

# Laura Benson



## Research Assistant



### **What did you study?**

Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology A-levels, with AS Further Mathematics.

BSc in Biochemistry and MRes in Biological Science, both at the University of Portsmouth.

### **What is your research area?**

Epigenetics: this is any added 'tag' to the DNA that helps to control how it is expressed, but without changing the DNA itself. These are reversible and are affected by many things, which makes it very interesting to study.

### **What does your job involve?**

As a research assistant, my job involves helping others with their lab work and working on my own projects. My job also includes being a lab manager where I get to help organise the things we need in our lab.

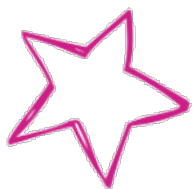
### **What are your wider interests?**

Reading, hiking, crochet and organising.

### **Favourite science fact:**

There are more trees on Earth than stars in our galaxy.





# Christopher Todd



## Postdoctoral Research Scientist



### **What did you study?**

International Baccalaureate: Maths (H), Biology (H), Chemistry (H), Psychology (S), English (S), German (S).

BSc in Biology (with a year in Europe) – University of York.

PhD in Genetics – Queen Mary University of London.

### **What is your research area?**

I study epigenetics in human embryo development, looking at how the DNA of stem cells is controlled in the embryo to grow healthy tissues such as the brain during early development.

### **What does your job involve?**

I design and perform experiments using stem cells, develop new technologies, read about new scientific discoveries, present my research at conferences, and discuss science with researchers from all around the world.

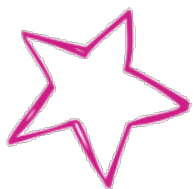
### **Wider interests:**

Baking, video games and fencing.

### **Favourite science joke:**

What do scientists use their mobile phones for in the lab? To take Cell-fies!





# Paula Kokko-Gonzales



## Sequencing Facility Manager



### **What did you study?**

At school: Finnish, Swedish, English, Maths, Chemistry and Biology.

MSc in Environmental Sciences at University of Kuopio, Finland.

MSc in Microbiology (Food sciences) at University of Helsinki, Finland.

### **What is your research area?**

I work with sequencing, which is reading the base composition of DNA using scientific instruments. We sequence DNA for Babraham Institute researchers and external companies.

### **What does your job involve?**

Managing the sequencing lab means that I do a lot of organising and planning to ensure that all processes function well. I also do experiments and talk to our customers.

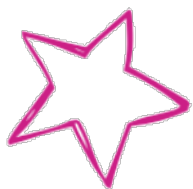
### **Wider interests:**

Trying new cooking recipes and going for walks.

### **Favourite science joke:**

What did the science book say to the math book?  
You've got problems!





# Ntombizodwa Makuyana



## PhD Student



### **What did you study?**

A-levels in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics.

Medicinal biochemistry, Arizona State University.

Now studying for a PhD at the Babraham Institute.

### **What is your research area?**

I study immunology – how the body fights infections. Currently, I am working on minimising the damage to the lungs that can happen during a viral infection such as flu.

### **What does your job involve?**

Lots of experiments, analysing data, and reading – I try to read at least one scientific paper per day. There's also admin work, such as answering emails. It's important to plan my time to keep on schedule every day.

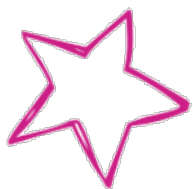
### **Wider interests:**

Cooking, dancing, singing and watching football.

### **Favourite science joke:**

Never trust an atom – they make up everything!





# Maria A. Christophorou



## Epigenetics Group Leader



### **What did you study?**

At school I was in the Sciences division (equivalent of A-level Physics, Maths, Chemistry, Biology and Modern Greek).

BSc in Biology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

PhD in Biomedical Sciences, University of California, San Francisco.

### **What is your research area?**

My group studies how the proteins that control gene expression (whether genes are "switched on" or "switched off") are themselves controlled by changes in the cellular environment.

### **What does your job involve?**

Organising projects, training and helping my team do research, presenting and discussing our work, securing funding, experimenting, learning.

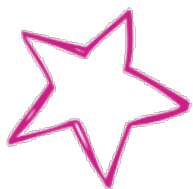
### **Wider interests:**

Theatre, dance, world politics and being a mum. I'd love to fly aeroplanes one day.

### **Favourite science joke:**

"Be part of the solution, not the precipitate!"





# Chris Hall



## Senior Flow Cytometry Tech Specialist



### What did you study?

A-levels in Biology, Business and Physics.

BSc in Applied Biology, University of Newcastle.

MSc in Cancer Immunotherapy, University of Nottingham.

### What is your research area?

Analysing single cells quickly using a machine called a flow cytometer. This machine uses lasers to look at and to sort cells at up to 45,000 cells per second.

### What does your job involve?

Helping other scientists do their work by operating flow cytometers, designing experiments, and analysing data using computers (both point and click and programming using R and Python).

### Wider interests:

Running, cycling, and eating Cadbury's Creme Eggs (I once ate 24 in one hour).

### Favourite science fact:

Light is both a wave and a particle!





# Bobbie Claxton



## Science and Director's Office Administrator



### **What did you study?**

At Sixth Form I studied Health, Social Care & Early Years and Maths.

I didn't have any desire to go to University so I applied for a job in the Nursery based at the Institute after finishing Sixth Form. I worked there for six happy years before moving into my current role.

### **What does your job involve?**

It is difficult to describe how a typical day would look as the tasks that I have to complete vary day-to-day. Before I start work, I always take my Black Labrador Ruby out for a walk, this sets me up a treat! I then log in and will read, monitor and respond to emails; organise and run seminars/events; schedule, prepare papers and minute meetings; help with diary management; assist colleagues with queries; and anything else in-between.

### **Wider interests:**

Cooking/baking, trying new restaurants, watching Tottenham Hotspur and spending time outdoors.

### **Favourite science fact:**

Giraffes (my favourite animal) have huge hearts, around 11 kilograms! It needs to be extra powerful to pump 60 litres of blood all the way up that long neck. What's not to love?





# Fergus Powell



## School Engagement Officer



### **What did you study?**

For A-level, I took Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Further Maths.

BA in Natural Sciences, University of Cambridge.

MSc in Science Communication, University of Manchester.

### **What is your research area?**

I don't do research! Instead, it's my job to support our scientists in sharing their knowledge and passion for research with school audiences.

### **What does your job involve?**

I organise and facilitate a range of events and activities, including practical workshops, talks and even online games. I also manage the Public Engagement blog and internal bulletin. It's very variable and I get to meet and work with lots of different people.

### **Wider interests:**

Acting, running, board games and quizzes.

### **Favourite science joke:**

Pavlov is in the pub with some other scientists. The bartender rings the bell for last orders. Pavlov jumps up and cries: "I need to feed my dogs!"

