The Department of Medicine’s summer 2015 networking event enabled staff and students from various lab groups to socialise together in a light hearted and fun environment. Zorb football (hired from Bubblekickz.com) and rounders were played on Wormwood scrubs behind Hammersmith Hospital, which proved very popular, and there was lots of laughter all round. A variety of games can be played using the zorbs (not just football), meaning that all sporting abilities are catered for. Unlike undergraduate courses, postgraduates rarely get the chance to meet students from outside their own group, due to a heavy work load. It is highly beneficial to hold such cohort bonding events away from the lab, to provide a better student experience and promote engagement between students that would otherwise not get a chance to meet. Due to zorb football being quite tiring (it gets hot in there!), team members were frequently rotated, allowing more chances for team building between new students, while those taking a break were able to meet and chat informally.
Claire Byrne, a second year PhD student, particularly enjoyed the event, and let her competitive side out as one of the rounders’ team captains; ‘It’s been a fab evening, it’s been great to have the opportunity to get our department together outside, doing something completely different and informally socialise with other labs that I’ve never met before, I hope we can do it again soon’.

Overall the event was a great success, providing an evening of relief from the stresses of thesis writing and lab work, with many new friendships made.