Scientist of the Month

Professor Sir David Weatherall
Sir David John Weatherall was born in Birkenhead on 9th March, 1933: his research interests are on the genetics of the haemoglobinopathies and, in particular, a group of inherited haematological disorders known as the thalassemias that are associated with abnormalities in the production of globin (the protein component of haemoglobin).

Sir David is one of the world's experts on the clinical and molecular basis of the thalassemias and the application of this information for the control and prevention of these diseases in the developing countries.

He was educated at Calday Grange Grammar School and then graduated from the Medical School at the University of Liverpool in 1956. After house staff training, he joined the Army for 2 years. Returning from military service, he took a fellowship at Johns Hopkins University before returning to Liverpool, where he rose to the rank of Professor of Haematology.

In 1974 he was appointed Nuffield Professor of Clinical Medicine at the University of Oxford, and, in 1992, he assumed the most prestigious chair, that of Regius Professor of Medicine, from 1992 to 2000.

In 1989, Weatherall founded the Institute of Molecular Medicine at Oxford, which was renamed the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine in his honour in the year 2000 upon his retirement. He then became Chancellor of Keele University. He was a member of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics 1991-1996. In 2002, Weatherall wrote a major report on the application of genomics for global health for the World Health Organization. Sir David is a Distinguished Supporter of the British Humanist Association.

In 2009, a working group report under the Chairmanship of Professor Weatherall concludes that there is a strong scientific case to maintain biomedical research activities using non-human primates in carefully selected areas.

He was knighted in 1987 and Sir David was awarded the Manson Medal by the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene for his contributions to the field of tropical medicine and hygiene in 1998.

In 2012, Keele University named the Medical School building on the Keele Campus the David Weatherall Building in honour of Sir David.