

We were very pleased to host the annual Molecular Microbial Ecology Group Meeting (MMEG21) on the Norwich Research Park on 1-2nd December 2021. There was a fantastic response from the microbial ecology community in the UK who were clearly hoping for a long-awaited face-to-face meeting. The MMEG is a forum for early career researchers to present their research findings in a friendly and supportive environment and was long-awaited since postponement of the meeting from 2020. MMEG2021 was organised by Laura Lehtovirta-Morley (University of East Anglia), assisted by Matt Hutchings (John Innes Centre), Colin Murrell (UEA) and with excellent support from a number of people from their research teams and the fantastic staff at the John Innes Centre Conference Centre. We had 160 registrants, which is almost double the average for an MMEG meeting in recent years, and attendees from over 20 different universities and research institutes across the UK enjoyed two days of fantastic science at the JIC Conference Centre covering a wide variety of topics in microbial ecology, environmental microbiology and molecular microbiology. Early career researchers presented 35 short talks and flash talks and there were also 21 excellent poster presentations. The Keynote Speaker for MMEG2021 was Dr Kirsten Bos, Research Group Leader for Molecular Palaeopathology at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena Germany, who gave a fascinating talk entitled “New stories from old bones: genomic reconstructions of ancient pathogens”. Thanks Kirsten for making the journey during the COVID pandemic! Much appreciated. Attendees also enjoyed a fantastic symposium dinner at Namaste Village and Revado’s Kitchen, excellent vegetarian Indian restaurants in Norwich, which gave everyone a great opportunity to catch up and network after the best part of two years without a face-to-face conference.

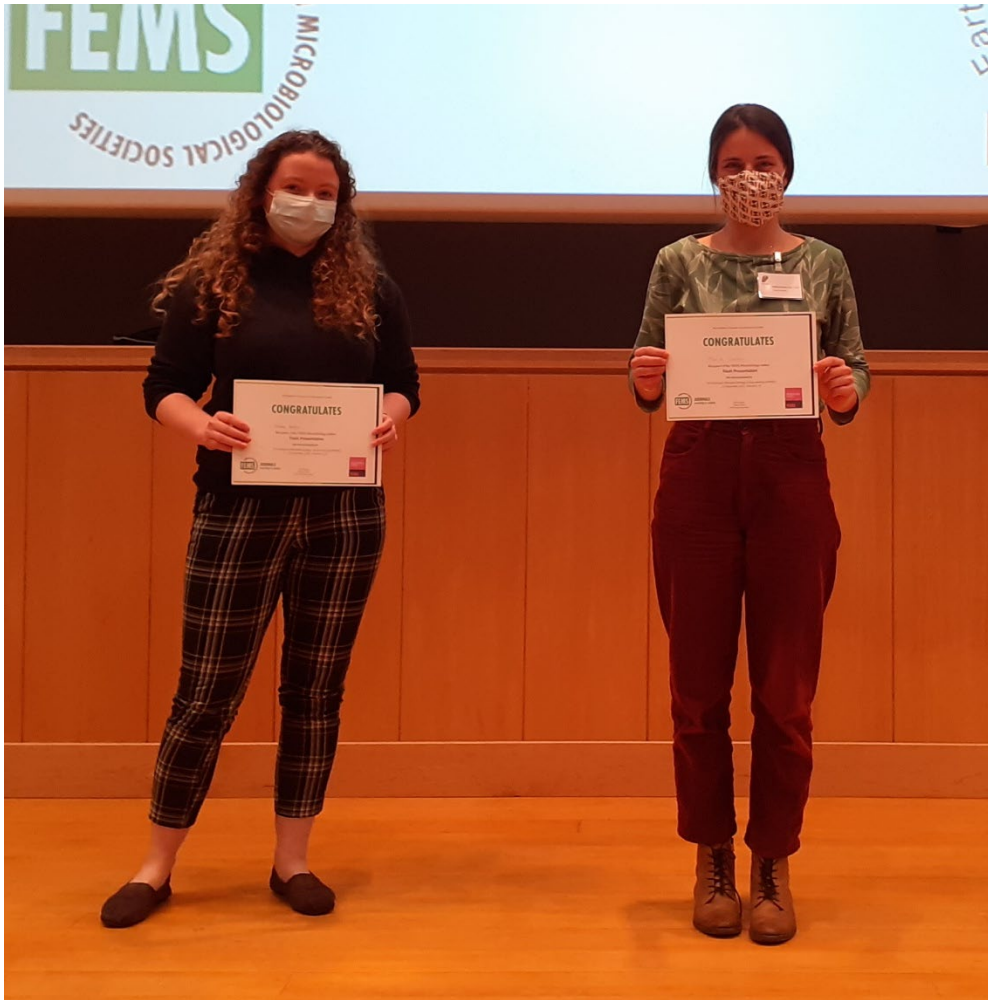
We were very grateful for sponsorship from ISME, the Microbiology Society, Environmental Microbiome, FEMS, the Astrobiology Society of Britain and the Earth and Life Systems Alliance of the Norwich Research Park which enabled us to keep registration costs for the meeting, support attendance of our keynote speaker Kirsten Bos and provide prizes for the best talks and posters. ISME Ambassador James McDonald gave a five-minute presentation about the benefits of ISME membership, publishing in the ISME Journal and ISME Communications, and attending the upcoming ISME 18 conference in Lausanne in 2022. All of the presentations throughout MMEG2021 were of an extremely high standard and so it was difficult to single out the very best of these, making it a tough job for the panel judging them. Prize winners for the best talks were Nello Gregori (University of Warwick), Barbora Oudova (University of East Anglia) and Rebecca Ansorge (Quadrum Institute, Norwich). Flash presentation prize winners were Ainsley Beaton (John Innes Centre) and Marine Cambon (Bangor University). Poster prizes were awarded to Andrew Murphy (University of Warwick), Zoe Dietrich (University of Cambridge) and Alejandra Ordonez (Bangor University). Congratulations to you all.

For those wishing to catch up on all of the action during MMEG 2021, please check out the posts on the conference Twitter feed (~MMEG21): [mmeg2021 - Twitter Search / Twitter](#)

Finally, we are pleased to announce that Katherine Duncan and John Moreau will host MMEG2022 in Glasgow on 1-2nd December 2022. Thanks for picking up the baton that is MMEG and we look forward to seeing you all towards the end of 2022.



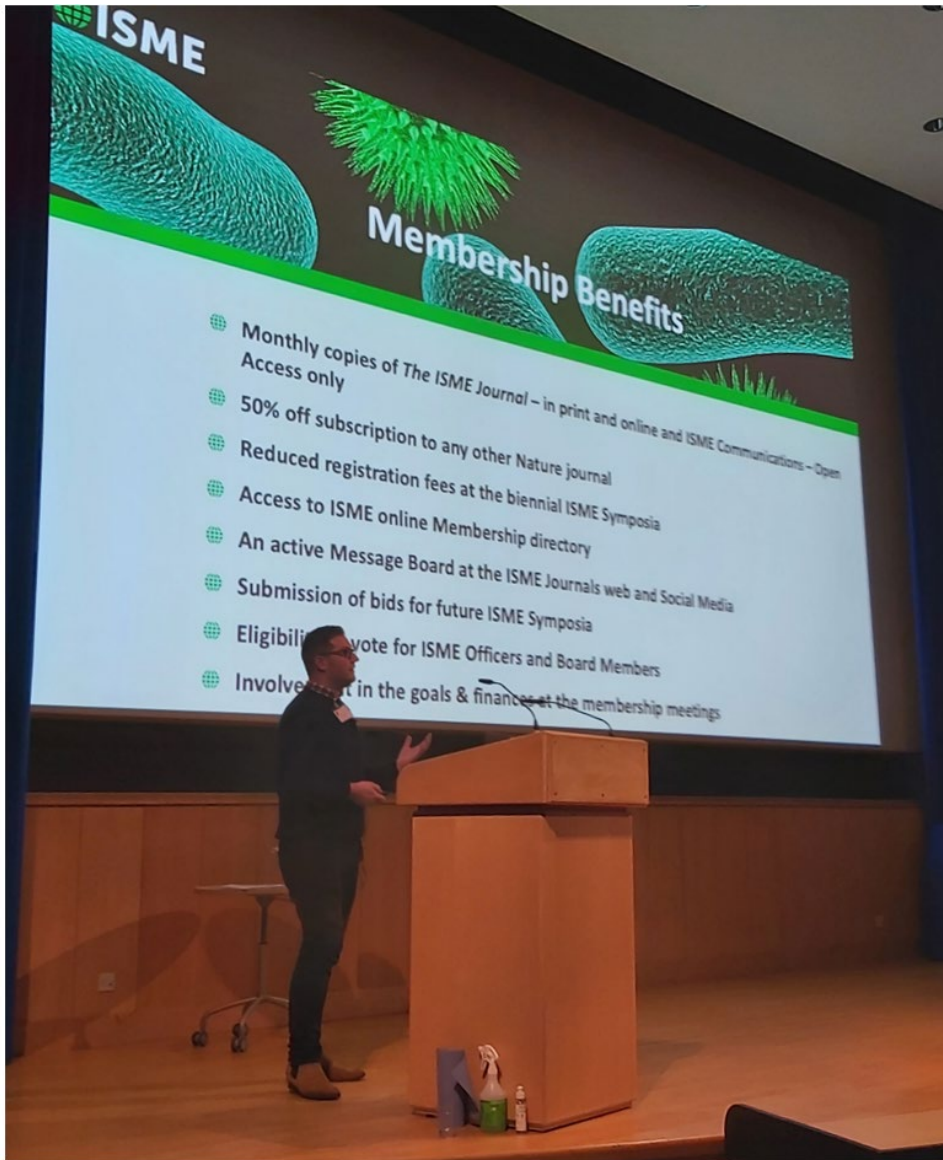
MMEG2021 talk prize winners (from left to right): Barbora Oudova, Nello Gregori and Rebecca Ansonge



MMEG2021 winners for flash presentations: Ainsley Beaton (left) and Marine Cambon (right)



MMEG2021 poster prize winners (from left to right): Alejandra Ordonez, Andrew Murphy and Zoe Dietrich



ISME Ambassador James McDonald addressing the MMEG2021 delegates