Toby Wiltcher, Dr. Hastings and Anna Hall

14:39 Wednesday 01 April 2015

One of the world's leading scientists in the field of biorhythms and biological clocks has given a talk at King William's College.

The programme invites speakers - specialists in a wide range of fields - to address the sixth form students, and offer them the opportunity to extend their knowledge, and broaden their academic interests.

Dr Michael Hastings, joint Head of the Division of Neurobiology at the UK's Medical Research Council's Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, delivered the final sixth form lecture for this academic year.

The Laboratory of Molecular Biology is one of the world's leading institutions in medical research, and has produced 10 Nobel Prize winners since its establishment in 1947.

It is one of the birthplaces of modern molecular biology, having pioneered many important techniques in the fields of DNA sequencing and three-dimensional protein structure.

The laboratory's aim is to understand important biological processes at molecular level with the goal of using this knowledge to tackle major problems in human health and disease.

Dr Hastings is at the forefront of developments in our understanding of circadian rhythms; those important daily cycles of physiology and behaviour than underpin much of our daily activity patterns.

Dr Hastings joined the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in 2001 having spent the previous 20 years at the University of Cambridge.

He was a Fellow and college lecturer at Queen's College, Cambridge, having established his own laboratory in the Department of Anatomy and subsequently been appointed as Reader in Neuroscience.

He regularly lectures at international neurological conferences and has appeared on the BBC's Horizon programme investigating circadian 'body clocks'.

In addition to the lecture, Dr Hastings ran a workshop during the afternoon for a group of enthusiastic fifth form biologists from King William's College and Ramsey Grammar School.

The workshop aimed to introduce students to some of the fundamental aspects of biological research.

After the workshop, Dr Hastings said: 'I was very impressed by the students from King William's College and Ramsey Grammar. They got stuck in and engaged with the science and came up with really good ideas for how to design experiments.

'They are bright, hard-working and thoughtful and should do well in their future science careers if that is what they decide to do.'

Dr Hastings is no stranger to the Isle of Man having completed his PhD at Liverpool University's former marine biological station in Port Erin in the late 1970s, during which time he also played football for Colby United.

This was the final lecture in the series for this academic year, but from September the King William's College sixth form lecture series will resume.