

Translations – from today’s science to tomorrow’s medicine in Berlin-Buch

By Russ Hodge

Reviewed by Marie Walsh, Ireland

Campus Berlin-Buch is a science, health and biotechnology park in Berlin, Germany, with a focus on biomedicine. The Campus provides a unique environment for scientific exchange and research collaboration, facilitated by the close physical proximity of the research institutes, clinics and biotechnology companies. Major areas of activity include the study of the molecular causes of cancer, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases, as well as interdisciplinary basic research to develop new drugs, patient-oriented clinical research and the commercial realisation of biomedical insights. Investments of more than 200 million Euros from the federal government, state government and the EU have made the tradition-rich Campus Berlin-Buch into an innovative location.

Translations is a celebration of just some of the research being carried out at Campus Berlin-Buch. Author Russ Hodge suggests that Berlin-Buch is a microcosm of current trends in experimental and clinical research in laboratories all around the world, and that the aim of the book is to open a window to the much larger international context of developing biomedicine.

This is a large (coffee-table type) book which would be a welcome ad-

dition to school libraries. The photography by Maj Britt Hansen and design by Nicola Graf (who is also responsible for the layout of the *Science in School* print edition) make it a very attractive book to browse. The literary style of the author also makes it an attractive book to read. For anyone with an interest in current research and development, and for teachers of life sciences who wish to take their students beyond the constraints of the syllabus and show the real-life applications of theory, this is a marvellous book. It certainly is not a textbook, but it is very relevant for contextualising the role of research in advancing medicinal science. The book can be ordered (free) in print or downloaded as a PDF^{w1}.

The book is introduced by the author’s description of being driven from the train station in Berlin to the campus at Berlin-Buch where he was starting as a new staff member. This fantastic research facility is put in context with descriptions of Berlin’s scientific development throughout history, and the author’s attempt to give a glimpse of what the Campus is likely to produce in the future. Incidentally, German schoolchildren have the opportunity to tour the Campus teaching facility (the Transparent Laboratory, *Gläsernes Labor*), and many more visit during Berlin’s ‘Long

Night of the Sciences’. This book will whet the appetite to visit!

The 300-page book is divided into four parts, each ending with an interlude or interviews. It finishes with a list of further reading – references to research articles relevant to the work on the Campus. All of the state-of-the-art areas of research in molecular biology are touched upon, including stem cells, genetics, information technology, learning from microscopic organisms, biomarkers and so on. The text is built around profiles of the people and places on the Campus, including their links to the outside community and the ideas that they have brought to the Campus from their work in other countries and disciplines.

One would have no hesitation in recommending this book for school libraries – with the caveat that students should be given an incentive to read it – build it into project or assignment work. It is not a book to be read in one sitting (although the style might encourage that), but it is certainly a very interesting insight into the cutting-edge research that is taking place in the field of biomedicine.