

ADELPHI REVIEW

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ADELPHI
GENETICS FORUM

exploring heredity and society

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*Images: Cover image CHASE Africa.
CHASE Africa pictures: CHASE Africa.
Genomics Showcase Pictures: Wales Gene Park.*

As I write this, the third heatwave of the summer has just passed and it's still not August!

On page 5, there is a brief report of our latest Teachers Conference in Manchester which was a full house. We had some excellent speakers including our treasurer **Professor Andrew Read** and trustee **Dr Sarah Wynn**. I cannot overstate how much time and effort our trustees put into their roles and we thank them sincerely for all that they do to help achieve our aims.

Another trustee who never seems to relax is **Dr Helen Middleton-Price** who as well as taking on her new role as Development Officer, is drawing up the plans for our 2027 Annual Conference alongside Vice-President **Professor Gregory Radick** and fellow trustees **Professor Ralph Levinson** and **Dr Sarah Wynn**. The conference is tentatively titled '*Debunking Myth in Genetics*'. Arrangements for the 2026 Conference are of course now fully in place. Organised by ex-President **Professor Veronica van Heyningen**, current President **Professor Nicholas Wood** and **Dr Elena Bochukova**. Titled '*Complexity of Neural Function – the Brain in Charge*', it looks to be a brilliant occasion. Details and ticket information can be found on page 20 and on our website.

On page 7, there is the latest report from CHASE Africa who never fail to provide inspiring accounts of their remarkable work in rural Kenya. We also have reports from a workshop in Oxford with the title '*In the Name of Eugenics: A Reappraisal*' co-written by trustee **Professor Shirley Hodgson** and from a very successful meeting in Cardiff, organised by the Wales Gene Park. All of these were recipients of grants from either the Adelphi Genetics Forum or the Artemis Trust.

Finally, I hope you like the new bright and breezy look of the *Adelphi Review*.

Robert Johnston

Teachers Conference 2026

‘Further Advances in Genetics’

NOWGEN Centre, Manchester – 26 June 2026

More than 60 secondary Biology teachers gathered on a searingly hot day to listen to and discuss the latest information on this fast-changing subject.

The day was organised and chaired by our Librarian, **Mr Robert Johnston** while our Vice-President, **Professor Dian Donnai** helped to make the day run smoothly.

The first speaker was our Treasurer, **Professor Andrew Read** from the Manchester Centre for Genomic Medicine, who described how our knowledge of the human genome has evolved over the past 20 years. He believes that the original dreams of the ‘Human Genome Project’ have not been fulfilled but, nevertheless, huge advances in techniques have led to a greater appreciation of just how complex the genome is.

After a coffee break, **Dr David Craufurd** from the University of Manchester, gave a description of the history and pathology of Huntington’s Disease, a dominant condition familiar to Biology teachers. He weighed up the various methods for predictive testing and described the drug treatments now available to slow the progress of the disease. He also considered the very latest techniques, using viral vectors, aiming to find a permanent cure.

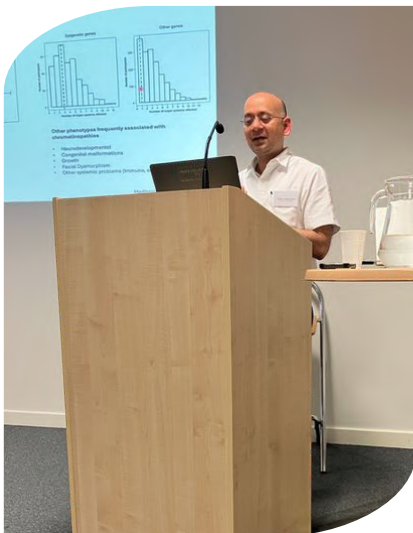
The next speaker was one of our trustees, **Dr Sarah Wynn**, who gave an insight into the amazing work carried out by **Unique**, a charity of which she is CEO. It is an open, supportive community for people who are looking to learn more about rare chromosome or gene disorders. 95% of these rare conditions have no treatment so Unique aims to put families in touch with each other and provide as much support and information as possible.

After lunch, **Dr Coreen McGuire** from Durham University, discussed the history of eugenics in the United Kingdom. She considered early examples of positive and negative eugenics and compared them with 'modern' procedures. She also looked at historical examples of eugenic acts against the disabled.

The next speaker was **Professor Siddharth Banka** from the University of Manchester who, as a clinician, described his role in the detection and treatment of rare diseases. He moved on to consider epigenetic disorders, how they are caused and how they might be treated. He concluded with a description of genetic imprinting and how it might be explained.

The final speaker was **Professor Sue Kimber** from the University of Manchester who gave an insight into the science of pluripotent stem cells, how they can be produced and their possible applications in medical procedures. Their main drawback is cost but using 3D Organoids shows real promise to help understand embryonic development and to identify drug targets.

Robert Johnston



Professor Siddharth Banka



Dr Sarah Wynn

Improving access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services in the Tana River ecosystem, Kenya

Progress report for the period: 1st July 2025 - 31st December 2025

Recent activities and progress: In coordination with the Ministry of Health, underserved communities within the Tana River ecosystem were identified and selected to implement the project activities. In the chosen locations, three local community health workers, known as Community Own Resource Persons (CORPs), made household visits and facilitated community dialogues through which to address and discuss matters of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), with particular emphasis on improving access to modern contraception. CORPs provided accurate health information and referrals for health services, while integrating key messages on the interconnectedness of people, livestock and the environment. This integrated approach recognised the linkages between human health, environmental sustainability and livelihoods, and brought relevance and a fuller picture to discussions around the benefits of family planning, beyond health implications, to the well-being of entire families and communities. Enabling individuals to act on the information received, CORPs made referrals to health facilities when possible, or alternatively arranged to deliver family planning services to remote communities via a back-pack nurse outreach. To reach the most marginalised and hard-to-access communities, two mobile health clinics were deployed for ten days each. During this period, CORPs and a team of healthcare providers travelled long distances across difficult terrain, camping alongside remote communities and moving between neighbouring villages every one to two days. These extended outreaches enabled CORPs to share essential health and sexual and SRHR information with members of the most marginalised communities, while medical staff delivered integrated family planning services alongside basic curative care.

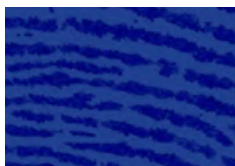
Three longstanding challenges continued throughout this reporting period, i.e. inter community conflicts in border areas causing security risks, stockouts of family planning supplies at health facilities, and myths and misconceptions causing lack of trust in modern contraceptives. However, our programme is designed to address and overcome such difficulties, and there were no additional new challenges which affected project activities or outputs during this time.

Lessons learned from 2025: Learning from our 2025 implementation, the following key lessons will shape our approach going forward.

- 1.** Evidence showed that peer-to-peer learning significantly increases adolescent attendance and engagement and therefore trained peer educators will be incorporated within youth forums across all programme sites. To ensure relatability, materials will be translated into local dialects, with focussed content tailored to different adolescent age groups.
- 2.** In insecure border areas, local health facilities commonly close due to safety risks. This affects people's access to health services by the CORPs' referral to those facilities. Mobile health clinic outreaches can be used in these situations to maintain continuity, so going forward we will coordinate with local leaders and security actors to gauge when it is beneficial to deploy mobile clinics along the border areas to provide the services which are unobtainable through a closed static health facility.
- 3.** Finally, all Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials will be co-created using community feedback, with both youth and elders involved in content review panels, ensuring messages are culturally relevant, trusted and responsive to community needs.

During this reporting period, the number of attendances for information and awareness raising (3,131) closely aligned with our target of 3,083. Notably, the number of family planning services delivered (1,915) far exceeded the anticipated 867. This positive variance is attributed to the CORPs, in collaboration with health facility teams, identifying new communities with high unmet need for family planning within the sub counties, as well as the effectiveness of the CORPs' door-to-door strategy, implemented through an integrated People–Health–Environment approach. This model has proved to be effective in reducing stigma and addressing myths and misconceptions surrounding family planning. It has also fostered increased male involvement and support, further enhancing community acceptance and sustained demand for family planning services.

Out of the total family planning services provided (1,915), the number of first-time users of modern contraceptives was 1,022 (53%), illustrating the effectiveness of the CORPs' work in building people's trust in modern contraceptives, and demonstrating the level of unmet need for family planning which exists in the project area. The extended mobile health outreaches to the most remote project locations not only provided contraceptives but also offered a wide range of general health services, which is an invaluable benefit to members of those communities who otherwise have no access to healthcare. The knock-on benefit of providing basic curatives for this project, however, is that this builds trust and fosters an environment in which opportunities open up for discussions with patients around family planning and contraceptives, and this supports the effectiveness of behaviour change communication regarding the sensitive and often taboo topic of family planning. A total of 1,564 non-family planning health services were provided during this reporting period, including immunisations and de-worming, cancer screening, HIV counselling and testing, antenatal and postnatal care, and basic curatives for common minor ailments.



Case studies:

Grace Mwende

Grace Mwende is a 21-year-old mother of one child from Itulu Village, Mwingi Sub county, Kitui County. Grace accessed integrated health services and family planning through one of the project's mobile health clinics. She said:

“The nearest health facility is far, and transport costs are high. Sometimes I had to choose between buying food and going to the clinic. After giving birth, I worried a lot about my health and about getting pregnant again too soon. I knew a little about family planning, but I had many fears. I had heard stories from other people that family planning could make someone sick or unable to have children in the future. I first heard about the mobile clinic from my sister. She had received family planning services from an earlier outreach, and she told me she was doing well and was happy with the service. My sister told me the health workers treated her with respect and answered all her questions without judgment. When I heard that the mobile clinic would be coming to our village, I decided to go. I felt I could trust them because of my sister's experience. I felt confident because someone close to me had already gone through the process and was okay. At the clinic, the nurse explained everything clearly. They checked my health and talked to me about different family planning options. I liked that I could receive both general health services and family planning at the same place, without having to travel far. I learned that family planning is safe and helps mothers space children so they can take care of their families better. I did not feel afraid anymore because all my questions were answered patiently.”

Since receiving services from the mobile clinic, Grace is no longer worried about an unplanned pregnancy and she is focusing on caring for her child and planning her future, step by step. Grace shares her experience of family planning with other women in her village, especially those who are afraid, like she once was. She tells them contraception can be trusted, just like her sister had told her.

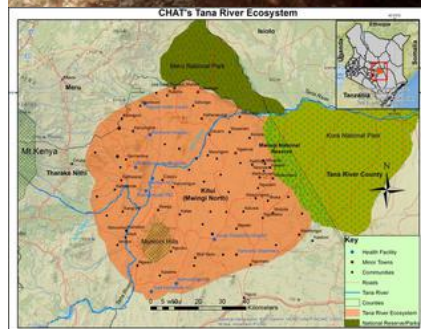
Linnet Karambu

Linnet Karambu is a 17-year-old female from Kawala Village, Tharaka Sub-county, Tharaka Nithi County. Linnet was referred through a door-to-door CORP visit and was accompanied by her mother when she accessed family planning services through a back-pack nurse.



“Before, I felt scared and confused about my reproductive health. In our community, it is not easy for young girls to talk openly about these issues. Many girls fear being judged or misunderstood. I did not know much about family planning or where young people could get correct information. I was afraid of going to a health facility alone because I thought people would talk about me. My biggest worry was making mistakes that could affect my future. My hope was to continue with my education and avoid problems that could disrupt my life. My mother heard about the backpack services. She talked to me kindly and told me that it was important for me to understand my body and make informed decisions. She accompanied me to access the services.”We thank the trustees of the Artemis Trust for your support of this project, making a meaningful and lasting impact in the lives of marginalised girls and women in remote rural communities of the Tana River Ecosystem.

“ We met a CORP named Jonathan, who came to my home with a nurse from the health facility, which made it easier and more private. Jonathan and the nurse explained things in a way I could understand and did not make me feel ashamed. I learned that family planning and reproductive health information are about protecting my future, not destroying it. What surprised me most was how respectful and supportive the service was, especially for someone my age. After receiving the services, I feel more confident and informed. I now understand my reproductive health better, and I am not living in fear anymore. My relationship with my mother has also improved because we can talk openly about these issues. My daily life is more focused on school and my goals. I feel empowered knowing that I have support from my family and access to trusted health services. In the future, I hope to complete my education and become someone who can support other girls in my community.”



We thank the trustees of the Artemis Trust for your support of this project, making a meaningful and lasting impact in the lives of marginalised girls and women in remote rural communities of the Tana River Ecosystem.

Workshop “In the Name of Eugenics: A Reappraisal” hosted by Centre for Medical Humanities, Oxford Brookes University - 19 March 2026

Progress report for the period: 1st July 2025 - 31st December 2025

Oxford Brookes University hosted a scholarly workshop through the historical lens. The organiser **Professor Marius Turda** welcomed delegates and shared his recollections of his first encounter with keynote speaker — American Historian — **Professor Daniel Kevles**. He obtained Kevles book alongside Beckett’s *‘Waiting For Godot’* in Romania after the fall of communism. Marius explained the translation of the word eugenics within Romanian and how his initial interest had been piqued when he had thought he was picking up a book about the history of the popular Romanian biscuit – Eugenia!

AGF trustee **Professor Shirley Hodgson** gave the first talk of the day, she says “I gave a short talk about the strong anti-eugenics’ stance taken by my father, Lionel Penrose, who did take up the Galton chair of Eugenics at UCL in 1945, but insisted on changing the title of eugenics to human genetics as soon as possible. He used scientific arguments based on his research to discredit the preconceptions of eugenicists. Since eugenicists were keen to eradicate undesirable traits by sterilising individuals thought likely to have affected offspring, Lionel delighted in explaining that eradicating the autosomal recessive condition phenylketonuria would “involve sterilising 1 percent of the normal population, if carriers could be identified. Only a lunatic would advocate such a procedure to prevent the occurrence of a handful of harmless imbeciles”. He also wrote “at the moment, our knowledge of human genes and their action is so slight that it is presumptuous and foolish to lay down positive principles for human breeding.” He said eugenics was not a science like genetics, but an ideology, espousing unscientifically proven theories.





Dr Ross Brooks delivered a talk on sex determination. He looked back to degeneration theories, the origin story of test tube babies within Eugenic thought, J.B.S Haldane and the ways in which modern socio-political debates around sexed brains and 'gay genes' or designer babies, relate within harmful discourse. **Dr David Redvaldsen** presented an interesting talk on Victorian and Edwardian measures of human aptitude. He showed examples of what most would now recognise as common reaction games and explained they were the rudimentary first intelligence tests developed by Galton alongside his more widely known anthropometrics. Dr Redvaldsen also provided background information on early theories of degeneration and their influence on negative (discredited and abhorrent) concepts of racial hygiene. He focused the audience's attention on how the definition of intelligence was created to encompass different aptitudes by Galton, Binet and Spearman and how each theory gave differing weight to musicality, rationalism, critical thought, sensory intelligence, artistic and sporting abilities within their research.

Next **Kellie Vernon** and **Stefan Bernhardt-Radu** presented talks that offered interesting parallels between Bateman's Cambridge and Weldon's Oxford, how the lens of eugenic thought diverged between strict heredity and environmental views. Vernon gave an interesting insight into the polar explorer Denis G Lillie - by following Lillie's correspondence, she was able to find record of early discussion of eugenics in New Zealand. Bernhardt-Radu's talk by contrast focused on Julian Huxley, and centered on ideas and inspiration that formed and motivated his thinking - from the influence of Weldon as a Zoology student at Oxford to scientific knowledge that ascribed environmental factors in altering the sex of crabs. Some focus was given to the influence of the Great War on Huxley's thought with a brief but dynamic dive into Huxley's thinking delivered in his '*War & Biology*' lecture (1916). Next, **Andrew Moeller**'s talk focused on the theme of his new book and was a thorough investigation into how the Church of England adopted birth control on certain conditions after consideration of eugenic principles in the inter-war years.

The culmination of the meeting was the keynote speakers talk by **Professor Daniel Kevles**. He explained why he wrote his seminal book "In the Name of Eugenics" and reviewed the history of eugenics including the ideas of Galton who promoted positive eugenics to improve the Human race, and others such as Pearson and Davenport. Kevles work had sought to assess this period, isolated from the knowledge of hindsight and without linking direct causality to the atrocities committed in wartime by Nazi Germany. Even so, he was able to show ways that sterilisation programmes in America had also had their own aspects of violent racial discrimination. Sterilisation was only largely discontinued in the late 1940's with the Human Rights Law.



Kevles indicated that the divergence of the science of eugenics from eugenic thinking was driven in the UK by Lionel Penrose and JBS Haldane. Finally, Kevles discussed recent advances in biotechnology including IVF, recombinant DNA technology and genome editing, and the ethical issues regarding the use of these technologies to avoid genetic diseases in humans and help infertile couples have children. His general view was that we should forget eugenics in this context, as the framework for this is very different from eugenic practice. There was much discussion after Kevles' talk, indicating how stimulating it had been, especially for the second-year history students at Oxford Brookes in attendance who are currently studying the Stigma and Dehumanisation module. This was a lively and thought-provoking workshop with thanks to the Adelphi Genetics Forum for contributing a Small Grant Award toward the cost of the attendance of the keynote speaker.

Shirley Hodgson and Ruth Matthews



Celebrating Genomics in Wales: Genomics Showcase 2026

Cardiff City Stadium – 23 April 2026

The event was organised by Wales Gene Park and delivered in collaboration with Genomics Partnership Wales (GPW). Over 450 delegates were welcomed to Cardiff to network and learn more about advances in genomics in relation to health and medicine in Wales, and what this means for patients and the wider population. The event was designed in partnership with members of GPW's Patient and Public Sounding Board, ensuring that the patient voice remained at the center of every aspect of the day. Feedback from delegates was overwhelmingly positive, and below is a small selection of the comments received:

“The strength of the conference was the wide range of inputs from patients, clinicians, and researchers that covered the full spectrum of genomic research in Wales. It was inspiring to learn about all the exciting work being carried out.”

“Bringing together academic researchers, public health and clinical professionals, and patient groups was fantastic, as it created a space for people who may not typically interact to connect.”

“What a fantastic event — so well organised and brilliantly executed. It was completely professional, and turnout in the final sessions was a real testament to how engaging and interesting the day was. Well done, team.”

“I thought it was an exceptional event from start to finish. This is not only my opinion, but also that of friends, family, and members of the public I spoke to. Everyone really enjoyed it, whether they were familiar with genetics or completely new to it — you pitched it just right. The communication before, during, and after the event has been exceptional too.”



“Thank you! A great opportunity for people working in the same field to come together — to learn, network, and be inspired.”

The day featured a full programme of over 30 talks and panel discussions from academics, NHS professionals, and those with lived experiences, who shared their expertise and perspectives on a variety of topics. Attendees were also able to visit 43 exhibition stands from public, private and charity sectors, explore the poster zone, take part in hands-on engagement activities, experience virtual reality workshops, and create mini podcasts as part of the Stories from the Showcase initiative. The full [Event Guide](#) can be viewed on the GPW website.

All involved in organising the Showcase are grateful to the wider genomics community, who came together to ensure the event was such a success, and look forward to welcoming everyone to the next Genomics Showcase in November at Venue Cymru, Llandudno.

We are extremely grateful to the **Adelphi Genetics Forum** for supporting the event and look forward to working together again in the future.





ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**COMPLEXITY OF NEURAL FUNCTION
–THE BRAIN IN CHARGE**

**THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER 2026
THE ROYAL SOCIETY, LONDON**

Line-Up

Kevin Mitchell - Wiring the brain - the origins of human nature

Siddharth Banka - Neurodevelopmental disorders arising from novel non-coding genetic changes

Andreas Brunklaus - Genetic therapies to treat ion channel epilepsies: impacts and outcomes

Maria Fitzgerald - Pain and the developing brain

Simon E. Fisher - Genomic insights into the neurobiology of speech and language

Rory Cellan-Jones in conversation with **Sonia Gandhi**
Movement disorders: Parkinson's disease – a discussion

Adelphi Lecture

Sadaf Farooqi - Neural control of appetite

Apply now for a FREE ticket via our website

adelphigenetics.org/events/annual-conference-2026