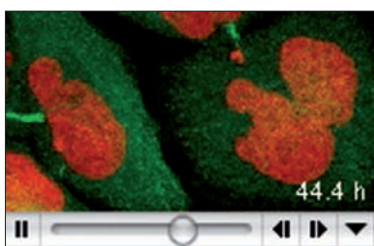


EMBL etcetera

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Off to the movies

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Pictures from Lab Day

Happy 10th anniversary, ELMI



The European Light Microscopy Initiative celebrates [page 7](#)

Grounded!

For more than a week, EMBL was abuzz with fields of science that had little to do with molecular biology; geology, jet engineering and meteorology dominated coffee get-togethers instead.

The source of all the commotion? The Icelandic volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, that caused mayhem for European airlines by grounding millions of passengers all over Europe, including many of EMBL's travellers. Inside, Lucas Brouwers, a trainee in the Bork group, takes a closer look at the physics behind the eruption disruption.

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A new building for EMBL Hamburg

A chat with Ralph Martens



Photo: Hugo Neves

Nearly eight months into his tenure, the new Administrative Director talks about some of his plans for EMBL's administration

What are your first impressions of EMBL's administration?

It's all working rather smoothly and the 'clients' appear to be happy. The results of the survey last year were very positive. Something particularly good about EMBL is that the administration is relatively small and not overpowering. That also has a downside, though, because we don't always have enough people to implement new projects as quickly as we would like to.

How does EMBL's administration differ from that of other places?

Administration here is organised around the needs of the individual scientists, which may sometimes contradict standard principles. Nevertheless, it works, and almost everyone seems to be satisfied with the results. In fact, I would like to focus even more on this aspect. At the Admin Assembly in April we tried to get a better understanding of what the organisation wants to achieve through its scientific projects.

Since the administration does not have its own purpose we will derive our goals and objectives from that exercise.

How have you had to change your own way of working to fit in at EMBL?

In industry and the International Criminal Court, where I have worked in the past, it is about setting standards and achieving specific goals. Here, individual ideas and choices are often more important, so I may have to apply my skills differently to see how we could achieve both at the same time.

What changes can admin expect to see in the near future?

We want to define our objectives first and then see what kind of strategies we will deploy to achieve them. It's a widespread exercise; everyone is involved. First we

"I'd like to focus even more on the needs of the scientists"

have started looking at strengthening communication within administration and with the scientists. I now have regular meetings with the senior admin people from all EMBL sites, a bit like the Senior Scientists meeting that takes place every two months. Of course, in parallel it will be business as usual on an everyday basis.

What sort of reaction have you had from the scientists?

Everyone has been very positive and supportive. When I still had the luxury of Bernd Uwe running things, I had time to have many conversations with the scientists. I collected suggestions and developed a project list, which is fairly long, I have to admit. The projects will be incorporated in the process of implementing the administration's objectives.

Most of the administration has moved to the ATC. How will the challenges that this presents be addressed?

Moving away – slightly – from the rest of the business should only be an issue in the beginning, when people have to adjust. A tunnel might have helped, because then people would not perceive the ATC as a different building. It probably takes longer to get to some labs in the main building than to the ATC. Crossing the street makes it seem further; it's a psychological barrier. But I'm confident that it will work out by itself. Of course we must ensure that face-to-face contact continues and that the channels of communication stay open.

What do you like doing when you're not working?

I've moved often in the last few years, so I'm just looking forward to settling down back in Germany and catching up with friends that we left behind. When we have found a permanent place to live, I'll be able to relax a bit, explore the Heidelberg region with my family, play golf and ski.

Drumming up enthusiasm

The 12th General Assembly of EMBL administrators took place in Heidelberg from 28-30 April. This biannual event provides a platform for staff across all sites to exchange information and coordinate actions, as well as getting to know people with whom they usually communicate via e-mail or phone.

For this assembly, new Administrative Director Ralph Martens put together an intensive schedule focused on the development of a strategic plan for EMBL administration. A plan is needed to fully align administrative processes and sys-



Photo: Marietta Schupp

tems to scientists' needs in these changing times for EMBL and research, as well as to help follow up on some of the feedback received during last year's survey in a systematic way. The project is still in its early stages, but will be communicated to the entire EMBL community when mature.

Work wasn't the only thing on the agenda, though. There were also interesting presentations from all outstation

representatives describing their sites with great knowledge, detail and humour, and a much appreciated and exciting presentation by Eric Karsenti. In a team-building drumming activity, the participants had the opportunity to make a lot of noise in stark contrast to their everyday work; this culminated in the rather successful performance of a Brazilian samba rhythm!

– Anna Efstathiou



Onwards & upwards

Two of EMBL Heidelberg's group leaders, Jürg Müller from the Genome Biology Unit and Mathias Treier from Developmental Biology, said their official good-byes to EMBL with a party on 19 May.

Jürg's group will move to the Max-Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried, near Munich. Mathias is making a move into the clinic – he'll start his own Institute for Molecular Endocrinology at the University of Cologne's Medical Faculty, building on last year's great results in mammalian sex determination.

Although the weather meant that the planned barbecue had to move indoors, the partygoers got hands-on with a crêpe machine – with varying results – and enjoyed drinks and music well into the night.



Mitocheck* this out!

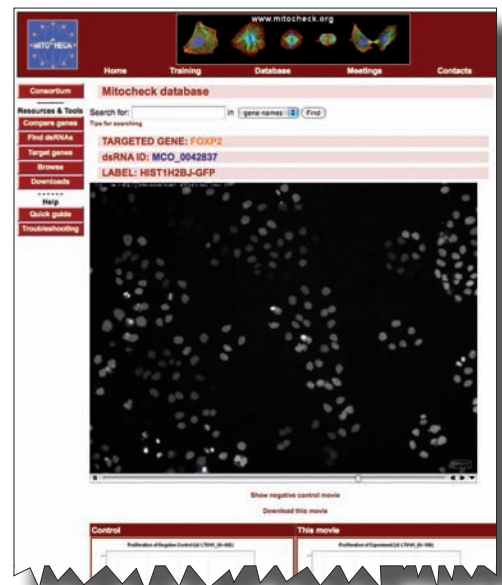
*Sorry

Jan Ellenberg and his Mitocheck colleagues across Europe have made a library of almost 200,000 time-lapse films freely accessible following publication of results in *Nature* on 1 April.

The database of videos, which show what happens to cells when each of the 22,000 human protein-coding genes is disrupted, is available at www.mitocheck.org. Search for a gene, click on 'Movies/Images' and you'll find a movie showing what happens when it is knocked out (right). It means that working out the processes individual genes are involved in in human cells is now much simpler; it takes just a few mouse clicks, instead of months of work in the lab.

To create the films, the researchers in Mitocheck – a Europe-wide consortium coordinated by Jan-Michael Peters at the Research Institute of Molecular Pathology in Vienna – inactivated each of the 22,000 human genes one by one in different sets of cells, which they filmed for 48 hours under a microscope. This generated almost 200,000 time-lapse movies of mitosis, and a computer program analysed the footage to detect what characteristic defects cells display, and in what order.

By grouping genes with similar effects – for instance, genes which when inactivated led to cells with two nuclei instead of one



after division – they were able to identify genes involved in mitosis, which they confirmed with further experimental assays. “We identified 1,249 genes associated with changes in the appearance and spatial arrangement of chromosomes,” explains Jan. “Nearly half of these are involved in mitosis – more than double the number that were known to be involved already.”

Early indications show that the database will be popular. “People bombarded me with e-mails asking, ‘Can I have the movies for my favourite gene?’” Jan says. “Now they can log on to the database and discover clusters of genes that underlie a particular response in cells. It's a very rich resource for the scientific community, and they don't need to do the silencing experiments themselves anymore.”

More power to the people: European Nucleotide Archive launched

In May EMBL-EBI launched the European Nucleotide Archive (ENA), a user-friendly portal to three major sequence resources which holds more than 20 terabases of nucleotide sequence.

Europe's primary access point to globally comprehensive DNA and RNA sequence information, ENA is the interface to the EMBL Nucleotide Sequence Database, which gives scientists access to raw sequence data; the European Trace Archive, which includes raw data from electrophoresis-based sequencing machines and was previously maintained at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute; and the Sequence Read Archive, a repository for raw data from next-generation sequencing platforms. Taking annotations into account too, the database occupies a massive 230

terabytes of disk space.

“ENA provides improved access both to annotated and to raw sequence data, as well as offering graphical browsing, web services, a text search and a new rapid sequence similarity search,” says Guy Cochrane, leader of the ENA team at the EBI. “There are also over 190 million cross references to external records, many of which are in other EMBL-EBI data resources.”

The launch of ENA reflects the EBI's continuing commitment to promoting scientific progress by providing global access. The next step for the ENA team is to improve submission and data-access tools to make it easier for ENA's users to share their sequence data.

www.ebi.ac.uk/ena

In the red

EMBL Monterotondo and EMBL-EBI have teamed up to identify the molecules that ensure red blood cell production remains high enough.

In a study published online on 31 May in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, Dónal O'Carroll and his group use genetically engineered mice to pinpoint two small RNA molecules which help keep enough red blood cells in circulation to carry oxygen all around the body.

The Monterotondo researchers teamed up with Anton Enright's group at EMBL-EBI to use a bioinformatics approach to discover that these two microRNAs are likely to act by fine-tuning many genes, and that one of them, MiR451, is probably the key player.



activities and educational games for teachers to take back to the classroom, ELLS also gives scientists a chance to work with teachers, helping to bridge the gap between research and schools. ELLS personnel in Heidelberg comprises Julia and Education Officer Philipp Gebhardt (above). In Monterotondo, Education Officers Rossana De Lorenzi and newest recruit Tommaso Nastasi were both scientists at the outstation – Tommaso getting as far as postdoc level – before deciding that science education was the way to go.

Future events for ELLS include a workshop on metagenomics at this year's ESOF meeting in Turin in July and an Interactive Network for Experimental Training (iNEXT) conference in May next year. iNEXT is an initiative funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung which aims to develop inquiry-based science teaching to advanced level in German schools. In addition, Rossana and

ELLS angels

The European Learning Laboratory for the Life Sciences (ELLS) team have been branching out. Their first foray into bioinformatics at the EBI in March met with much enthusiasm from the 20 teachers who attended: "certainly the best training we've received in years", according to head of biology Emily Akass from the Portsmouth Grammar School, UK.

The first ever ELLS LearningLAB not to involve wet lab techniques was held with the help of scientists and staff from the EBI and EMBL, including Paul Flicek, Jan Korbel, Aidan Budd, Louisa Wright and others. "Bioinformatics really lends itself to the classroom because it only needs computers rather than bench equipment," says Julia Willingale-Theune, who last year became head of the entire ELLS team. "It's also a popular subject because of young peoples' natural IT literacy."

ELLS' mission since it was created in 2004 is to bring school teachers into the lab for a hands-on encounter with molecular biology techniques. As well as developing

"Our activities have a far-reaching effect rather like ripples in a pond"

Tommaso are attending a Science Picnic in Poland in June, organising LearningLABs in Milan and Monterotondo for September and November, and taking part in the Genoa Science Festival in October. "Our LearningLABs and other activities tend to have a far-reaching effect rather like ripples in a pond," comments Julia. "After teachers from Romania attended the bioinformatics course, a story about EMBL and the EBI made the Romanian papers. We hope we're inspiring many young people all over Europe to pursue scientific careers."

Fact or fiction?

The 12th International EMBL PhD Student Symposium, 'From Science Fiction to Science Fact: What's next?' will be the first to be held in the ATC.

The event on 21-23 October will look at the real scientific discoveries that have shaped the creations of science fiction writers and, on the other hand, the inspiration scientists can sometimes find in the world of fantasy. Where is the borderline between fantasy and reality today, and where will it be in the future?

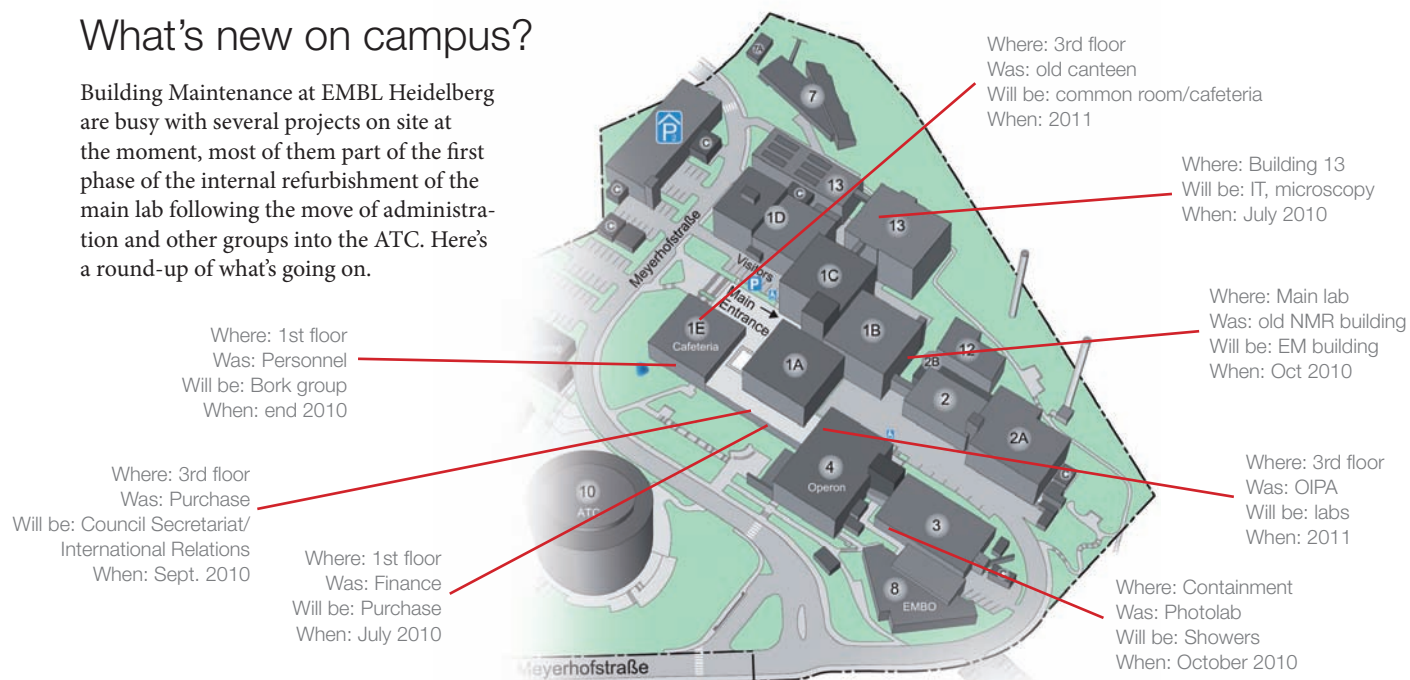
The symposium will be divided into four sessions, Structural and Cell Biology, Medical Research, Omics, and Science Fiction, and confirmed speakers include Petra Schwille, Christian Haass, Rudolf Aebersold, Gero Miesenböck and Miroslav Radman. Participants will also have the opportunity to present and discuss their own work in poster sessions and selected short talk segments. The event will also include a panel discussion and the presentation of the EMBL PhD Symposium Writing Prize 2010.

"Join us to experience a student-led symposium complemented by participation of world renowned scientists," says organiser Federico Rossi. "As history shows, 'science fiction' in a given moment can be turned to 'science fact' in a few years' time."

<http://phdsymposium.embl.org>

What's new on campus?

Building Maintenance at EMBL Heidelberg are busy with several projects on site at the moment, most of them part of the first phase of the internal refurbishment of the main lab following the move of administration and other groups into the ATC. Here's a round-up of what's going on.



Lab Day, 11 June 2010 A picture's worth a thousand words



This photo: Antje Seack. Others: Hugo Neves

What did you think? _____



“I don’t understand the science on most of the posters but so many of them are really creative. Lots of groups have had really good ideas about how to present their labs. I really like the Gavin Group’s Asterix one.”
Magdalena Wilczynska, Software Engineer



“I think the fact that Lab Day has become something more than just a social occasion is great. The new symposia in the morning are a really good addition to the event. I also appreciate that they’re showing the world cup, though!”
Sebastian Glatt, postdoc, Christoph Müller Group



“It’s great to be able to connect faces to names at last, because I haven’t been here for very long.”
Laure Plantard, postdoc, Nédélec Group



“The best part is seeing my friends from the outstations. I also enjoy the students’ presentations at the grad ceremony. Today the football’s on at the same time, so I’ll just go there briefly to see my colleague graduate, though!”
Vibor Laketa, Research Scientist, Pepperkok Team and Schultz Group



“I have to do this in English? I need a few beers first! I’m very much looking forward to playing my first gig at EMBL tonight with my band, Mind the Gap.”
Lothar Roland, Deputy Head House-keeper

Eastern promise

EMBL alumni travel all over the world when they leave, but Martin Senger found himself a more unusual new home than most – King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



Martin, how did you end up in Saudi Arabia?

After leaving EMBL, where I was a scientist in Graham Cameron's group from 1996 to 2005, I started at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. My job was interesting, useful and not yet over when I made the difficult decision to go to the King Abdullah University of Science and

Technology (KAUST) to be closer to my family, who are in Europe. And the place was challenging, so I took my chance.

What do you do at KAUST?

My title is Senior Bioinformatician, and I work at the Computational Biosciences Research Center. I develop new software tools, particularly those that help with data integration and access, and I provide data and software support for the

biologists and bioinformaticians both here and elsewhere in the Near East.

What's it like living in Saudi Arabia?

It's exotic, challenging, sometimes surprising – but generally very safe and inviting. I can't begin to explain the thousands-year-old culture and environment in just a few sentences, though.

Are there other EMBL alumni there?

Funnily enough, I'm in the same group as Heikki Lehvaslaiho, who was also working at EBI when I was there!

Are you still in touch with EBI staff or alumni?

Sure. I started at the EBI in its early days, and was part of creating something new and challenging. It was like moving into a new house where the furniture is already there but still needs some rearrangement. I was lucky to work with such great directors – both Paolo Zanella and Graham Cameron were very motivating and supportive. Also the project for which I was hired, the Industry Programme, showed how respected and useful the EBI can be for the 'big' industrial players – and it added to the challenge of my job there.

I still have personal and work-related contacts at the EBI. I believe in the open source ideology – where your work can continue even if you're physically in a new job. I still maintain some of the software tools I was involved with while at the EBI, and of course I'm using EBI databases – who wouldn't?

It's the people we meet...

For Joe Sanger, the first Humboldt Fellow at EMBL, a conversation in Heidelberg in 1977 resulted in a friendship that has continued for many years. "It also resulted in a great many fruitful collaborations!" adds Joe, who's now Professor at the SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, USA. Joe recently won the highest award for scientific achievement from the American Association of Anatomists.

Joe met Cell Biology and Biophysics group leader Brigitte Jockusch (1978-81) at a meeting in Heidelberg sponsored by DKFZ. Their conversation led to a year at EMBL for Joe in 1979, who was then Associate Professor in the Department of Anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. His collaborations with Brigitte and group leader

Thomas Kreis resulted in five publications before 1990, as well as a lasting family friendship with Brigitte.

"Something that really struck me about EMBL is that a large proportion of funds are devoted to equipment development," he says. "At the start of what became the first Leica confocal microscope, for example, a group of imagers – including me – were invited to a meeting to discuss the first steps toward building it.

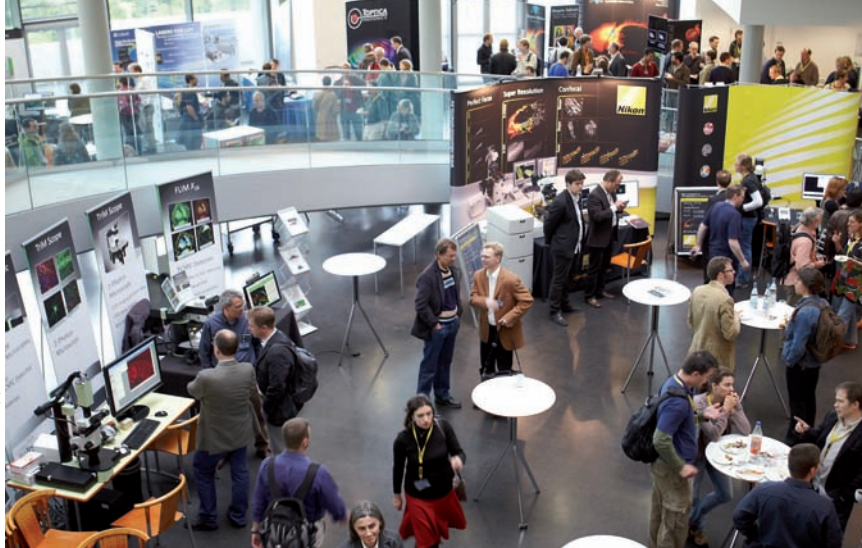
"Back at Penn we didn't have any such way of supporting exploration into equipment. In fact, the major light microscopic equipment still comes from outside the US – Leica, Zeiss, Nikon, Olympus – and EMBL continues to play a leading role."



We want to hear from you! Tell us about your personal or scientific achievements, an interesting event in which you are involved or give us feedback on alumni matters at alumni@embl.org.

Please mark your diaries with the forthcoming alumni events:

- The 4th Greek chapter meeting will take place at Dilofo Ioannina on **26-27 June**. For more details and to register, please contact Anastasia Politou (apolitou@cc.uoi.gr).
- 27 August: deadline for John Kendrew Award **applications for 2011**.



Ten years of the ELMI

The ATC welcomed over 300 participants to the 10th International ELMI Meeting on 18-21 May, which also attracted a record number of 27 companies attending with exhibition booths or workshop sessions.

The EMBO Workshop on 'Advanced Light Microscopy Techniques and their Applications' at EMBL Heidelberg was also in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the European Light Microscopy Initiative (ELMI), which was founded at EMBL by Rainer Pepperkok, Tommy Nilsson and Christian Boulin. "The ELMI was set up to promote the recognition of light microscopy as a fundamental tool in life sciences research, and to help a wider community benefit from its techniques and new developments by providing access through facilities such as the Advanced Light Microscopy Facility," says Rainer. "It has also strengthened the channels of communication between researchers and industry."

Several major industry partners have been on board since the beginning, and

the meeting demonstrated the strong links between European scientists working in light microscopy and the manufacturers of equipment. Alongside the lecture programme, representatives from ten of the 27 participating companies ran hands-on workshops in the use of their microscopes.

The ELMI now has countless members in 32 countries, and the future of the initiative includes a strong involvement in one of the big European research infrastructure projects, Euro-BioImaging, led by Jan Ellenberg, which aims to create a pan-European imaging infrastructure for scientists. "The members of ELMI are really keen to share their knowledge and expertise," says Rainer. "Our involvement in Euro-BioImaging will really allow us to develop a distributed system of access to cutting-edge imaging equipment, training and services."

If you'd like more information about the ELMI or are interested in joining, visit the website at www.embl.org/elmi.

Feet of strength

Four group leaders from the Molecular Medicine Partnership Unit (MMPU) between EMBL and the University of Heidelberg were just some of the EMBL-related runners who took part in 25 April's Heidelberg Half-Marathon, a 21.1km race over the city's grueling hills and dales.

Andreas Kulozik, Marcus Mall, Matthias Hentze and Heiko Runz (l-r, below) took the opportunity to have the MMPU logo emblazoned on their running shirts, and their friends and family proudly waved 'MMPU 4U Supporters Club' banners to cheer them on.

Well done to all the EMBL and EMBL-related runners, who included Victoria McParland, Matthias Helmling, Damien Devos and Michael Hansen, among many others too numerous to name here. Three weeks later many of the participants – and several new ones – were back on the road for the Mannheim full marathon on 15 May.



Photo: Britta Schläger

Arts at EMBL day



Science and Society's Arts at EMBL day on 30 April included a fascinating talk by Martin Kemp on structural intuitions in art and science and a panel discussion. The centrepiece of the event was the exhibition of scientific images and videos from EMBL researchers, which were on display on large panels in the ATC.

Stepping up How the EBI is meeting data storage demands

EMBL-EBI is leasing two new state-of-the-art data centres in London to cope with this year's projected accumulation of 12 petabytes (PB) of stored data.

The main centre on the Hinxton campus is functioning at its maximum capacity of 5 PB. With data levels expected to soar to the equivalent of 4 million human genomes – more than double the amount stored in 2009 – the storage capacity clearly needs to be stepped up.

With the help of £10m in funding from the UK Research Councils, the EBI Systems and Networking team has designed and overseen the establishment of the hardware and logical infrastruc-

ture hosted at the new centres. For the research community, the primary benefit will be improved access to the flood of biological information. Data requests will be shared between the two centres and each will be fully independent, which means that either will be capable of running all of EBI's core services. If the worst happens – the loss of an entire data centre – the remaining facility can deal with all requests, ensuring only minimal disruption for users.

The new facilities will be part of the central hub for the emerging pan-European life science research infrastructure for Biological Information (ELIXIR).

Grounded!

For more than a week, EMBL was abuzz with fields of science that had little to do with molecular biology. Geology, jet engineering and meteorology dominated lunchtime gossip and coffee get-togethers instead.

The source of all the commotion? The Icelandic volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, that caused mayhem for European airlines by grounding millions of passengers all over Europe, including many of EMBL's travellers, for several days in April.

"We had James, Vicky and Duncan stuck in Italy and Gaurav in Heidelberg," says Jan Copeland, EMBL-EBI's Workshop Exhibition Organiser. "I don't think any of them found it very amusing. Vicky's little girl was with a carer, with her mum supposed to be on a brief teaching trip."

With heavyweight conference season not due to kick off until May, the Courses and Conferences weren't too badly affected, but some seminar speakers and workshop participants were forced to cancel. For some people, though, the disruption was a blessing. "I should have been going to a conference in Finland," says Dean of Graduate Studies Helke Hillebrand. "I was utterly happy about a free gift of four working days and a weekend!"

The reason Eyjafjallajökull belched out ash instead of lava has everything to do



The Eyjafjallajökull eruption, taken on 17 April this year. Photo: Örvar Þorgeirsson

with Iceland's reputation as the land of fire and ice. The combination of a frozen glacier atop a lava-spewing volcano proved to be the perfect recipe for a black smoker emitting tons of ash.

As the volcano erupted, meltwater from the glacier entered the volcano's plumbing system. When the water hit the confined spaces of the magma chambers, it evaporated to steam with such force that rock shattered to fragments. These fragments were launched from the volcano like a bullet from the muzzle of a gun, and became the dreaded volcanic ash that held Europe in its grip for weeks.

Even when the worst trouble seemed to have blown by, airports in the UK and Ireland still had to keep their planes on the ground at various times over the following weeks. For a while it was difficult to say

when Europe's airspace would finally be safe from Eyjafjallajökull's tyrannous reign. Scientists did see the volcano's activity and temperature drop eventually, but experts were hesitant to announce a definite end to the eruptions. Their caution seems justified, as the volcano's previous eruption lasted a full 13 months from 1821 until 1823. A long breath indeed.

In the end, most people just wanted the trouble to be over. "My native Iceland seems to excel these days in exporting its disasters," comments Science & Society Programme Manager Halldór Stefánsson, who had no travel plans disrupted. "Enough is enough!"

– Lucas Brouwers, Bork group

A great turnout for the first forward-look



Even the new auditorium at the ATC wasn't big enough for the crowds who flocked to the first Vision 2020 lecture on 28 April. CIT's David Baltimore, who talked about microRNA control of inflammatory and immune processes, attracted an on-site audience of more than 550 for the first in a series of forward-looking scientific lectures by world leaders in their fields. The next will be on 15 June when Phil Sharp from MIT will give a talk about the biology of gene regulation by miRNAs.

Big pharma input for ChEMBL

EMBL-EBI's ChEMBL database has received chemical structure data to coincide with the publication of two *Nature* papers.

After going public with research identifying promising potential leads to develop malaria medicines, pharma company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, USA have deposited compound data into the drug discovery database. The addition provides information on 14,000 compounds known to act against the parasite responsible for transmitting malaria, providing free access and integrating it with other publicly-held data.

Novartis have also added to ChEMBL, which is now set to become an invaluable resource for researchers developing new malaria treatments worldwide.

⇒ Registration is now open for the following **EBI hands-on bioinformatics training course** to help you make the most of your data: 'EMBO Practical Course; Computational aspects of protein structure determination and analysis: from data to structure to function' will be held from 6-10 September (registration deadline 23 July). See www.ebi.ac.uk/training/handson to register and for full details.

⇒ The application deadline for the next round of **EIPOD selection** is 31 August. Selection will be completed in November, with projects starting shortly afterwards. Applications should be made online at www.embl.org/eipod.

⇒ The next **EMBO|EMBL Symposium**, 'Human Variation: Cause and Consequence' will take place in the ATC on 20-23 June. Keynote Lectures will be delivered by Svante Pääbo from the MPI for Evolutionary Anthropology and Kári Stefánsson of deCODE genetics. Registration is also open for the third meeting in the EMBO|EMBL Symposia Series, 'The Non-Coding Genome', on 13-16 October, and the abstract deadline is 18 July. Details of both symposia can be found at www.embo-embl-symposia.org.

⇒ EMBL Monterotondo's site, the **Adriano Buzzati-Traverso campus**, has been purchased by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR). The 158,000m² international scientific campus was created in 1996 by a consortium of the CNR, EMBL, EMMA (the European Mouse Mutant Ar-

There are some new EMBL goodies to be had in the shape of bumper-sized umbrellas (useful for those lunchtime trips to the canteen), key rings and a different mug to add to your collection. Check the website under 'shop' or visit Angela Michel in B0703 to have a look.



chive) and the ICGEB (International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology). It was previously owned by ENI SpA, a major Italian oil, gas and chemical conglomerate.

⇒ At the beginning of May EMBL Heidelberg's **Kinderhaus** opened its 10th group. The Fröschegruppe (Frog Group) offers up to 20 places for children aged 3-6.

⇒ In order to make their collective experience more widely available, the seven EIROforum organisations presented a **position paper** entitled "Establishing New Research Infrastructures in Europe – The EIROforum Experience" at the 6th European Conference on Research Infrastructures in Barcelona in March. Representatives of European research and science policy-makers gathered to discuss challenges and issues currently facing European

Research Infrastructures, such as prioritisation, management and financial issues, governance structures and a general future strategy. The paper was produced at EMBL as a key EIROforum activity under EMBL's chairmanship, which continues until the end of June this year, after which EFDA-JET will take over.

⇒ Please see http://intranet.embl.de/personnel/training_development/index.html for information on upcoming **courses in the General Training and Development Programme**.

⇒ The **DKFZ/EMBL retreat** on 3-4 May in Herxheim, Pfalz brought together 18 young group leaders from both institutes (below). They discussed their research and explored potential collaborations in the fourth meeting in a series initiated in 2005.



New building for HH

The talk of the town lately has been the ATC opening at EMBL Heidelberg – but EMBL Hamburg have been enjoying a few changes of their own, with part of the staff moving into a brand new building.

On 23 April, the first seminar was held in the new seminar room in Building 48E, which is already home to some members of the PETRA III team. To mark the occasion, Stefan Fiedler presented an informal overview of the PETRA III annex building in the making. The seminar was followed by nibbles and drinks on the new veranda at the top of



the building.

As of 28 May, the Friday Seminar Series will take place regularly in 48E – which is yet to receive a geographical nickname in true Hamburg style – instead of the original EMBL building, 25a. This represents the next step in starting up full operation of the new building, which will in future be the home of the EMBL@PETRA3 Integrated Facility for Structural Biology.

scientifichaiku

A colour is shifted
Peptides are lost in the noise
Confusion reigns here



– Toby Mathieson and
Michael Rinner, Cellzome

Send your scientific haiku to info@embl.de.

fromtheStaffAssociation

□ Keep up-to-date with events at www.embl.de/~staff (for EMBL pensioners: www.embl.de/~staff/pensioners).

events@EMBL

20-23 June EMBL Heidelberg
EMBO | EMBL Symposium: Human variation

22-24 June EMBL Heidelberg
Course: Targeted genome editing using zinc finger nucleases

25 June EMBL Monterotondo
EMBL Distinguished Visitor Lecture: Gene circuit dynamics at the single-cell level. Michael Elowitz, Division of Biology at CIT, USA

26 June EMBL Heidelberg
Staff Association Summer Party

28 June -1 July EMBL Heidelberg
Summer Council Meeting

29 June EMBL Heidelberg
Meet your council delegate over lunch

2 July EMBL Heidelberg
Science and Society: Complexity: a guided tour. Melanie Mitchell, Portland State Uni & Santa Fe Institute, USA

5-9 July EMBL Heidelberg
Course: Following MIQE recommendations

7 July EMBL Heidelberg
Vision 2020 Lecture Series: Gene Targeting in the 21st century: mouse models of human disease from cancer to psychiatric disorders. Mario Capecchi, HHMI, USA

13-16 July WWGC, Hinxton
Conference: 7th Joint BSPR/EBI Proteomics Conference

23-31 August EMBL Hamburg
EMBO Practical Course: Protein expression, purification and crystallisation

29 August-5 Sept EMBL Hamburg
EMBO Practical Course: Cryo-electron microscopy and 3D image processing

28-31 August EMBL Heidelberg
Conference: 9th EMBL Conference: Transcription and chromatin

14-16 September Stromberg
Heads of Units Meeting/Senior Scientists Meeting/Faculty Retreat

For more details about these events and more, visit www.embl.org/events.

people@EMBL

Julio Saez-Rodriguez joins in July as a group leader at the EBI, a joint appointment with the Genome Biology Unit. After studying chemical engineering at the universities of Oviedo and Stuttgart, Julio did his graduate studies at the MPI for Dynamics of Complex Technical Systems, obtaining his PhD from the University of Magdeburg. He is currently a postdoc at Harvard Medical School and MIT. His group will work on computational analysis of information transfer in signalling networks.



Administrative Assistant **Louise Carling** is the new contact for information about the General Training and Development Programme. Originally from the UK, she comes to EMBL from Basel, where she worked as Administrative Assistant/Conference Organiser for the Bank of International Settlements.

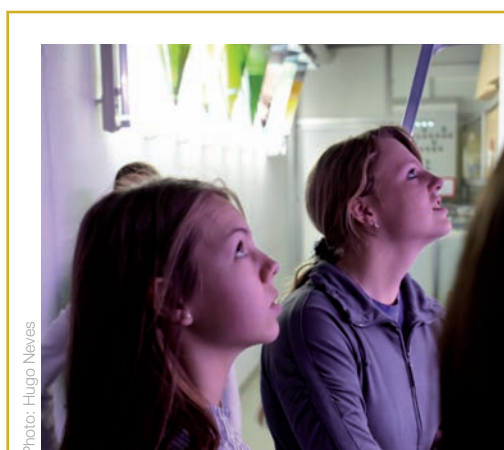


Photo: Hugo Neves

Girl power

EMBL Heidelberg was host to 24 young visitors on Girls' Day – rather a misnomer now as 7 of them were boys – on 22 April. The pupils, who ranged in age from 11 to 15, shadowed staff in labs, the canteen, Photolab, the Kinderhaus and even the ISG. The event, part of a European-wide initiative with the original aim of giving girls a taste of what are thought to be traditionally 'male' jobs, was organised by OIPA, who would like to thank everyone who hosted a young visitor.

awards&honours

Head of EMBL Monterotondo **Nadia Rosenthal** has been awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa by the Université Pierre et Marie Curie at the Sorbonne in Paris. This mark of honorary distinction has been awarded to 130 recipients since its inception in 1975.

Yan Nie, a predoc in EMBL Grenoble's Berger group, has been awarded the Chinese Government Award for Outstanding Students Abroad for his thesis. Yan will receive the prize in a ceremony at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Paris on 4 June. Of 35,000 Chinese studying in France, Yan is the only life sciences student to receive this award.

On 17 May EMBL DG **Iain Mattaj** received the City of Florence Award in Molecular Sciences from the Società Chimica Italiana at a ceremony at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, Italy, for his contributions to biomedical science.

Chen Li, a Software Engineer in the EBI's Rebholz-Schuhmann group, has been awarded a University of Cambridge International Scholarship as one of the best overseas PhD applicants this year. His research will use Natural Language Processing, statistics and text mining to look for causative effects of recorded gene-disease associations.

Jordi Xiol from the Pillai group at EMBL Grenoble got the best PhD student talk award at the 5th Microsymposium on Small RNAs at IMBA, Vienna, in May. He won a free trip to The EMBO Meeting 2010 for his presentation about the novel RNA helicase Mov10L.