

Roundtable Career's Event - Guest Bios

Funder

Dr Annette Bramley, N8 Research

Since 2018 Annette has been the very driven and inspiring Director and 'Chief Collaboration Officer' of the N8 Research Partnership- the strongest university research alliance in the UK.

As one of the U.Ks foremost experts in research culture she has become a regular, compelling and in demand speaker on the subject.

A graduate of Oxford University where she achieved a first class degree and D.Phil in Materials Science, her particular niche is bringing people from different backgrounds to work together on research that has a tangible, genuine and long-lasting impact on the world. It's fair to say N8's successes in this arena are both as fascinating as they are many.

For over 20 years now she's guided scientists and engineers of all disciplines at the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (part of UK Research and Innovation) with great skill, inclusivity, and creativity. The LinkedIn recommendations available here <https://bit.ly/3IUUKPK6> go some way to explaining how one unique input has helped make so many people and projects successful.

When not excelling in her profession Annette is also a gifted artist in the medium of embroidery and acrylic and again to the highest accolade. She holds the Certificate in Technical Hand Embroidery from the Royal School of Needlework with Distinction and has exhibited countrywide.

As if all that isn't impressive enough – her current side hustle is studying for a Professional Diploma in Group Sound Therapy.



Charity

Charlotte Coates, Scar Free Foundation

Charlotte is Head of Research Funds at the Scar Free Foundation. She joined in 2014 having previously been Research Manager at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society for 5 years. Prior to this she worked in private office and project management positions at the Parliamentary and health services Ombudsman and the BBC. She is currently head of research funds.



Industry

Dr Jonathan Best, Cell Guidance Systems

Jonathan Best – Director, Research and Production, Cell Guidance Systems. After a Zoology BSc at UCL and PhD. in Anatomy at the University of Cambridge I took a post-doc at Dartmouth Medical School, New Hampshire USA. I then joined Merck, Sharp and Dohme in 2001 as team leader investigating therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases in particular Alzheimer's and was a member of the team which delivered 5 NCEs, of which one progressed to the clinic. I then moved to the Biotech company, Summit plc as leader of the cognition project, discovering therapeutics for neurological diseases, and, in 2008 I joined a start-up biotech, CellCentric, as Project Director responsible for overseeing the drug discovery programmes conducted by Contract Research Organisations. In March 2013, I became Grants Operations Manager at Wellcome, overseeing the team that manages and processes all the grant applications from Academia and Industry. I then moved to be Insight Manager of the Strategy & Performance team, analysing Wellcome's activities and involved in strategic planning until September 2021. I am currently the Director for Research and Production at a small biotech company in Cambridge, Cell Guidance Systems which produces reagents and products for researchers in the life sciences as well as developing a protein delivery system to enable a range of new therapies for diseases with unmet needs.



Dr Simon Fitzgerald, HORIBA UK

Simon is the UK Technical Manager at HORIBA, a global company manufacturing analytical and measurement systems for industry and academia. He is a leading technologist within HORIBA UK, spearheading strategic partnerships with pioneering organisations, contributing to the adoption of HORIBA technology for new applications, and promoting the company's core competencies within both established and emerging scientific markets.

Simon's doctoral research focused on fundamental photophysical techniques and luminescent materials, with a particular emphasis on nanosecond TCSPC time-resolved fluorescence. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

He leads a team of product specialists working with numerous technologies including Raman spectroscopy, AFM and tip-enhanced Raman spectroscopy, fluorescence spectroscopy, particle characterisation, X-ray fluorescence and a wide range of gas sensors. As a team, they are focused on the success of HORIBA's customers...from defining the technological solution based on the customers' needs through to ongoing scientific support for the life of the product.

In his 18 years at HORIBA, he has worked in many different roles from applications support, through product management, to his current role as the Technical Manager. Across these roles a unifying element has been to manage and improve the critical interface between HORIBA's expertise in instrument design and the many varied end users who use HORIBA technology to provide insight and knowledge to their operations and scientific quests. He has also worked as a global product manager for Smiths Detection, leading the development of trace detection systems for airports, customs organisations and police departments, and liaising with global regulators and government specialists for the industry.

Outreach to schools through STEM events is close to Simon's heart, and he assists with HORIBA UK's varied activities to excite a new generation of scientists through approachable and engaging scientific demonstrations.



Industry

Dr Luana Ferrara, Qkine

Dr Luana Ferrara obtained a BSc in Biotechnology from the University of Palermo and an MSc in Functional Genomics from the University of Trieste before moving to Scotland to complete a Marie Skłodowska-Curie funded Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of St Andrews. During her Ph.D., Luana collaborated with several European universities in order to understand the role of bacterial membrane proteins in the uptake of antibiotics. She has over 10 years of research experience in molecular biology and protein engineering. In 2017, Luana started as a Senior Protein Scientist at Qkine – a leading UK-based manufacturer of high-purity and animal-free growth factors and cytokines. Here she experienced firsthand the exciting and fast paced environment of a start-up, taking an active role in different aspects of the company, specializing in product development and manufacture of growth factors. She then progressed to the role of R&D lead in 2021 and became the R&D Manager at Qkine in 2022. Her role now involves overseeing the R&D strategic plan for the company and making sure new products are delivered following company standards.



Dammy Olayanju

Dr. Adedamola (Dammy) Olayanju is the Product Manager at Qkine. He is responsible for defining the product roadmap and planning new product launch strategies for successful commercialisation. He is also responsible for the management of the company's high-quality products, providing technical and scientific support for customers, strategic partners, and the wider community. Prior to joining Qkine, Dammy was a Principal Scientist at Manchester BIOGEL working on the development and application of robust 3D platforms such as stem cell and organoid technologies for use in regenerative medicine, tissue engineering, and drug screening and development. He gained his post-doctoral training and PhD in Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the University of Liverpool, UK.



Industry

Dr Jeanne River, LGC Group

Jeanne Rivera is the Northern Cell Metrology Hub Team Lead based in Nexus Leeds. Jeanne joined NML at LGC in April 2022 where she oversaw the laboratory design and renovation of the cell biology lab. Her role involves daily management of the cells team, contribute to the design and project delivery of core metrology, identify new funding streams, build collaborative relationships through partnerships and commercial aspects.

Born in the Philippines but raised in South Wales, Leeds became Jeanne's home during her undergraduate degree in Genetics. Jeanne further pursued research through PhD as a Leeds Anniversary Research scholar where she investigated genetic mutations in the pathogenesis of myeloproliferative neoplasms in developing novel therapeutic strategies. She also gained academic experience as a postdoctoral researcher in Leeds Institute of Medical Research in St James' identifying novel biomarkers in B cell lymphoma and at University of York testing novel therapeutics for treatment of myeloid malignancies representing the team in international conferences and workshops.

Prior to joining LGC, Jeanne was a field applications scientist covering the North of UK for Thermo Fisher where she supported the flow cytometry and cell sorting portfolio by training, troubleshooting and performing customer demos. The combined experience of academia and industry allowed her to form strong relationships across the disciplines that is beneficial in driving innovative partnerships here in Nexus.



Entrepreneurship

Dr Frank Craig, Sphere Fluidics

Dr Craig has over 25 years of international, general management experience gained from GlaxoSmithKline, Amersham Biosciences (as a Vice-President of R&D) and several start-up firms. He was responsible for managing product development of Green Fluorescent Protein (first identified by the 2008 Nobel Prize Winners for Chemistry) and many other products and services for the Life Sciences industry. Frank is a (co)-Founder of Aurora Biosciences (San Diego, USA), which had a peak market cap. of £1.6 billion. He was also a co-Founder and CEO of Smart Holograms (Cambridge, UK) – named as the UK's Fastest Growing Company. Frank has raised c. £60 million in Angel and Venture Capital investment, £23 million via an IPO on NASDAQ and has delivered many commercial partnerships with global Life Science firms – resulting in recorded deal values of £180 million. Frank is currently the CEO of Sphere Fluidics, commercialising new lab-on-a-chip and droplet technology from Cambridge University. He has a PhD in Cell Biology and Microbiology from Glasgow University and an MBA from Warwick Business School.



Professor Ivan Wall, University of Birmingham, Quest Meat, FourPlus Immersive

Professor Ivan Wall is an interdisciplinary scientist who works at the interface of cell biology, bioprocess engineering and digital technology. His research group works on stem cells and extracellular vesicles, with emphasis on industrial translation and scale up production.

At University of Birmingham, where he has a part-time appointment, he is the Director of the National Training Centre for Advanced Therapies Manufacturing. His ambition is to see Birmingham become a hub manufacturing cell and gene therapies that local patients can benefit from. Most of Ivan's time is spent outside of the University building local businesses. Some of his activities involve:

Co-Founder and Director of FourPlus Immersive, who make virtual reality training simulations for medicines manufacturers and educational institutions.

This is critical to accelerate workforce growth as new medicines such as gene therapies, cellular therapies and vaccines become increasingly adopted in healthcare.

Co-Founder and CEO of Quest Meat, who are driving a food revolution through cellular agriculture to make meat using sustainable, cruelty-free methods. This is critical for ensuring food production meets the needs of a rapidly increasing global population with less impact on climate change than current industrial farming.



Academia

Dr Anita Ghag, University of Birmingham

Dr Anita K Ghag is a Lecturer in the School of Chemical Engineering and the Healthcare Technologies Institute (HTI) at the University of Birmingham. Anita graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Biomedical Materials Science from the University of Nottingham in 2007. She went on to study for a PhD in Biomaterials Science based on the development of electrospun synthetic bone graft substitutes at the University of Manchester in 2010. After two short post doctoral positions, Anita was appointed as a lecturer in Regenerative Medicine in the School of Chemical Engineering at the University of Birmingham in September 2013. Her research focuses on the development of novel, functional materials which have the potential to be used in various applications including bone, cartilage and the cornea.



Professor Anthony Metcalfe, University of Birmingham

Professor Anthony Metcalfe is Industrial Chair of Wound Healing in the School of Chemical Engineering at the University of Birmingham and a Fellow of The Royal Society of Biology. Tony is a Biochemist (BSc) and Molecular Geneticist (PhD) and has also worked at The Universities of Lancaster, Manchester and Brighton as well as being Director of Research and Target Biology in industry (Renovo Ltd and F-star Therapeutics) and was Professor and Director of Research at the renowned Blond McIndoe Research Foundation. As such, he has many years of experience in academic, clinical, not-for-profit, and small to medium Biotech sectors in a range of therapeutic areas. Tony has interdisciplinary experience in innovative discovery, R&D, translational medicine and has regulatory, commercialisation and fund-raising expertise with a patient focussed outlook.



Tony's research has characterised wound healing and scar reduction, programmed cell death mechanisms in mammary gland biology & pre-implantation development, techniques for creating novel skin substitutes, delivery mechanisms for skin cells and stem cells, as well as engineering bispecific antibodies as a therapy for various cancers. Tony also helped raise funds and develop technologies at two spin-out companies which are or have investigated scar reduction technologies from proof-of-concept lab-based studies through to Phase I - III clinical trials. Tony is currently part of a team developing scar reduction strategies and therapies for skin and ocular applications at The Healthcare Technologies Institute in Birmingham.

