Welcome

2015 has been my first full year as Chair of Trustees of the Daphne Jackson Trust. Not surprisingly, it has proved to be fast moving, but above all, immensely enjoyable and satisfying.

The Daphne Jackson Trust changes, enables, and empowers the lives of returners to STEM, reinvigorating the UK research base through reintroducing talent, knowledge, and skills back into the workplace. In today’s ever-changing, complex, and competitive world, we look to our scientists and engineers to address the great challenges of our time.

The Trust is critical in nurturing a diversity of talent that would otherwise be lost to UK science and the wider scientific world. During the last year, the Trust passed the milestone of its 300th awarded Fellowship and the number of new Fellowships awarded hit a record high of 26.

One of the pleasures of being Chair of Trustees is the opportunity to thank all those people who make the Trust’s work such a success. We have welcomed new sponsors and host organisations, as well as a number of new Trustees. The Trust benefits from robust and effective governance and focused strategic direction from our Board. New Trustees who joined us during the last year are Sue Angulatta, Director of the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre, The University of Manchester; and Lesley-Ann Davison, Vice-Principal, Queen Mary University of London; and Karen Hassell, Senior Associate Dean, of Academic Affairs, California North State University.

I had the pleasure of attending my first Daphne Jackson Trust Research Conference in October and was delighted to meet so many of our current and former Fellows, along with supervisors and sponsors. The day was a huge success and I would encourage you to attend the next conference, which will take place in 2017. Last but not least, I thank Katie and the team for their commitment, energy, resourcefulness, and sheer hard work.

The Trustees, all of our sponsors, and staff.

In this years
Annual Review...

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The Daphne Jackson Trust in 2015

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Daphne Jackson Trust’s 2015 Annual Review. 2015 was an exciting and packed year for the Daphne Jackson Trust. I will give you a flavour of what we achieved during the year in this introduction but do read on through to understand what a tremendous difference we make to the lives of the researchers we support.

The third Daphne Jackson Trust Research Conference was held at the Welcome Collection, London, in October and over 140 delegates attended. The Conference was an opportunity to showcase the work of the Trust, with more than 60 current and former Daphne Jackson Fellows attending the event, and 41 presenting either a poster or oral presentation. The conference gave sponsors, and those interested in sponsoring, a chance to interact with our Fellows, chat to staff and Trustees, and get a real feel for the benefits of working with us – there is nothing like meeting a Fellow in person to gain a sense of the difference the Trust makes and the high standards of research we support.

Leading the Way for Returners, the report of the survey of former Daphne Jackson Fellows undertaken during 2015, was launched at the conference. The survey provided a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data on post-fellowship career pathways, progression, and the contribution of the Trust to the wider UK research base. It underlined the overwhelming success and impact that Daphne Jackson Fellowships have had on researchers who are returning to the workplace following a career break taken for family, caring, or health reasons.

The survey highlighted that over 90% of Daphne Jackson Fellows continue working in STEM for the majority of their career post-Fellowship, with over 70% remaining in research-based roles for two years post-Fellowship, and 57% for up to five years post-Fellowship. In addition to the survey report, we produced a one page infographic, which gives the key statistics in a very accessible way. We were delighted with the overwhelmingly positive results about how the Daphne Jackson Fellowship restarted and improved Fellows’ careers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Teresa Anderson, former Head of School of Science, Engineering, and Computing, Kingston University and Emeritus Professor, University of Oxford; Christopher Whitehead, former Head of School of Chemistry, The University of Manchester; and Lesley-Ann Davison, Vice-Principal, Queen Mary University of London; Stephen Newstead, Emeritus Professor, Plymouth University; Edith Sim, former Dean of Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Computing, The University of Manchester; and the team for their commitment, energy, resourcefulness, and sheer hard work.

The Trust’s achievements are a sterling example of the power of teamwork and collaboration – we would not be the success we are without the contributions of all of our Trustees, partners, sponsors, and staff.

We awarded 26 new Fellowships in 2015, the highest number since Professor Daphne Jackson awarded the first Fellowship in 1986. Going forward into next year, 2016 is the 30th anniversary of Fellowships being awarded and we will be celebrating this milestone with a number of events and initiatives. These are likely to include celebratory events and a series of podcasts by Fellows.

2016 promises to be another great year for the Daphne Jackson Trust and I look forward to working with our current and future sponsors, partners, and Fellows as we continue to build on the successes of 2015.

Dr Katie Perry, Chief Executive, Daphne Jackson Trust
The Fellowship application process

The Daphne Jackson Fellowship application process is unique. Both rigorous and developmental, it supports individuals from the point of enquiry all the way through to the award of the Fellowship.

Dr Elizabeth Dickinson (ED), who recently completed the application process for a Daphne Jackson Fellowship at the University of York (co-sponsored by the Royal Society of Chemistry and BBSRC), and her Fellowship Advisor, Dr Katherine Rooke (KR), describe their experiences of the application process.

FINDING OUT ABOUT THE TRUST

I completed my PhD and a fixed-term post-doctoral research post at the University of Leeds. My husband and I were keen to start a family so at the end of my contract I left research and became a stay at home mum giving birth to two sons (in 2010 and 2012). I had always hoped to return and two years later when my children were at school and I had some free time, I was assigned to be Elizabeth’s Fellowship Advisor, so contacted her to arrange a time for a phone interview. In addition to confirming that she met our eligibility criteria, the interview was a chance to discuss her past achievements, goals and future plans, starting her on the process of getting reacquainted with research culture and the current UK research environment.

“I had always hoped to return to research after having my children, but didn’t know how to go about it and was nervous about whether I even could do it.”

- Dr Elizabeth Dickinson

ED

A dedicated Fellowship Advisor provides ongoing tailored advice on the programme of work and retraining, taking into account the individual’s personal circumstances, break(s) from research and career aspirations. The Fellowship Advisor works with the applicant to rebuild self-confidence, preparing them for a successful Fellowship and return to research.

The post-Fellowship evaluation survey conducted during 2015 was designed to collect information from former Fellows to show their career pathways after completing their Fellowship. We were delighted that the survey results highlighted an exceptionally good success rate that we feel is due to the tailored support offered to Fellows in the application process. We are also delighted that so many of our former Fellows are happy to remain in contact with us and offer support to new Fellows coming through the pipeline.

A new Fellowship Advisor, Dr Katherine Rooke (KR), describes the Fellowship application process for a Daphne Jackson Fellowship.

Finding out about the Trust

Dr Elizabeth Dickinson recently completed the application process for a Daphne Jackson Fellowship at the University of York (co-sponsored by the Royal Society of Chemistry and BBSRC). This was too good an opportunity to miss and I contacted Dr Julie Wilson at the University of York and after a meeting and encouraging conversation she submitted my application forms to the Trust in May 2015. At that point I had been away from research for six years.

“I was so nervous about my phone interview – I had so much riding on this being successful – but Katherine put me at ease and made me feel comfortable in openly discussing my hopes and concerns. I was ecstatic when I got the invitation to enter the application process and develop a proposal – but, as I was in a doctor’s waiting room, I had to restrict myself to sitting grinning rather than screaming aloud and jumping for joy!”

Dr Katherine Rooke

Funding

The Daphne Jackson Trust secures sponsorship for a successful Fellowship and prepares the applicant for a rewarding career break(s) from research and career aspirations. The Fellowship Advisor provides ongoing tailored advice on the programme of work and retraining, taking into account the individual’s personal circumstances, break(s) from research and career aspirations. The Fellowship Advisor works with the applicant to rebuild self-confidence, preparing them for a successful Fellowship and return to research.

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Dr Katherine Rooke

Funding
DEVELOPING THE PROPOSAL

At the start, I wrote relatively short draft proposals and then revised them. I really enjoyed discovering new ideas in writing the proposal. I was always keen to progress the proposal before I felt it was at the right stage.

In October 2015, Elizabeth had a face-to-face interview with the Trust’s team of Fellowship Advisors. Although it was already good, we gave feedback on how to strengthen the proposal even further in preparation for being sent for peer review and then to the Awards Assessment Panel.

Despite my initial fears about attending an interview, I quickly realised that it was more of a ‘discussion’. Hearing positive comments on my proposal was hugely reassuring and I could see how the suggested changes would improve my proposal (and therefore, ultimately, my Fellowship). For me, the interview really reinforced how desperately I wanted a Fellowship.

FINALISING THE APPLICATION

Elizabeth worked with her supervisor to make the final tweaks to the proposal. I then sent it out to two peer reviewers for their comments on the novelty and feasibility of the project taking account of the time available for the project and the applicant’s experience. Elizabeth then had the opportunity to respond and answer questions.

I was happy to receive overwhelmingly positive comments from the reviewers and then from my supervisor on the response that I had written. By now I was really proud of the application that I had put together and couldn’t wait to get started — if only the Awards Assessment Panel made the award!

Honeybee health linked to diet

Dr Latha Vellaniparambil began her Daphne Jackson Fellowship at The University of Manchester in November 2015, co-sponsored by the BBSRC and NERC.

Latha worked as a botanist in India analysing the genetics of wild species of rice. Her husband had to frequently relocate for his job, including to and within the UK, so Latha took a break from her career to concentrate on their children. Latha’s dedication to research persisted, and through enquiries about voluntary work to rebuild her scientific skills, she learned about Daphne Jackson Fellowships.

Plant pollination is important for survival of life on the planet. Bees are an important pollinator of plants, however bee populations have declined recently. In response to this decline, urban beekeeping is increasing and may help improve plant survival. Urban areas are also interesting because the diversity of plants in urban gardens might benefit bees’ health.

During her Fellowship with Dr Jennifer Rowntree and Professor Richard Preziosi, Latha will analyse and compare honey samples and bees from urban and rural beekeepers to identify which plants bees visited and determine bees’ health status. This will reveal links between diet and the health of the bees.

Latha has forged links with the Manchester District Beekeepers Association to arrange collection of honey and bees from 75 different beekeepers. Beekeepers have shown great interest in her work to learn more about their bees’ health.

As Latha settles into her Fellowship, her supervisors and other lab members have been very supportive. Working part-time helps her to balance family commitments and, after a 10-year break, ease back into research culture.

“Every Fellow has different circumstances around their career break and need to return, but it is always interesting seeing their journey and how the application process empowers them to take ownership of their project. Throughout Elizabeth’s Fellowship, I will continue as her advisor to offer support where required.”

Dr Katherine Rooke

Focusing on Fellows

Daphne Jackson Fellowships support individuals to return to research in all areas of science, technology, engineering, and maths. This section focuses on just a few of the many achievements of our Fellows during the year.
FELLOWSHIPS

The Daphne Jackson Trust Research Conference 2015

Maximising potential

The air buzzed with excited conversation at our third research conference on 15th October 2015. Inspiring discussions and the launch of our former Fellows’ survey results, accompanied oral and poster presentations showing the range and talent of our Fellows.

The panel discussion that opened the conference – “Returning to STEM – How do we maximise potential?” set the tone for the day – one of positivity and action. Professor Julie Williams, CBE, Chief Scientific Advisor for Wales, joined the Daphne Jackson Trust’s Professor Teresa Anderson, MBE, and Dr Kate Perry for the discussion, chaired by our patron Vivienne Parry, CBE.

The conference is a powerful experience for those attending; it makes our mission – to realise the potential of scientists and engineers returning to research following a career break – real for delegates. Our Trustees and supporters gain an opportunity to see the difference the Trust makes to people’s lives and that our Fellows’ research is of an inspiringly high standard, despite the challenges connected with a career break.

Fellows presented their work as talks or posters, and prizes were awarded for the highest quality presentations. Many thanks to our prize judges, who confided that it was a difficult task choosing who to award as the quality of the research and presentations was of a very high standard. Thanks also to our patron Maggie Philbin, who presented the prizes.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Eight Fellows delivered oral presentations covering a range of topics including developmental dyslexia, applying Google data search algorithms to understand ecosystems, and analysis of the human genome. Judges awarded three prizes for oral presentations:

Overall prize for oral presentations:
Dr Deborah Mitcheson (at the University of Leicester, co-sponsored by the University of Leicester and the EPSRC) for her work on developing a tool to disrupt developmental processes in the malaria parasite in the fight against malaria.

Highly commended: Dr Margaret O’Hara’s work (at the University of Birmingham, co-sponsored by the University of Birmingham and EPSRC) on developing more accurate techniques to diagnose liver disease.

Special merit: Dr Anita Dawes (at The Open University, co-sponsored by The Open University and STFC) who spoke about the chemistry of ice and dust particles in space that hold clues to star formation.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Thirty-three Fellows presented posters.

Overall prize for poster presentations:
Dr Gretel Finch (hosted and sponsored by University of York) was the overall winner through her clear and interesting poster on the factors that affect maternal eating behaviour.

Highly commended:
Dr Brendan Garrett (at the University of York, sponsored by Prostate Cancer UK) was the overall winner through her clear and interesting poster on the factors that affect maternal eating behaviour.

Dr Amanda Noble (at the University of York, sponsored by Prostate Cancer UK) was the overall winner through her clear and interesting poster on the factors that affect maternal eating behaviour.

Dr Emma Pilgrim (at the University of Exeter, sponsored by EPSRC) was the overall winner through her clear and interesting poster on the factors that affect maternal eating behaviour.

Maggie Philbin presenting to Dr Brendan Garrett for his highly commended poster.

Maggie Philbin presenting Dr Gretel Finch with the overall prize for her poster on the factors that affect maternal eating behaviour.

Maggie Philbin presenting Dr Dr Amanda Noble an award for best poster.

Panel discussion (L to R): Vivienne Parry, Professor Julie Williams, Dr Kate Perry.

Fellows presenting their research to the conference.

The event was held at the Wellcome Collection and generously sponsored by the Wellcome Trust, Institute of Physics, Biotechnology Biological Sciences Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, Medical Research Council, Natural Environment Research Council and Science and Technology Facilities Council.

“I am delighted to have been able to be at the conference today and it has been excellent to meet Fellows. As a new Trustee I had learnt lots about the Trust but actually meeting the Fellows has been like putting the final piece of the jigsaw in place and I can fully appreciate the benefit of the Fellowships.”

Professor Christopher Whitehead, Trustee
Optical fibres and nanomaterials for detecting hazardous gases

Dr Divya Tiwari completed her Daphne Jackson Fellowship, sponsored by the Royal Academy of Engineering, in July 2015 and is continuing at Cranfield University as a Research Fellow funded by an EPSRC Platform Grant. Divya continues her work part-time, balancing her research with family commitments.

"I advise aspiring Fellows to keep in touch with research even when they are on their career breaks and look for research active teams who are winning grants."

Dr Divya Tiwari

Harnessing nature for healing

Following her Fellowship at the University of Surrey, sponsored by the Royal Society of Chemistry, Dr Sianne Schwikkard now works as a full-time lecturer in organic chemistry at Kingston University.

Dr Sianne Schwikkard

"I would like to thank everyone at the Daphne Jackson Trust and the Royal Society of Chemistry who made my re-entry into work and offer of a lectureship possible. Your work makes a significant difference to people’s lives, mine included."

Sianne secured a full-time lectureship in organic chemistry at Kingston University, a role that also allows her to continue her collaboration with her PhD and Daphne Jackson Fellowship supervisor, Professor Dulcie Mulholland.

Sianne’s children are old enough now that the transition from working part-time to full-time has been fairly straightforward.

"Being a stay-at-home dad can be quite an awkward situation, with sometimes little understanding from others, which can hit your self-confidence. However, the rewards of extra involvement with my son as he has grown up were enormously valuable to both of us. Returning to challenging, interesting work which uses my skills and qualifications has boosted my self-esteem."

Dr Alan Fox

Protecting marine areas by modelling ocean currents and coral reef connections

Dr Alan Fox began his Daphne Jackson Fellowship in October 2014 after a 12-year break, sponsored and hosted by Heriot-Watt University.

"I would like to thank everyone at the Daphne Jackson Trust and the Royal Society of Chemistry who made my re-entry into work and offer of a lectureship possible. Your work makes a significant difference to people’s lives, mine included."

Dr Sianne Schwikkard

Alan had 10 years’ experience of oceanography research studying circulation and currents in the ocean and carrying out numerical modelling of ocean data. When his son began experiencing problems with his health at the age of two, Alan decided to be the stay at home parent while his wife continued working.

During voluntary work for the Scottish Ornithologists’ Club, Alan had the opportunity to remain engaged with the issues that impact marine protected areas. When at the age of 14, his son’s health was well-managed and stabilised, Alan decided to return to research.

Alan has been enjoying his Fellowship research – a project that uses computer modelling of how the larvae of cold water corals disperse on ocean currents. The cold water coral reefs in the North Sea are a habitat for many species and are essential to biodiversity. Analysis of how different reefs are connected allows development of a map of which marine areas to protect.

This research also contributes to understanding how climate change and weather conditions can affect our oceans.

Following his Fellowship, Alan will continue working at Heriot-Watt University with his Fellowship supervisor on a collaborative, EU-funded project to extend the work and study other aspects of deep-sea ecosystems of the North Atlantic. Alan plans to continue working part-time, but increase his work hours.

"Being a stay-at-home dad can be quite an awkward situation, with sometimes little understanding from others, which can hit your self-confidence. However, the rewards of extra involvement with my son as he has grown up were enormously valuable to both of us. Returning to challenging, interesting work which uses my skills and qualifications has boosted my self-esteem."

Dr Alan Fox

Cold water corals of the North Sea
Retaining a talented STEM workforce

We continue to interact with our Fellows after the completion of their Fellowship and in doing so, gain both positive feedback and excellent ongoing information on their subsequent careers. This is when we really see the benefits of a Daphne Jackson Fellowship to the individual, the research knowledge base, and the wider STEM community.

The full survey report and accompanying infographic can be accessed from www.daphnejacksonson.org. But one thing not covered in the report is the extra achievements of former Fellows, highlighting the wider impact that the Daphne Jackson Fellowship has on a personal level.

“I became a STEM ambassador for schools and obtained a £1500 grant from the Royal Society School Partnership Award in conjunction with a local school.” AT

“I contributed to my host Department gaining an Athena SWAN Brome award, as well as putting together their recent application for a Silver award.” KON

“I developed a programme which is very successful in widening participation in Engineering, Physics and Maths.” LO

“I was awarded Chartered Engineer Status in 2009.” SK

“I am on the funding committee of the Fund for Women Graduates. I am supervising a Daphne Jackson Fellow.” CC

“I have through publications influenced lobbying carried out by RSPB.” TM

“I work with NGOs on scientific education programmes. This includes developing methodologies for surveys, training 276 people from five countries on how to survey bat populations, organising events, inviting speakers, and securing sponsorship.” NI

Former Fellows had some great advice for current and potential Fellows:

“Do it! It is possible and definitely worth it as you can return to what you love and what you are good at.” AT

“Don’t underestimate your capabilities just because you are a bit rusty. You are still the clever and capable person you were before your break. You also have a more balanced outlook having spent time out of academia and meeting people who have followed different career paths.” MA

Working together

The Trust recognises that by working with other organisations, we are able to extend our reach and increase the impact of our work. We actively pursue our vision to develop ongoing Fellowship arrangements with all UK universities and research institutions.

Our mission is to realise the potential of scientists and engineers returning to research following a career break. One way we work towards this goal is to develop new collaborations and strengthen existing ones by delivering results and highlighting best practice.

We are going through an exciting period, as the value of engaging with returners is gaining greater recognition. Consequently, organisations are taking action – by setting up sponsored Fellowships with us, changing policies and grants available to researchers, or creating resources for returners. Although many of the issues around research careers remain, the research landscape is changing and many more organisations are becoming receptive to accepting a non-traditional career path for researchers. The Trust’s post-Fellowship survey undertaken in 2015 backs up the message that those who take career breaks can enjoy a successful career for a substantial length of time.

FELLOWSHIP SPONSORS

Our sponsored Fellowships are advertised and competitive, the sponsor selects their preferred candidate, who then proceeds through the Daphne Jackson Fellowship application process.

Many arrangements are for the sponsorship of more than one Fellow and are ongoing, with an agreement to sponsor every year or every two/three years, thus ensuring a university has one or more Daphne Jackson Fellows in place at any time.

In 2015, the Trust welcomed the following organisations who have sponsored Fellowships for the first time: Genesis Research Trust; Greater Manchester Patient Safety and Translational Research Centre; John Innes Centre; Kingston University; Sheffield Hallam University; University of Central Lancashire; and University of Sussex.

During the year our Chief Executive spent a significant amount of time working to secure new arrangements for the sponsorship of Fellows. We look forward to working with the Dr Hadwen Trust, Durham University, Keele University; The Kennedy Trust, Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences at the University of Oxford, Pharmacy Research UK, University College London, University of Oxford, and University of Westminster.

CONTINUING PARTNERSHIPS

The Trust was represented at the Vitae Researcher Careers Development Conference, and the Vitae Researcher Careers Development Conference and the Association of Medical Research Charities Annual Conference.
Moving towards our mission

The Daphne Jackson Trust is a lasting testament to the vision of Professor Daphne Jackson, who noticed an appalling waste of talent and investment when qualified and trained scientists failed to return to their careers after a break.

The Chief Executive, staff, and Trustees continue to work together to develop Daphne’s mission and vision to eliminate barriers to returners and are delighted with the developments that have been made during the last 12 months.

During 2015, we saw a record number of Fellowships awarded and we partnered with a number of new sponsors. In 2016, this will be complemented by our efforts to increase opportunities for working collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders with an interest in the equality and diversity agenda, while also maintaining and developing existing relationships. A working group will consider ways to enhance the working relationships with Learned Societies and Professional Institutions.

The Trust is positioned as an expert in the issues and needs of those returning to a career in STEM research after a prolonged break and its expertise is being recognised and called upon more frequently. The Trust intends to build on this success with an increased policy work, which will in turn lead to a raised level of awareness of the Trust and the Fellowships.

The Trustees are aware of the need to continue to demonstrate the impact of the Fellowships to potential stakeholders. Following on from the launch of the report of the survey of former Fellows, the Trust will produce more statistics and a report of the survey of former Fellows, which will be of great use to many of the Trust’s partners and the Fellows. The Trust supports Fellows effectively through their Fellowship, and that the issues and needs of those returning to research following a career break.

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This is a list of all sponsors and donors who have sponsored fellowships and made donations since the Trust was established in 1992. Please note: new sponsors are added at the point when a fellowship commences and we would also like to thank the sponsoring organisations, not listed here, that will be supporting Fellows in the coming year.
Seventy-seven Daphne Jackson Fellows were in post in institutions across the country at some point during 2015. 26 new Fellowships were awarded and 19 Fellows completed their Fellowships.

The map below shows the regional distribution of these fellows and the facing page gives information about the organisations sponsoring and hosting them.