

2014 Genetics Society Medal

The Genetics Society Medal is an award that recognizes outstanding research contributions to genetics. The Medal recipient, who should still be active in research at the time the Medal is awarded, will be elected annually by the Committee on the basis of nominations made by any individual member of the Society.

Those making nominations must be members of the Genetics Society, but there is no requirement for the nominee to be a member, nor any restriction on nationality or residence. Neither current members of the Committee nor those who have retired from office in the past four years may be nominated for the award.

The recipient will be invited to deliver a lecture at a Genetics Society meeting, where the medal will be awarded, in the year following his/her election. Stephen West (LRI, CRUK) will present the Genetics Society Medal lecture for 2012.

A call for nominations for the 2014 Genetics Society Medal will be made in the 2012 summer Newsletter and by email. To make a nomination, you will be asked to confirm that your candidate is willing to be nominated and to provide a two-page CV of the candidate, together with a list of his or her ten most important publications, plus a one-page letter of recommendation outlining why you feel their contributions to the field have been outstanding.

The Sir Kenneth Mather Prize 2011

The Sir Kenneth Mather prize, of £150, is awarded to recognise a BSc, MSc or PhD student of any UK University or Research Institution who has shown outstanding performance in the area of quantitative or population genetics.

There was an exceptionally strong field of candidates for the Sir Kenneth Mather Prize in 2011, and the judges were unable to resolve between the merits of the two strongest candidates. The outcome has been that, in 2011, there will be two Sir Kenneth Mather Prizes awarded, to Gibran Hemani and Ben Longdon.

The first recipient of the Sir Kenneth Mather Prize 2011 is Gibran Hemani, a PhD student at the Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh. His project has been on dissecting interactions in quantitative traits. The identification of genetic interactions is a famously difficult problem in quantitative genetics, in that the numbers of possible two-way interactions increases with the square of the numbers of genetic markers, and the threshold for significance has

to be scaled to allow for this. Gibran Hemani has created software resources, and identified computing power, necessary for the task. In addition to these developments, he has also developed population genetics theory predicting the timescale of the maintenance of epistatic interactions in populations.

The second winner is Dr. Ben Longdon, who recently completed his PhD in the Institute of Evolutionary Biology, University of Edinburgh. Ben's work has been on the vertically, and bipaternally, transmitted viruses of insects. His PhD work has been extraordinarily productive and has already resulted in seven first-author publications. Notwithstanding their vertical transmission, the spread of these viruses through *Drosophila* populations can be remarkably rapid, and can be investigated using sequence variation in a coalescent context. Similarly, Ben has been able to demonstrate the patterns of cross-species transfer of these viruses, and the impact of host phylogeny on viral persistence.

The Mather Prize 2012

We are seeking nominations for this annual prize, of £150, to reward a BSc, MSc or PhD student of any UK University or Research Institution who has shown outstanding performance in the area of quantitative or population genetics.

Nominations should be made between **July 1st and November 1st 2012** through the local Head of Department or School of the nominee. Nominations should consist of no more than one page of A4, setting out the case for the nomination, including relevant comparison with other students

where possible. Nominations should be sent to the Head of School, School of Biosciences, The University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, clearly labelled as a nomination for "The Sir Kenneth Mather Memorial Prize". Kay Boulton (University of Edinburgh) was awarded the Mather Prize for 2011.

Nominations will be assessed by a panel of two people with experience in the area of quantitative/population genetics, one from the University of Birmingham and the other nominated by the UK Genetics Society. Decisions will be announced in December 2012.