



BSMT 41st Annual Microbiology Conference 21st May 2026
Microbial Technology in Practice: The Good, the Bad and the Bugly

Speaker profiles

Dr Sarah Pitt

Principle Lecturer, University of Brighton.

President, Institute for Biomedical Science.



Dr Pitt is the new IBMS President, a role to which she would seem particularly well suited given her long history of advocating for the profession and contributing to the development and training of biomedical scientists. After attaining her degree in microbiology from Bristol University, Sarah trained as a biomedical scientist at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School in London. Her career has taken her to diagnostic laboratories across the UK with time also spent working in Africa and Central Asia. Sarah has had a longstanding interest in teaching and developing training in biomedical science. She lectures at all academic levels at the University of Brighton with a particular expertise in clinical virology and parasitology.

Sarah was the IBMS Chief Examiner for Virology until 2025 and during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic was a regular voice on BBC news and other media platforms, advocating for the role of laboratory diagnostics and explaining the intricacies of virology to a concerned general public. Dr Pitt has authored three textbooks, all focused on supporting learning and development within biomedical science.

At this year's Annual Microbiology Conference, she will speak on the current state of diagnostic microbiology in the UK. As IBMS President, Dr Pitt's insights on the future directions and challenges we may face at this crucial time for laboratory services will prove a thought-provoking start to the conference.

Dr Marie Anne Chattaway.

Unit Head Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit, UK Health Security Agency



Dr Marie Anne Chattaway, a seasoned clinical scientist, is Head of the Salmonella reference service at the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) within the UK Health Security Agency, boasting an extensive tenure of over two decades. Beyond her main role, she actively engages in surveillance initiatives, providing vital microbiological information and expertise for outbreak investigations, and conducts in-depth analysis of genomic data, particularly focusing on antimicrobial resistance and population structures. Currently, she holds the position of co-lead and career academic lead for the Genomic and Enabling Data Health Protection Research Unit (GED HPRU).

Dr Chattaway's commitment to global health is evident through her decade-long involvement in fortifying laboratory capabilities for enteric bacterial diseases across Africa, achieved through the development and implementation of comprehensive training programmes, all in support of the International Health Regulation Programme's Global Health initiative. Additionally, she is currently undergoing training to become a consultant microbiologist via the HSST programme, further solidifying her expertise and impact in the field. Dr Chattaway will be bringing her experience on enteric pathogens and will speak about a recent unusual case of cholera infection.

Dr Mike Beeton

Reader in Medical Microbiology, Cardiff Metropolitan University



Dr Mike Beeton is the lead scientist of the Mycoplasma and Ureaplasma Group at Cardiff Metropolitan University. He has 20 years' experience researching human mycoplasmas, with a recent focus on *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* and its role in human health and disease. His work has centred on understanding the prevalence of infection and the molecular mechanisms underpinning antimicrobial resistance.

From 2019 to 2023, Dr Beeton held leadership roles within the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) Study Group for Mycoplasma and Chlamydia Infections (ESGMAC), serving first as the Science Officer and subsequently as Chair (2021–2023). During this time, he co-founded the Early Career Mycoplasma and Chlamydia Researcher (ECMCR) Conference, designed to provide a supportive, low-pressure platform for early-career researchers to develop their presentation skills and showcase their work.

Recently, he co-led the first prospective global surveillance study of *M. pneumoniae* and is currently leading an international research project to improve molecular surveillance of *M. pneumoniae* across Europe and beyond.

Dr Jolyon Medlock

Head of Medical Entomology, UK Health Security Agency



Dr Jolyon Medlock has worked on vector-borne diseases for more than 25 years and currently leads the UK's Medical Entomology Group. His first roles were in Africa studying malaria control and lymphatic filariasis as a field parasitologist with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine but also worked for Oxfam in Mozambique as the malaria control programme officer following large-scale flooding.

Since 2002 he has been working at Porton Down for the UK Health Security Agency. Dr Medlock has a varied role which involves advising UK government on vector-borne disease risk and managing UK-wide vector surveillance systems. He also supports the UK Overseas Territories in their dengue prevention work and ECDC in European tick surveillance projects.

Dr Medlock's research interests focus on mosquito- and tick-borne diseases, including impacts of environmental and climatic change. He is particularly interested in the ecology of tick-borne diseases and environmental and ecological drivers for risk, and has published over 185 peer-reviewed articles on the subject

Michael Wren CSci, FIBMS, FRSB,



Mike Wren remains a well-known name in the circles of anaerobic microbiology and was a practising Biomedical Scientist for 43 years until his retirement. Throughout a long and distinguished career Mike published numerous papers, contributed to chapters of many books and co-authored the textbook *Clinical Microbiology*. Working in collaboration with colleagues in industry he also wrote the bench guide "Introduction to clinical anaerobic

bacteriology" which has become a fundamental introduction and resource to many bench microbiologists. In September 2004 Mike was one of the first to be appointed to the role of Consultant Biomedical Scientist at University College Hospital. He also held the role of visiting professor at the University of Westminster where he was involved in teaching on both MSc and undergraduate courses. In 2007 Mike was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours list in 2007 for services to Biomedical Science. Since retirement Mike has stayed active and his interest in medical history meant he is currently the IBMS Honorary Librarian responsible for maintaining the institutes collection of over 1500 titles.

Professor Martha Clokie

University of Leicester, Division of Microbiology and Infection

Director of the Becky Mayer Centre for Phage Research



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After studying biology at the University of Dundee Professor Clokie undertook postgraduate studies in biodiversity in Edinburgh before moving to Leicester where she completed her PhD in Molecular Ecology. Early in her post-doc career Professor Clokie worked with the University of Warwick and the Scripps Institute of Oceanography focusing on the study of the molecular evolution of plants then cyanobacteria and bacteriophages.

Professor Clokie returned to Leicester in 2007 as a lecturer and was promoted to Professor in 2016. Since 2001 her work has focused on bacteriophages in environmental and clinical settings, particularly their distribution in nature and potential uses in healthcare and beyond. A key area of Professor Clokie's research is the investigation of bacteriophage therapy in relation to the treatment of *Clostridioides difficile* and other intestinal infections and on urinary tract infections and respiratory infections. Through her role as the director of the UK's first centre for phage research, she is also exploring other potential applications of this technology.

Given the rising prevalence of antimicrobial resistance, bacteriophage therapy may well finally break into mainstream clinical practice in the near future due in part to Professor Clokie's pioneering work.