The Drug Metabolism Discussion Group (DMDG) celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2011 and returned for the fourth time to Robinson College, Cambridge for its annual Open Meeting in September. First-class facilities and AV, excellent catering and a responsive in-house team provided the perfect formula for a successful event.

**Background**

The DMDG is an informal Europe-wide association for scientists engaged in research and development within the drug metabolism, pharmacokinetics and related disciplines of the pharmaceutical industry. Since its formation in 1971, the DMDG has grown from a UK-based organisation to one that has over 80 member sites spread throughout Europe.

Its annual Open Meeting attracts around 150 delegates to the three-day residential event which includes scientific presentations, with a parallel programme, breakout discussion sessions, a poster exhibition and formal dinner.

**Brief**

Mick Hall is the DMDG Committee Chairman and was the Open Meeting Organiser. He said: “This year, as our 40th anniversary, was an extra special gathering as we had invited past Chairs of the Committee to return as our guests. Some of these travelled from as far afield as the USA to attend. Therefore we needed a meeting venue that would deliver quality service and facilities in a relaxed environment. As usual in our experience, Robinson came up trumps!”

Robinson College has the right prescription to deliver successful scientific event
“The Open Meeting is always held in September and we alternate between Cambridge and another university location. However for the last four meetings in Cambridge we have been at Robinson College.

“For this event, it is essential that we have residential accommodation on site and all other facilities close by. Robinson is especially good in this respect as everything is located in one place and delegates can move easily from session to session. Some members of the organising team and other delegates like to arrive the day before the meeting and we appreciate the flexibility Robinson offers in making accommodation available ahead of the event.

Event

“The whole idea behind our Open Meeting is to provide a forum for informal discussion where scientists can get together to discuss topics of interest and share expertise. Delegates come from all over the UK and mainland Europe and so good transport links are important.

“Our main presentations were held in the raked auditorium where Robinson provided excellent IT support throughout the three days. We also used a range of different rooms within the College for our breakout sessions and also for the parallel programme on the Friday morning.

“One of the main features of our Open Meeting is the Poster Exhibition which we held in the marquee on the Wednesday evening. The marquee is a great facility for this and offers a self-contained space for people to have a leisurely look at the posters, not just on the evening but also during coffee breaks on subsequent days.

“As usual the catering was of a very high standard, especially the formal dinner on the Thursday evening and delegates with special dietary requirements were well looked after.

Result

“Of course one of the key factors in running a successful event is Robinson’s in-house team which was responsive and efficient throughout. Inevitably, as with all events, there were a few small challenges such as a few delegates not appearing on the rooming list on arrival and some misunderstanding about AV requirements for one of the parallel sessions. However these were handled quickly and efficiently – in fact the AV was dealt with before the sessions were even due to start.

“Robinson is an ideal location for our Open Meeting and as we start our fifth decade of meeting and discussing, we shall be back in the future. Indeed we have already booked for 2013.”

Robinson College was purpose-built with conferences in mind to bring in revenue and regularly hosts residential and day conferences for over 250 delegates and drinks and canapé receptions for up to 700. State-of-the-art wi-fi (300mbps) is provided in all bedrooms, available to delegates free of charge. Registered as a charity, it offers modern buildings, traditional values and year-round conference facilities, including residential events during term-time by partnering with local hotels. Robinson has purpose-built theatres with state-of-the-art audio visual technology supported by trained technicians, award-winning cuisine and a location that allows excellent access from major road links and yet only a short walk from the historical centre. Robinson College has been awarded official Fairtrade College Status and holds AIM Silver and 4* Campus accreditations.

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