

Contacts

Publisher: Ben Crowe

Editor: Paul Smaglik

Marketing Manager: David Bowen

European Head Office, London

The Macmillan Building

4 Crinan Street

London N1 9XW, UK

Tel +44 (0) 20 7843 4961

Fax +44 (0) 20 7843 4996

e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

Senior European Sales Manager:

Nevin Bayoumi (4978)

UK/ RoW/ Ireland:

Matt Powell (4953)

Andy Douglas (4975)

Frank Phelan (4944)

Netherlands/ Italy/ Iberia:

Evelina Rubio Hakansson (4973)

Scandinavia: Sille Opstrup (4994)

France/ Belgium:

Amelie Pequignot (4974)

Production Manager:

Billie Franklin

To send materials use London

address above.

Tel +44 (0) 20 7843 4814

Fax +44 (0) 20 7843 4996

e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

International

Advertising Coordinator:

Hind Berrada (4935)

Naturejobs web development:

Tom Hancock

Naturejobs online production:

Ben Lund

European Satellite Office

Germany/ Austria/ Switzerland:

Patrick Phelan, Odo Wulffen

Tel + 49 89 54 90 57 11/-2

Fax + 49 89 54 90 57 20

e-mail: p.phelan@nature.com

o.wulffen@nature.com

US Head Office, New York

345 Park Avenue South,

10th Floor, New York, NY 10010-1707

Tel +1 800 989 7718

Fax +1 800 989 7103

e-mail: naturejobs@natureny.com

US Sales Manager:

Peter Bless

US Advertising Coordinator:

Linda Adam

Japan Head Office, Tokyo

MG Ichigaya Building (5F),

19-1 Haraikatamachi,

Shinjuku-ku,

Tokyo 162-0841

Tel +81 3 3267 8751

Fax +81 3 3267 8746

Asia-Pacific Sales Director:

Hideki Watanabe

e-mail: h.watanabe@naturejpn.com

Converging on DNA

In next year's calendar of scientific events, occasions marking the fiftieth anniversary of the elucidation of DNA's twisted structure span continents, disciplines and dress codes. This *mélange* of events, listed in the directory that follows, is somehow appropriate when you consider the backgrounds and interests of the principals involved in the discovery.

Rosalind Franklin was a British biochemist who, according to a recent biography, was more comfortable living in France than in England. She worked at the University of Cambridge with Maurice Wilkins, a physicist born in New Zealand, using X-ray crystallography to discern DNA's structure.

They alternately competed and cooperated with another team arising from equally mixed disciplines and origins. James Watson was a biologist from the United States who was working with Francis Crick, an English physicist. In their Cambridge lab, the two used their knowledge of chemical bonds, as well as X-rays of DNA generated by Franklin and Wilkins, to solve the molecule's structure.

It is fitting, then, that events celebrating this finding are all over the map; literally and figuratively. They include genetic symposia in France, artistic exhibits in England and at least one black-tie dinner in New York. It is also appropriate that DNA-related meetings are scattered beyond places that have obvious geographical connections to the discovery of DNA's double helix. Contributions by scientists across the globe, from all disciplines, to the application of this ground-breaking work transcend — but don't overshadow — the finding that emerged from two English labs.

Everyone, understandably, wants a piece of the double helix. This year's calendar of events will help to make that possible.

Paul Smaglik
Naturejobs editor



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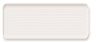
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