell Foster is Professor of Circadian Neuroscience, Head of the Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology and Director of the Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute at the University of Oxford. He is a Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford. Russell's research interests span the neurosciences, but with a focus on the regulation and generation of sleep and circadian rhythms, and what happens when these systems go wrong across multiple areas of health. He has published over 240 peer-reviewed scientific papers and four popular science books on sleep and circadian rhythms. For his discoveries, he has received multiple prizes and honours, not least election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society in 2008 and the Academy of Medical Sciences in 2013. In 2015, Russell was appointed as a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for services to science and awarded a DSc from the University of Bristol.

**John Hall, Director, BUS** John Hall is a successful businessman who has used his business acumen to help BUS grow and plan for the future. He was diagnosed with birdshot several years ago. John is responsible for organising our main fundraising initiatives.

**Greg Heath BSc, MBBS, MRCP(UK), MRCOphth, MCOptom, DipClinOptom, FHEA**

Greg is Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist, York Hospital.

He originally qualified as an optometrist, working in both private practice and the eye departments in both the Central Middlesex and Sussex Hospitals. After seven years, he returned to university to read medicine at University College, London. He undertook most of his postgraduate training within the Yorkshire deanery in which he spent a considerable time working in oncology and neurology before accepting a training post in medical ophthalmology. Greg completed his medical ophthalmology training in 2016 and undertook a Fellowship in uveitis and neuro-ophthalmology in Manchester. He returned to York as a consultant medical ophthalmologist where he specialises in inflammatory eye disease and neuro-ophthalmology.

Greg has a keen interest in medical education and is currently an undergraduate tutor at the Hull and York Medical School, an associate lecturer in the optometry department at City University, London and regularly delivers presentations to healthcare professionals at a postgraduate level on subjects pertaining to medical ophthalmology.

**Julian Jackson**

After a long career in management consultancy and organising events in emerging markets, followed by five years as Director of Development and then Senior Adviser to a leading eye research charity, Julian launched the social enterprise 'VisionBridge' in June 2016, supported by a growing nationwide group of academic researchers, clinician scientists, clinicians and patient advocates. He is building on the work he started in 2014 to promote eye health, increase the awareness and understanding of sight loss and introduce the extraordinary world of eye research to the public, eye health professionals, patients and the wider visually-impaired community across the UK.

## **Julian Jackson continued**

Julian lost his sight in 2010 to a retinal inherited disease and therefore has a personal as well as a professional interest in the daily battles being waged in hospitals and universities across the UK to prevent sight loss, treat eye disease, restore sight and improve the quality of life for patients through enhanced rehabilitation

## **Richard Lee BMedSci, BMBS(Nott), MRCS(Eng), MRCOphth, PhD**

Richard is a Consultant Ophthalmologist specialising in uveitis. He has clinics in both Moorfields and Bristol Eye Hospitals. However, he is also an immunologist working to understand how the immune system and the eye interact in the context of diseases such as birdshot. To do this, he supervises and works with teams of clinicians and scientists in the UK (principally at UCL, Bristol and Birmingham) and in the US at the National Eye Institute in Washington DC. His official job title is lead for experimental medicine for inflammatory eye diseases at the UK's Biomedical Research Centre for ophthalmology, funded by the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and based at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

## **Omar Mahroo MA, MBBChir, PhD, FRCOphth, FHEA**

Omar is a consultant ophthalmologist with subspecialty expertise in retinal disease, managing patients at Moorfields Eye Hospital and St Thomas' Hospital. He completed a medical degree and PhD at the University of Cambridge, and post-doctoral research at Cambridge and the Australian National University. He then commenced clinical house officer jobs in Cambridge, followed by ophthalmology training in London. His main research interest is understanding retinal function through electrophysiology. He has received funding from Fight for Sight, the Birdshot Uveitis Society, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and Thomas Pocklington Trust. He was recently awarded a £1.1m Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Career Development Fellowship to investigate disease mechanisms in patients with inherited retinal conditions and also the effects of common genetic variants on retinal function in healthy individuals, including variants related to myopia. His research is based at the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and at King's College, London where he is Honorary Senior Lecturer. He has been trialling the use of a quick-to-use hand-held electrophysiology device that could help manage patients in clinic.

## **Marina Mesquida MD MSc PhD**

Marina Mesquida is an ophthalmologist clinician scientist. She obtained her degree in medicine and surgery at the University of Lleida, Spain, then completed her residency in ophthalmology at the Hospital Clinic Barcelona, where she graduated with numerous research awards. After undertaking a Master's degree (MSc) in autoimmune diseases, she studied for a PhD in ocular immunology and inflammation at the University of Barcelona, followed by postdoctoral training at the University of Bristol, UK. She served as a consultant ophthalmologist specialising in medical retina and uveitis at the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona for 10 years, where she was also appointed head of the Ophthalmology Clinical Research Unit at the Fundació Clínic per a la Recerca Biomèdica.

Dr Mesquida has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed publications and 20 book chapters, with her major scientific interests being the role of interleukin 6 in the pathogenesis of macular oedema and immunological dysregulation in retinal diseases. In 2017 she received the Early Career Clinician Scientist Award from the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Foundation. She currently serves as Translational Medicine Leader in Ophthalmology as part of the Roche Pharma Research and Early Development team in Basel, Switzerland, where she develops new treatments for retinal diseases, a job which combines her enthusiasm and passion for science with a strong commitment to patients.

## **Professor Philip I Murray MBBS, DO(RCS), PhD, FRCP, FRCS, FRCOphth**

Phil undertook most of his clinical ophthalmology training at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London and his basic science laboratory training at the Institute of Ophthalmology, London and the Department of Ophthalmology-Immunology, Amsterdam.

He is Professor of Ophthalmology, Institute of Inflammation and Ageing, University of Birmingham. His laboratory research is focussed on understanding:

- why intraocular tolerance fails in uveitis
- what immune mechanisms initiate and drive the inflammatory response
- what can one do about it?

## **Phil Murray continued:**

He is Honorary Consultant Ophthalmologist at the Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre (BMEC), Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and runs two dedicated regional and supra-regional uveitis clinics per week. He enjoys the challenging and frustrating nature of uveitis but also finds it immensely rewarding. He is involved in clinical trials on novel therapies for uveitis and until recently he had a special interest in cataract surgery on the uveitic eye. He is part of the Birmingham National Centre of Excellence for Behçet's syndrome. From 2004-2016 he was Secretary of the International Uveitis Study Group. He sits on numerous national committees, is section editor for three journals, an examiner for the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth), external examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland and past external examiner, Optometry BSc (Hons), Aston University.

He has published over 180 peer-reviewed papers, contributed numerous book chapters and authored four textbooks, including the highly successful 'Oxford Handbook of Ophthalmology'. He has a keen interest in undergraduate ophthalmology teaching (previously national lead for the RCOphth), is an adviser to three national uveitis patient groups, helped set up a successful local patient involvement group in uveitis and is an advocate of the 'patient voice'.

He is a fervent supporter of the English Championship side Brentford FC, and plays baritone sax in 'Out of the Blue Big Band' and 'The Soul Providers' [www.pimurray.com](http://www.pimurray.com)

## **The Patient and Public Involvement Team**

The Patient and Public Involvement Team at the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Moorfields Biomedical Research Centre is a group of enthusiastic volunteers, staff and patients who bring many different skills and perspectives to the development of initiatives that help patients to influence research. We contributed to the Priority Setting Partnership for Sight Loss and Vision (through the steering group and data analysis) and now use those outcomes to begin debates between clinical researchers and the public when designing new projects. We also seek novel ways to communicate science

## **Preeti Singla MSc MCOptom DipTp (IP) Prof Cert Glauc**

Preeti is a Specialist Optometrist with over 15 years' experience in the profession, spanning NHS hospitals, community optometry and as a clinical supervisor for the undergraduate optometry degree at City University, London. She started her career in primary care ('high street' or community practice) but quickly realised that her passion lay in secondary healthcare and the management of eye conditions, rather than in screening and the commercial side of optometry.

She worked for a number of years across both sectors and then in 2010 made the switch to working in the hospital service full-time. She has worked for The Royal London Hospital Whitechapel, Moorfields Eye Hospital and most recently for Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust, covering Stoke Mandeville, High Wycombe and Amersham Hospitals.

Her work in the hospital sector has covered a broad range of experience in both core optometry clinics and also in an extended role, working alongside ophthalmologists in paediatrics, glaucoma and retina specialities. She has a keen interest in low vision rehabilitation and took on the role of Low Vision Lead at the Royal London, working closely with low vision aid suppliers.

Preeti has also written a number of articles for professional publication, the most recent being a series of three articles on low vision.

She holds a Masters' Degree in Clinical Optometry, a Professional Certificate in Glaucoma and is an Independent Prescriber.

## **Professor Miles Stanford MD, FRCP, FRCOphth**

Miles is currently Chair of Clinical Ophthalmology, King's College, London and holds posts mainly at St Thomas' Hospital. He trained at St Thomas' and King's College Hospitals as well as undertaking original research into the mechanisms underlying uveitis for his postdoctoral thesis.

He currently runs seven clinics per week for patients with uveitis (including patients with birdshot).

His main current research interests are in intraocular inflammation, particularly the immunogenetics of Behçet's syndrome and the epidemiology of toxoplasmosis. He is undertaking a number of commercial and non-commercial trials evaluating the effects of new drugs in the treatment of uveitis, including in patients with birdshot.

### **Miles Stanford continued:**

He has published over 190 peer-reviewed articles and contributed to more than 30 book chapters. He is founder and chairman of the British Ophthalmological Surveillance Unit, a unique unit that studies the epidemiology of rare ophthalmic diseases in the UK. He has also contributed significantly in the past to the training of ophthalmologists.

### **Laura Steeples MBChB(Hons), FRCOphth**

Laura is a Consultant Ophthalmologist at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital (MREH). She graduated from the University of Glasgow in 2006 and completed specialist training in the North Western deanery followed by two years of sub-speciality training in uveitis at MREH and Bristol Eye Hospital. Laura was appointed as a Consultant in adult and paediatric uveitis in 2016 and is an honorary lecturer at the University of Manchester. Laura is involved in uveitis research and has been an investigator in several national and international clinical trials. Laura regularly presents at international and national meetings and publishes in peer-reviewed journals. She is an active member of several networks including the Uveitis National Clinical Study Group, Paediatric Ocular Inflammation Group, European Society of Retina Specialists and the Birdshot Uveitis Society. She also contributes to patient safety work for the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

### **Professor Jennifer E Thorne, MD, PhD**

Jennifer Thorne is Chief, Division of Ocular Immunology and Uveitis Cross Family Professor of Ophthalmology and Epidemiology at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, US.

She is a board-certified ophthalmologist and an expert in the evaluation and management of patients with uveitis and other related immune-mediated disorders. She directs the mucous membrane pemphigoid clinic: a multi-disciplinary specialty clinic designed to evaluate and treat patients with mucous membrane pemphigoid and other cicatrizing conjunctival diseases.

Dr Thorne participates in numerous research projects on the clinical and treatment outcomes of uveitis, including white spot syndromes such as birdshot chorioretinitis and paediatric uveitis. She is national protocol chair of the MUST-sponsored POINT study on uveitic macular oedema;



## **Jennifer Thorne continued**

principal investigator of a study in the effectiveness of the dexamethasone implant in the treatment of uveitis.

Her research, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies, is focused on understanding which treatments for uveitis offer the best balance of effectiveness and safety to preserve patients' vision and quality of life in a cost-effective manner.

## **Graham Wallace, BSc, PhD**

Graham is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Immunity and Infection, Birmingham University. He has published over 75 research papers in scientific journals as well as reviews in the fields of ocular immunology, Behçet's syndrome and immunogenetics. He has received grants from Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Fight for Sight, and the Wellcome Trust. He is an enthusiastic communicator on the theme of immune responses in the eye and the effects of gene polymorphisms on ocular diseases. Graham is on the medical panel of the Behçet's Syndrome Society and speaks at meetings of patient groups on a regular basis.

## **Mark Westcott MD, FRCOphth, CCST**

Mark is a Consultant Ophthalmologist at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, where he specialises in uveitis, and also at St Bartholomew's and The Royal London Hospitals.

After residency training in London he spent a Fellowship year in glaucoma at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute, Los Angeles. Thereafter he returned to Moorfields Eye Hospital to undertake a Specialist Fellowship in medical retina and inflammatory eye disease.

Mark has co-authored over 40 scientific papers and regularly lectures both nationally and internationally. He is an honorary Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Ophthalmology, UCL. His research interests include infectious uveitis, birdshot disease and visual dysfunction in glaucoma.

Mark lives in London with his family. In his spare time, he indulges a passion for amateur astronomy and coaches junior rugby.