

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE DAY

Biomedical Science Day takes place on July 19 and the IBMS is calling on its members to join this celebration of the profession #AtTheHeartOfHealthcare, and the incredible hard work and dedication of biomedical scientists.

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, Biomedical Science Day 2018 is expected to be bigger and better, shining an even brighter spotlight on contributions and achievements, which all too often go unacknowledged outside the laboratory.

Taking place on July 19, the birthdate of IBMS founder Albert Norman, it takes the theme "at the heart of healthcare", focusing on the role biomedical scientists play in the healthcare journey. From the newborn heel prick blood test, to the monitoring and treatment of diseases

and infections, their work behind the laboratory doors is the foundation on which clinicians base their diagnoses and plan treatment.

Laboratories across the UK and beyond will be marking the occasion, by hosting lab tours, putting up promotional displays, reaching out to schools, taking part in competitions and organising family fun days.

Get involved

And the IBMS is making it as easy as possible to get involved. Ideas and information can be found at biomedicalscienceday.com, including

templates for press releases and invitations, and members can order free promotional materials.

The IBMS is also supporting Harvey's Gang this year. To celebrate NHS 70 they are aiming for at least 70 hospitals to take part in the initiative, so check the website for more information on how to connect with this charity which helps hospital labs provide tours for poorly children.

Following the success of last year's lab selfie photo competition, which brought in more than 300 submissions, the IBMS is also organising more fun competitions this year.

It is looking for the best Biomedical Science Day themed cakes, biscuits, or other baked creations in the biomedical bake-off competition, and photos demonstrating how members are "at the heart of healthcare", with prizes across six different categories. For details of how to enter, visit the IBMS website.

Don't forget to contact the IBMS on the

day via social media, using the hashtags #AtTheHeartOfHealthcare or #BiomedicalScienceDay2018 to help promote your events and spread the word about the vital work you do.

Last year, IBMS social media posts were seen by 166,198 people on the day – and this year the aim is to reach many more.

Engage with people

Taking part is well worth the effort, as one of last year's participants attests. Ellen Whiteside is a biomedical scientist based at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, which took part in the first Biomedical Science Day.

Staff organised an information stand in the main hospital entrance, with leaflets to take away and a quiz for children, which attracted huge interest from the general public and hospital staff too.

She says: "We were able to engage with people really well – most people didn't know what we did or that we even existed."

She says their efforts are paying off; helping to generate a "lot more interest in what we do", and that has been built on with further engagement activities through the year.

"It is massively worth doing. Anything that brings us out of the shadows and brings people together can only be positive. It helps people understand what

OPENING THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION

Biomedical Science Day casts light on the profession

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCEDAY.COM



“It’s making them aware of who we are, what we do, and the role we play in their healthcare”

we do – especially patients; it is a lot less scary for them when they can understand the processes involved.”

Following is a taste of some of the imaginative and impactful events being organised by biomedical scientists across the UK this year.

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

‘LIGHTING THE FLAME OF CURIOSITY’

Rebecca Wright, a Lecturer in the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, says she and her fellow members of the Aberdeen IBMS committee want to “really embrace the day”.

They are organising a public engagement event on July 21 at the Aberdeen Science Centre, with support from some of the students at the university and staff at NHS Grampian. Pitching at the nine- to 11-year-old age range, their aim is to open their eyes to the role of the biomedical scientist in healthcare and spark an interest in the subject.

“We felt that, with public engagement for STEM subjects, the earlier the better – we don’t think you’re ever too young to get involved,” says Rebecca. “It’s really important that we get the message out there that this is a really interesting and dynamic career pathway.”

Stalls representing the clinical disciplines - haematology and blood transfusions, microbiology, pathology, biochemistry, and genetics – will be staffed by HCPC-registered biomedical scientists, who will talk about their work. And children will be invited to try some hands-on activities including a blood typing exercise, and preparing blood

smears with bovine blood to look at through a microscope.

“Hopefully they will go away with a bit more of an understanding about the role of the biomedical scientist, or a new fact about the human body, or recognition of biomedical science as a career option,” adds Rebecca. “It exposes them at a young age to a really positive experience, which will hopefully light the flame of their curiosity and interest within the subject.”

WATFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL

JOINING HARVEY’S GANG

One of the latest laboratories to launch Harvey’s Gang tours is at Watford General Hospital.

Ben Sheath, Transfusion Practitioner, Haematology, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, spearheaded the initiative after reading about the charity and its Co-Founder Malcolm Robinson in *The Biomedical Scientist*. The first tour for a five-year-old leukaemia patient went ahead in April, followed by another in June, and a third is planned for this month (July).

“It’s something I’d really wanted to do but wasn’t sure how to go about it,” says Ben. “It’s so easy to become so focused on numbers and turn-around times that you lose sight of the fact that there is a patient at the end of it. You can lose that context, which is so important.”

The idea came together after he moved roles in December last year, becoming a transfusion practitioner. Stepping out of the lab, seeing patients and working with clinicians, he witnessed the huge gap in understanding between what he’d imagined they were aware of, and what they actually understood about the work of the laboratory.

“It’s down to communication – no one gets to see what the other person does,” he says. “This is a great opportunity to experience and understand it – not just for the children, but for staff as well.”

He says feedback from all sides has been really positive, with parents able to understand the waiting times they face so often, and staff getting a boost from the positive coverage in internal newsletters and the local press.

“The work is something that happens behind closed doors,” says Ben. “It’s taken for granted, and staff can feel like they are not cared about – so it’s good to get that exposure, show the lab off. It really helps bring the team together.”

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

ILLUMINATING ‘THE ROLE WE PLAY IN THEIR HEALTHCARE’

Registered biomedical scientist Carol D’Souza, a Principle Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Westminster, is hosting a tour of the university laboratories for a small group of patients and relatives of patients.

The idea grew out of a conversation with two patients, one of whom has sickle cell disease, the other thalassemia, whom she routinely invites to speak about their experience to undergraduate students.

“I’ve been doing that for the past five or six years and it has always been positively received by the students,” she says. “Just last year I was talking to them afterwards and they told me that they didn’t know what happened to their samples. By listening in to the lecture they had got to know more about the process, but no one

had ever talked them through what happened to a sample.”

Carol says that during the visit she will put a blood sample through the haematology analyser, explain the process and the results, and look at blood smears under the microscope to compare normal cells with haematological abnormalities.

Working with biochemistry and microbiology colleagues, the group will also experience biochemistry analytical processes and see what organisms they can grow from hand imprints in agar.

“They have their blood taken and they know about the results – but they don’t know how the results are achieved – what happens, who does it and where,” adds Carol. “It’s making them aware of who we are, what we do, and the role we play in their healthcare.”

VICTORIA HOSPITAL

BREAKING DOWN SILOS

Naideen Forrest, a Specialist Biomedical Scientist based at Victoria Hospital in Fife,

is helping to organise an awareness-raising fun day at the hospital entrance, with a host of activities inside and out.

She says: “For a long time, labs have gone unseen and unsung, which can be demoralising. This is a unique opportunity for us to promote what we do and give some insight into what goes on behind the scenes.”

The team is organising activities for children including inoculating plates using safe alternatives like jelly and yoghurt, a photo booth, with props to help them look like biomedical scientists, and an augmented reality device, which will allow children to scan and “see inside” each other’s bodies.

There will also be posters detailing the work of the labs, information and displays covering topics such as antibiotic resistance, as well as plenty of opportunities to ask questions. Video screens will play virtual laboratory tours, and attendees will be able to book a physical tour on the day as well.

Naideen says the aim is to engage not only children, but crucially to help “the general public and our peers learn about our profession”.

She continues: “The NHS is a priceless treasure celebrating its 70th birthday and we are a valuable asset in this service. We want to promote biomedical science and the crucial role we play in a unique and fun way, not just for the general public, but also our peers.

“We will also take the opportunity to break down the silo working within which many professions in the NHS find themselves operating. We hope this is a great success for all participating on the day, and that July 19 2018 will be a day to say ‘I was there and I am proud to say I am a biomedical scientist.’”

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE DAY 2017 IN NUMBERS



Last year was the first ever Biomedical Science Day



More than 300 people sent in lab selfies



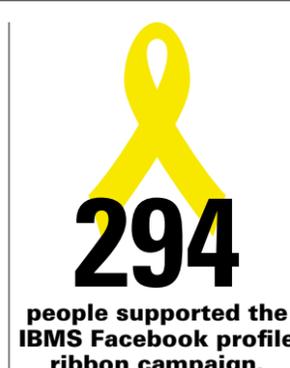
166,198 people saw IBMS social media posts on the day



The Institute’s dedicated website page attracted 834 visits.



The IBMS sent out 49 Albert Norman birthday cards to members born on 19 July.



294 people supported the IBMS Facebook profile ribbon campaign.