

Michael H Hastings, PhD, FMedSci, FRS,

Michael Hastings is a Programme Leader and Joint Head of the Division of Neurobiology at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, U.K. He graduated from the University of Liverpool (1977) with a BSc in Marine Biology. For his PhD in Marine Ecology, again at Liverpool, he studied tidal and lunar rhythms in intertidal crustaceans (1980). He then took a post-doc with Professor Joe Herbert in the Department of Anatomy, University of Cambridge (Oct. 1981), to investigate the role of melatonin and circadian clocks in seasonal fertility of mammals.

Establishing his own laboratory in the Department of Anatomy, he was appointed to a Junior Lectureship in Anatomy in 1984 and became a Lecturer in 1988. He was elected a Fellow & College Lecturer at Queens' College, Cambridge (1987). His research interests moved towards the neurobiology of circadian clocks, with a focus on the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), the brain's principal pacemaker, and its entrainment by environmental cues. He was appointed Reader in Neuroscience in 1998.

In 2001 he left the University to become a Programme Leader in Circadian Neurobiology at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, U.K. This enabled him to develop a molecular genetic approach to examine the core mechanisms of circadian time-keeping in the SCN, and its effects on behaviour and the temporal organisation of peripheral organs. Being an early adopter of transcriptomic and proteomic approaches, he has illuminated the inter-relationships between the SCN and subordinate tissue-specific clocks across the body, defining the impact of the circadian system on vital metabolic functions. His current areas of interest include elucidation of the molecular, genetic and cellular mechanisms that underpin cellular clocks, and definition of the mechanisms that weld the individual clock cells (both neurons and astroglia) of the SCN into a robust synchronised time-keeping circuit.

In 2008 he was elected to Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences and was also elected as President of the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms. In 2010 he was elected to Fellowship of the Royal Society, London. In October 2013 he was appointed Joint Head of the Division of Neurobiology at the LMB and in May 2016 became sole Head of Division, returning to Joint Head in October 2022. In 2020 he was awarded an Honorary Professorship by the University of Cambridge. Additional national roles include membership of the MRC Neurosciences and Mental Health Board, and Deputy Chair of the Royal Society University Research Fellowships Committee.