



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 Claire Jenkins

Deputy Head for the Gastrointestinal Reference Unit (GBRU), UK Health Security Agency

Profile – to be confirmed.

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 Alexander Vaux,

Principle Medical Entomologist, Medical Entomology and Zoonosis, UK Health Security Agency

Profile – to be confirmed.

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



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.

Image © 2026 University of Leicester

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.