

**Report from the XVIth meeting of BEES
16th - 18th April 2007
Pope Building, University of Nottingham**



This year BEES returned from the provinces to what some may regard as its spiritual home in Nottingham! The meeting was held jointly with the British Society for Investigative Dermatology with BEES members receiving the same preferential registration fees as the BSID members. Whilst there was not a specific epidemiological session during the meeting there was plenty for members to get their teeth into. Indeed, our brand new honorary secretary, Carsten Flohr won the prize for the second best presentation of the whole meeting.



The meeting was held on the beautiful campus of the University of Nottingham in the not quite so beautiful Pope building, which has a distinctive 1960s feel to the architecture! Fortunately the sun shone (for the first time in a number of years for a BEES meeting) and the lecture theatre provided excellent accommodation for the presentations. The meeting, chaired by Prof Graham Ogg, began with an introduction to

immunology research for trainees given by Mike Arden-Jones. There were many other interesting lectures during the first day. Highlights included 'Genetics of atopic dermatitis' given by Irwin McLean who discussed Filaggrin, a discussion of epigenetics by Prof Keith Godfrey, who has been looking at the effects early environmental influences may have on genetic/physiological make-up that can be passed onto future generations, and of course the chief drone himself, Hywel Williams, discussed the role of environment in childhood eczema.



The second day of the meeting had 3 scientific sessions interspersed by guest speakers. The keynote Guest Speaker was Prof Irma Thesleff, from the University of Helsinki, who described the pathogenesis of ectodermal dysplasia syndromes. The British Photodermatology group guest lecture was given by Prof Steve Ullrich, from the University of Texas



on sunlight and skin cancer: lessons from the immune system. He proposed that if one blocks platelet activating factor and/or 5-HT (agents that cause ultra-violet induced immunosuppression) then could we possibly reduce or prevent skin tumours? The day ended with the Annual Dinner

of the BSID in the impressive Senate Chamber of the University. Without a doubt the highlight of the evening was a pair of musicians called "Diabolus in Musica" who specialised in medieval music. Equipped with hurdy gurdy, lute and colourful pantaloons, they provided us with a tour through a range of medieval musical instruments with plenty of audience participation! It was all rather bizarre for a BSID meeting, but great fun nevertheless, especially for those who came from overseas.



The Trent Building, which houses the Senate Chamber



Diabolus in Musica entertained the audience



The final day saw the BEES guest speaker - the highly entertaining and thought provoking Richard Smith, former editor of the *British Medical Journal* - give an enjoyable polemic on the trouble with medical journals (I'm sure I saw the editor of the *British Journal of Dermatology* quietly slipping out towards the end!). The final speaker was the local guest, Prof David Pritchard from the University of Nottingham, who discussed how worms, maggots and bacteria may play an important role in the future development of drugs - perhaps even more so than the current vogue for targeted therapies!

On reflection it was a great success combining the BSID meeting with BEES and allowed the best of dermatological researchers and clinicians to interact together in an enjoyable forum. Next year BEES plan to continue their collaborations when Nottingham will play host to the EDEN/ADEN Congress from 7th - 9th September 2008. See you all then!