



KELLY EDWARDS

Research Information Co-ordinator

What did you want to be when you were younger?

When I was younger I wanted to be an Astrophysicist... This was before I learnt that I don't like Physics!

What did you study at A-level (or equivalent)?

For my A-Levels, I studied human biology, chemistry, maths and computing. Of these, I most enjoyed human biology and learning more about what 'really' goes on inside our cells. I remember being fascinated by this, it really opened my eyes and made the decision for me as to what I wanted to study at University.

What did you study at university?

I studied BSc (Hons) Biology. During my course I studied quite a few different biological topics, including biochemistry, microbiology, animal science, genetics and molecular biology. By the time I reached my final year, I'd learnt what subjects I most enjoyed (and also which ones to avoid like the plague!). During my final year I carried out a biochemistry based

project called 'Characterizing genes in the catshark - *Scyliorhinus canicula*'. I enjoyed every minute of my project; from the bumbling, mistake making start I soon became proficient and felt at home in the lab. Overall, I really enjoyed my degree and don't regret choosing biology.

What did you enjoy most about your degree?

One aspect I enjoyed most about my degree was learning to think independently about scientific findings and not to accept claims as facts. This was a massive step for me and I now constantly question findings and statements about science for their integrity.

What did you do after university?

I was quite lucky after university in that I had already secured a job as a Research Information Co-ordinator before my final exams were over. I work for a charity called the Motor Neurone Disease Association where I have been since June 2008. However it was not easy to decide which area of work I wanted to get into.

Motor neurone disease (MND):

a progressive disease that attacks the motor neurones, or nerves, in the brain and spinal cord. This means that messages gradually stop reaching muscles, which leads to weakness and wasting.

Scyliorhinus canicula:

a small spotted catshark, found in the British Isles and other places.

Rett syndrome:

a disorder that affects the brain, and that almost exclusively affects females.

Why were you attracted to the job?

I found it difficult through my last year to find a job description that really suited me. I really didn't know what I wanted to do at that point and was looking for jobs that would simply 'get me by'! After attending an inspirational lecture in my final year at university (about Rett syndrome), I realized that I was interested in diseases and their possible causes. I then came across a job description that almost sounded as if it were written for me as it combined science communication, a neurodegenerative disease and using a newly created database -pulling together both the knowledge I had gained at university and my 'techy' abilities!

What is a Research Information Co-ordinator?

My role is to make our current understanding of the underlying causes of motor neurone disease (MND), and findings from new research, easy to understand for patients and the general public. I do this through answering patient enquiries and writing

articles to explain key findings from research; this is one of my favourite parts of the job. Other duties involve helping organize an annual conference and managing databases with large amounts of information.

Do you have any advice for someone wishing to enter your career area?

For someone wishing to enter a career that involves communicating science, I would advise them to start writing a blog about scientific findings to develop their 'lay' communication skills, as this something that can only be self-developed.

WHAT IS BIOCHEMISTRY ?

Biochemistry is the branch of science that explores the chemical processes that take place inside all living things, from bacteria to plants and animals. It is a laboratorybased science that brings together biology and chemistry, by using chemical knowledge and techniques to help understand and solve biological problems.

For more information visit
www.biochemistry.org/careers

FURTHER INFORMATION

Motor Neurone Disease Association:
www.mndassociation.org/what-is-mnd/About-MND

Careers in science communication information sheet (University of Bath):
www.bath.ac.uk/careers/sciencecomm.pdf

List of science communication courses (British Science Association):

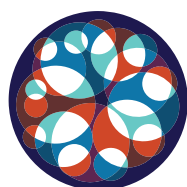
www.britishscienceassociation.org/web/scienceinsociety/Courses_and_Training/Science_Communication_Courses.htm

Career ideas (Prospects):
www.prospects.ac.uk/options_biology_career_areas.htm

Biochemistry careers information:
www.biochemistry.org/careers

General science careers information:
www.futuremorph.org

For more information visit
www.biochemistry.org/careers



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