

# UKSPA CASE STUDY

## PHARMACEUTICAL SUCCESS ON SCOTTISH SCIENCE PARKS

Headquartered at Pentlands Science Park, Edinburgh Pharmaceutical Processes (EPP) is a Contract Research Organisation that provides services to support the pharmaceutical, agrochemical and other industries that use fine chemicals.

Edinburgh Pharmaceutical Processes (EPP) has come a long way since its genesis within the labs at Heriot Watt University 23 years ago. At first the focus of work was on pharmaceutical process development, but now these synthetic capabilities are complemented by GLP Analytical and Environmental Science teams housed in labs on two different science parks. James Stuart, Managing Director of EPP Ltd, looks at EPP's formula for success.



*Radiochemistry is an important part of EPP new capability, both to synthesis labelled materials and to support high tier Ecotoxicology testing*

### A focus on Research & Development

EPP was established by Dr Stephen Newlands in 1992. Last year, after more than two decades of development, he stepped back from the business and asked me to take it on to lead the next stage of our growth.

The early focus of EPP's work was process research and development and that root of synthetic capability developed then still remains today. The client base was diverse and saw work on a host of veterinary, pharmaceutical and agrochemical active ingredients, metabolites and impurities for companies from around the world. Custom synthesis and the production of impurity reference standards began to drive the order book. These services remain but now the synthetic team is one of three interdependent teams including Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) analysis and Environmental Science.

The analytical team was established in 2006. At first this was in response to our clients need to identify impurities prior to seeking a reference standard. In due course it became clear a comprehensive approach to 5 Batch Analysis would be successful; drawing together our understanding of impurities, their identification, and our ability to create reference standards with a full GLP analysis.

We achieved GLP accreditation in 2009 and have since completed nearly 200 GLP studies across more than 60 different active ingredients. The integrated service has been hugely successful too; helping our clients to manage time and risk across their project.

### A step change

2014 saw the instigation of another phase of investment and expansion. Much like the step into analysis the choice of new services sought to draw heavily upon existing capability to offer a more integrated approach for clients and to realise other ways of reducing time or project risk for them.

This expansion has seen nine high quality jobs created in the last year and the purchase of additional premises – the EPP Environmental Centre, a 1000 m<sup>2</sup> laboratory and office facility located in the Bush Estate/Technopole. The conversion and fitting out of these labs has more than doubled the laboratory space held by EPP.

Two of the new roles, filled by biology graduates Chris Doig (Manager, Ecotoxicology) and Andrea Milne, helped us to establish GLP compliant ecotoxicology contract services. These services are being supported by parallel growth into radiochemical capabilities including analysis, synthesis, purification and certification led by our Chief Scientific Officer, Ian Dawson.

Chris, Andrea and Ian have been helped with the development of the new facility for Ecotoxicology and Radiochemistry by our recently appointed Facilities Manager, Andy Hamilton. Having overseen the initial commissioning of the EPP Environmental Centre and creation of environmental science laboratories, Andy is now turning his attention to an overhaul of the building services to improve sustainability – a topic we are passionate about and will explore at considerable length as we continue to grow and develop.

*“2014 saw the instigation of another phase of investment and expansion”*



*One of the newly refurbished Environmental Science Labs*

## Adding depth to capacity

It is not however all about the new services, we've also been working hard to add depth to our existing capability. Another of our recent appointments, that of Dr Alan Boyd, NMR specialist, has overseen the qualification of EPP's 500-MHz NMR to be part of the suite of GLP compliant equipment. This gives our GLP analytical team the benefit of another tool already routinely available to our non-GLP screening team.

We expect that drawing the NMR into our service will reduce time and the total number of methods for services like the 5 Batch Analysis. We have also brought additional and more cable LCMS instruments into our suite and are in the process of a full audit and update of software across the business.

With all of these moving parts it has also been important to add capacity to the Senior Management Team and that is what motivated the owner to appoint me. I've been asked to lead these developments and the broader expansion of EPP, I'm certain it is a fantastic opportunity for me and I'm excited about the development of the business.



*The EPP Environmental Centre, a 1000 m2 laboratory and office facility located in the Bush Estate/Technopole*

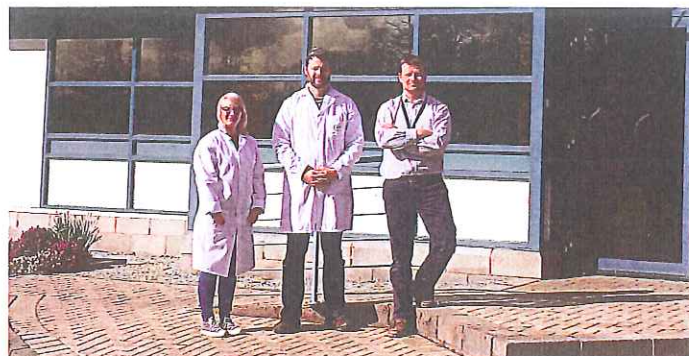
## Growing Space

I am however not necessarily the obvious choice. For a start, I'm neither a chemist nor a biologist. I did study for a BSc in Oceanography at Southampton University but am a professional leader rather than scientist; starting as an Officer in the Army and then working in the third sector as Chief Executive of the Royal Yachting Association Scotland and supporting strategic initiatives at national level in Scotland's tourism industry.

Indeed, to me not being a chemist or biologist is a distinct advantage; it means I can bring something different and complementary to the business, and so add to the team rather than replace any part of it.

Growth demands systems that can scale with the increased workload. The appointment of a new Managing Director is an important part of facilitating this development. We are also reviewing key support provision in Human Resources, Marketing, Administration, Lab Support, IT provision, CPD provision and Educational outreach.

Additionally, we have also undertaken a brand refresh and looking forward to the launch of the new brand and website in the near future. In the life cycle of any business periods of growth are of course hugely exciting. However, poorly supported growth leads to an inherent vulnerability. At EPP we are committed to a balanced and sustainable business plan. This will see a growth in frontline services properly supported by the right sort of systems to allow for a continuously high quality service, even during a period of change.



*James Stuart and members of the EPP team*

## What next?

EPP's existing and developing services sit astride Scotland's Life and Chemical Sciences sectors and it is clear from the national strategies of these sectors that industry at large and the Scottish Government believe in the opportunity they present and the growth possible.

The agencies, including Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International, are committed to high growth companies such as EPP. They have been very supportive already, providing a mixture of expert advice, access to training and some funding to help realise the potential for growth and are set to continue to be an important part of our broader team.

These investments and our work with partners and agencies are the beginning of a longer-term plan that will see EPP grow from around 25 staff to more than 50 by 2020. Synthesis, analytical chemistry and environmental science will be the cornerstones of this growth.

Such a significant increase in personnel, estate holdings and equipment requires a strong strategy, innovative staff and an ambitious vision for the future. At EPP we are lucky enough to have all of these elements in place.

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## About UKSPA

Information on all UKSPA members can be downloaded from the UKSPA website. Visit the Association website at [www.ukspa.org.uk](http://www.ukspa.org.uk) for more information.

## Innovation Into Success (IIS)

*This case study originally appeared in the UKSPA Journal which can be read online at [www.scienceparks.co.uk](http://www.scienceparks.co.uk)*