

“New Horizons for Phage Antibody Display Technology”, University of Hull, April 11–13, 2000

The idea of expressing antibody fragments as fusion proteins on the surface of filamentous phage was first reported in *Nature* in 1990 by McCafferty and colleagues. At this early stage, the drive for the development of phage technology came principally from immunologists and protein engineers who had encountered problems with the use of animal derived mAb for in vivo immunotherapy and the targeting of molecules conserved between species. As a result, much of the early work focussed on identifying phage antibodies that could be used for the treatment of tumours. However, by 1993 this technology was being used more widely, as the full potential of the technology was being realised in several reviews. The two key factors that make phage antibodies unique are; 1) that the target molecules do not have to be immunogenic, and 2) the ease in which antibody fragments can be selected and subsequently engineered to form complete mAb or other derivatives. As the methodology for producing phage antibody display libraries has become standardised the applications of the technology have increased. However, as is clear from much of the work presented in this volume one of the main challenges is now to translate the basic scientific discoveries into clinically

useful diagnostic or immunotherapeutic reagents.

The aim of the meeting held at The University of Hull was to bring together a diverse group of researchers who are currently using phage antibody libraries in many different applications with those who have an interest in exploiting this technology themselves in other innovative applications. Thank you to all the contributors for making the conference a success. We hope that all the delegates enjoyed the meeting as much as we did and gained new insights, and possibly new collaborators for further work.

The editors would like to acknowledge particularly all the hard work of Rhonda Green, in both the organisation of the meeting and co-ordinating the publication of this supplement. Her efforts and enthusiasm contributed, in no small part, to the success of the meeting. We must also acknowledge the help of the Home Office (UK Government) in funding some of the research within our laboratory, and for part-funding the meeting.

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