

LabSkin INSIGHTS

INNOVATION IN EVERY LAYER

Welcome to the second edition of Labskin Insights.

It has been a fantastic and busy summer at Labskin, with lots to celebrate. We officially opened our new laboratory facilities in Wetherby, welcomed new staff, and started working with exciting new projects and clients. It has been wonderful to see Labskin continue to go from strength to strength.

On a personal note, I was delighted to be invited to speak at the BEBPA EUR Bioassay Conference 2026 in Seville. It was a fantastic opportunity to share our work, meet colleagues from across the industry, and be part of such an inspiring scientific event.

As we look ahead, I am excited about what the next chapter will bring. I hope you enjoy this edition and discovering more about the people, projects, and developments shaping Labskin.



Dr Nicola Kingswell
Scientific Director and Owner



Dr Nicola Kingswell at the BEBPA conference in Seville

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IN THIS ISSUE



03. Editorial: Reducing Animal Testing

Why scientifically relevant testing models are critical for translating microbiome research into meaningful skincare innovation.



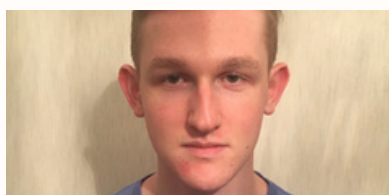
06. Company Growth and Updates

Read about our award nominations and find out about our successful KTP with Aston University.



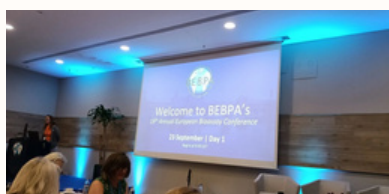
07. A New Home for Innovation

The Grand Opening at LabSkin.



08. People Behind the Science

Meet the newest members of the LabSkin team and discover the expertise they bring to our growing organisation.



09. Event and Industry Engagement

Sharing our science, building new connections, and engaging with partners and customers at leading industry events.



11. Client Voice

Hear directly from our partners about their experience working with LabSkin and the impact of our collaboration.

THE FUTURE OF PRECLINICAL RESEARCH: WHY HUMAN-RELEVANT MODELS MATTER

Editorial by Dr Stewart Sale, Business Development Director



The way we approach preclinical research is changing.

For decades, animal models have played an important role in biomedical research and the development of new products and therapies. However, advances in science and technology are creating new opportunities to complement, reduce and, where scientifically appropriate, replace animal studies with models that more closely reflect human biology.

This shift is being reinforced by significant regulatory developments. The FDA has been actively progressing its roadmap to reduce reliance on animal testing and has increasingly highlighted the role of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs), including advanced in vitro models, organoids, organ-on-chip systems and computational approaches. In March 2026, the FDA published draft guidance outlining considerations for the validation and use of NAMs in drug development, with an emphasis on human biological relevance, technical characterisation and fit-for-purpose applications. ([FDA Releases Draft Guidance on Alternatives to Animal Testing in Drug Development | FDA](#))

In September 2026, the FDA went further by updating its regulations to clarify that scientifically appropriate non-animal methods can be used for nonclinical testing of drugs and biological products. Importantly, this does not mean that animal studies have simply been eliminated. Rather, it represents a move towards a more flexible, scientifically driven approach in which the method selected should be appropriate for the research question and capable of generating meaningful evidence. ([FDA Updates Regulations to Advance Innovative Alternatives to Animal Testing | FDA](#))

For researchers and companies, this creates both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to develop models that can provide more relevant insights into human biology. The challenge is ensuring that those models are robust, reproducible, appropriately characterised and genuinely capable of answering the specific scientific questions being asked.

Human relevance starts with the right model

One of the key developments in this area is the increasing use of human-derived in vitro models.

Rather than asking whether an alternative model can simply replicate an animal study, a more useful question may be:

What is the biological question we are trying to answer, and what model is best placed to answer it?

This is where human skin models can offer significant value.

Skin is a complex, dynamic organ made up of multiple cell types and biological layers that interact with one another. Simplified cell cultures can be extremely useful, but they cannot always reproduce the architecture and interactions found in intact human tissue.

Three-dimensional, full-thickness human skin models provide an opportunity to investigate biological processes in a more physiologically relevant environment while maintaining the experimental control and accessibility of an in vitro system.

At Labskin Limited, we are focused on developing and providing human-relevant skin models that can support researchers across a range of applications.

From skin biology to disease research

Our full-thickness human skin models can be used to investigate a range of biological processes and research questions, including:

- Skin biology - understanding cellular interactions, biological pathways and responses within human skin.
- Wound healing - investigating the mechanisms involved in skin repair and regeneration and evaluating potential interventions.
- Atopic dermatitis - modelling aspects of disease biology and exploring potential therapeutic approaches.
- Melanoma research - providing a human skin environment in which researchers can investigate tumour biology and responses to potential treatments.

The value of these models is not simply that they are “animal-free”.

The real opportunity lies in the data they can generate.

A model that more closely represents human biology may enable researchers to ask different questions, investigate mechanisms in greater detail and potentially generate findings that are more directly relevant to human disease.

The FDA itself has highlighted the importance of developing NAMs that are human-relevant, scientifically rigorous and fit for their intended purpose. ([FDA Updates Regulations to Advance Innovative Alternatives to Animal Testing](#), FDA)

One model will not answer every question

The transition towards human-relevant research should not be viewed as a simple replacement exercise.

There is no single model that can replicate the complexity of the human body or answer every research question. The FDA continues to recognise that scientifically validated alternatives are not yet available for every application, and that further development and validation are needed.

Instead, the future is likely to involve a broader toolkit of complementary approaches.

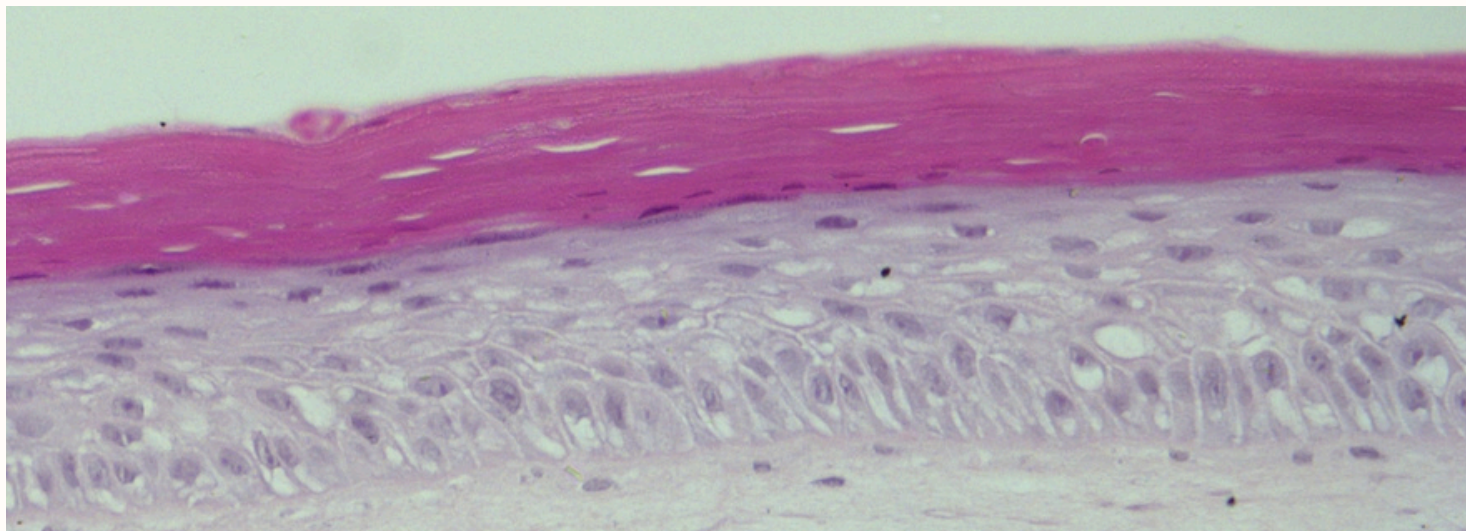
In vitro models, computational approaches, organoids, organ-on-chip technologies, existing human data and, where appropriate, animal studies can all contribute different types of evidence.

The important consideration is whether the selected approach is fit for purpose.

For skin research, this means developing models around the biology and research question rather than trying to force a single model to answer everything.

Collaboration will be critical

Developing better models requires collaboration. Researchers understand the biological questions they need to answer. Industry partners understand the challenges associated with product development, translation and decision-making. Model developers bring expertise in tissue engineering, biology and model characterisation.



Bringing these perspectives together can help create models that are not only scientifically interesting, but genuinely useful.

At Labskin Limited, we want to work with researchers and companies to understand the questions they are trying to answer and explore how our human skin models can support their work.

That may mean using an existing model, adapting a model for a specific application, or working collaboratively to develop something new.

Our aim is not simply to provide a model. It is to help researchers generate better, more relevant science and data.

Could a human skin model answer your research question?

As the research landscape continues to evolve, human-relevant in vitro models are likely to become an increasingly important part of the scientific toolkit.

If you are currently using an animal model for skin research, considering alternatives, or have a research question that could benefit from a human full-thickness skin model, we would like to hear from you.

Whether your interest is in skin biology, wound healing, atopic dermatitis, melanoma or another area of skin research, let's explore what is possible together.

If you have a research question, we want to help you find the right model to answer it.

Contact Labskin to discuss your research requirements and explore how our human skin models could support your work – science@labskin.co.uk.



Dr Stewart Sale,
Business Development Director

COMPANY GROWTH

Award Nominations for Labskin

Lab Innovations, the UK's largest laboratory industry event, returns to the NEC on 4–5 November 2026, bringing together the latest innovations, technologies, and developments from across the laboratory sector. This year, Labskin has even more reason to attend, having been shortlisted for three awards recognising its research, product innovation, and collaborative work.

The nominations span three distinct areas of Labskin's work:

- **Best Research Project** – Full-Thickness Atopic Dermatitis Skin Model for Therapeutic Delivery (in conjunction with the University of Leicester Proteomics Facility).
- **Best Consumables Innovation** – Labskin-S plates – Ready to Use 3D Full-Thickness Human Skin Model.
- **Best Technology Innovation** – Full-Thickness Human Skin Model Supporting a Functional Microbiome.



Labskin will also be sharing more about its technology during the event, with Nicola Kingswell delivering an invited presentation entitled: “**Labskin-S: One Model, Multiple Applications!**”

The talk will provide an overview of Labskin's 3D skin model technology, exploring its versatility and how it can be applied across numerous research areas.

The presentation is scheduled for day two of Lab Innovations, 5 November, at a provisional time of 12 noon.

Labskin looks forward to showcasing its work, sharing its expertise and connecting with others across the laboratory sector at Lab Innovations, as it celebrates three award nominations and contributes to the event's scientific programme.



“I am thrilled that Labskin's work and collaborations have been recognised in this way.

These nominations reflect the dedication of our team and the strength of our partnerships, and we are looking forward to attending Lab Innovations and joining our exclusive UK distributor, Thistle Scientific, on their stand H80.”

Matteo Capocéfalo
Labskin's Scientific Strategy and Operations Director

COMPANY GROWTH

Simms Adu Wins Aston University KTP Science, Health & Engineering Award

Simms Adu has won the Science, Health & Engineering KTP Award at Aston University's annual Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Showcase and Competition, recognising his work with Labskin to advance human skin models.

The event, held on Wednesday 14 October, welcomed around 200 guests, including members of the Labskin team, among them Nicola Kingswell. Reflecting on the quality of the work showcased, Nicola commented: *"The high standard of the projects on display must have made selecting the award winners a real challenge, so we are incredibly proud of Simms' achievement and pleased to be here to support and congratulate him."*

Developing the next generation of advanced 3D human skin models is the focus of Labskin's Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Aston University. Through the partnership, Simms is combining Labskin's expertise in skin model development with Aston University's academic research capabilities, with the shared aim of creating an immune-competent skin model that more closely reflects the complexity of human skin.

While current 3D in-vitro skin models can reproduce many of the physical characteristics of human skin, they typically have limited representation of immune cells. Simms' work focuses on addressing this gap by incorporating macrophages - important immune cells involved in inflammation, tissue repair and skin disease - into Labskin's existing full-thickness skin model. The aim is to provide a more representative platform for investigating healthy and diseased skin, as well as evaluating skincare products and potential therapies.

Following the partnership's first Local Management Committee meeting, Simms reflected on the progress being made: *"The future of artificial skin is in capable and professional hands."*

Although the project is still in its early stages, the collaboration is building momentum towards a model that could help researchers and industry better understand how human skin responds to products, disease and repair.



Local Management Committee meeting central image - L-R: Raphael Slipp, Andrew Devitt, Nicola Kingswell, Simms Adu, Matteo Capoccefalo, Ian Blakemore

A NEW HOME FOR INNOVATION

Labskin Grand Opening on 15th September 2026

Labskin welcomed over 50 attendees to the grand opening of its new premises in Wetherby, bringing together clients, suppliers and supporters, alongside civic leaders from across Yorkshire, including the Mayor of York, David Skaith.

Guests enjoyed a guided tour of Labskin's new laboratory facilities, where they had the opportunity to meet the scientists, learn more about the work taking place and see our Labskin plates up close under the microscope.

We were delighted to welcome our three event sponsors, Proteintech, MSD and Haier Biomedical UK, who are also valued suppliers supporting the work we do at Labskin.

The event was a great opportunity to connect with familiar faces, build new relationships and showcase our new facilities.

Here's to the next chapter for Labskin!

“

IT WAS SO INTERESTING TO SEE THE LAB, AND THE BUZZ IN THE ROOM WAS GREAT TO EXPERIENCE. THE NEW PREMISES ARE REALLY IMPRESSIVE, AND THE LAB STAFF WHO SHOWED US ROUND WERE TOO.”

Event Attendee



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PEOPLE AND TEAM GROWTH

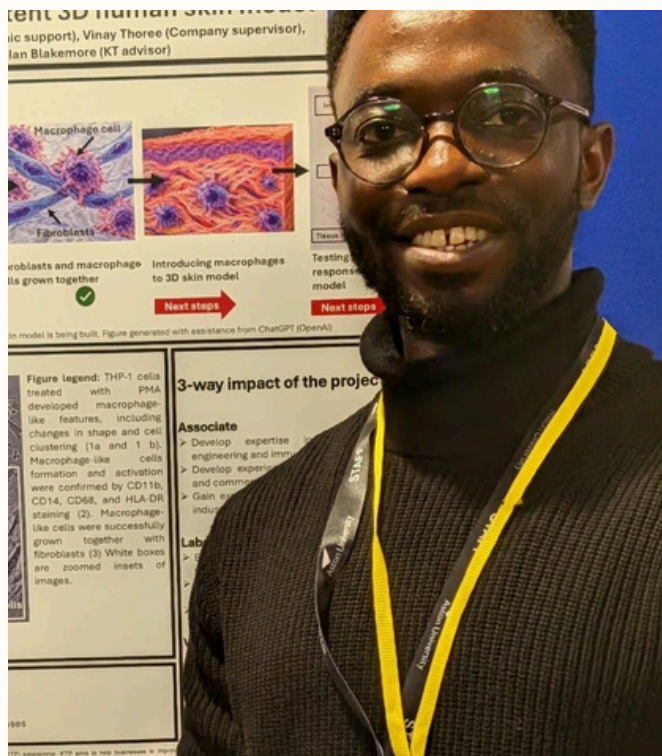
Our people are at the heart of everything we do, and we are delighted to introduce the newest members of the Labskin team. Join us in welcoming them as they begin this exciting new chapter with us.



Joe Taylor, Scientist

I have recently joined the team as a Microbiological laboratory technician; my role involves assisting in the preparation and conduction of research studies.

Prior to joining, I completed an MSc in Biomedical Science from the University of Leeds specialising in antimicrobial resistance and worked for 2 years in water quality.



Simms Adu, KTP Associate

I am a KTP Associate at Labskin UK Ltd, working on the development and optimisation of an immunocompetent 3D skin model through the incorporation of immune cells into Labskin's existing platforms. My role involves working collaboratively with academic and industry teams across the project, from experimental planning to laboratory experimentation, and product development. I am currently focused on developing robust methods for macrophage differentiation, establishing cell co-culture systems, and ultimately integrating functional immune cells into Labskin to support the development of a physiologically relevant model for future research and product testing.

As hobbies, I enjoy cycling, cooking, and taking scenic coastal drives, particularly exploring the UK and Ireland's coastline and countryside.



Blaze, Director of Employee Happiness

Every workplace needs a little extra happiness, and Blaze is here to deliver! As our unofficial Director of Employee Happiness, Blaze brings a little fun to the Labskin family.

EVENTS AND INDUSTRY PRESENCE

BEBPA – 23-25 September 2026

Dr Nicola Kingswell, Scientific Director at LabSkin, presented the latest work on LabSkin-Mel, our new in vitro 3D melanoma model for the assessment of novel therapeutics, at the BEBPA EUR Bioassay Conference in Seville. The three-day conference featured presentations from organisations including AstraZeneca, Sanofi and Novo Nordisk, alongside opportunities to connect with fellow experts. Delegates also enjoyed a Flamenco lesson, coinciding with Seville's biannual Flamenco festival.

If you want to find out more about LabSkin-Mel, Nicola and her team will explore the science behind the model, its development and its potential applications in preclinical drug testing at an upcoming online webinar on Monday 7 December 2026.

[REGISTER](#)



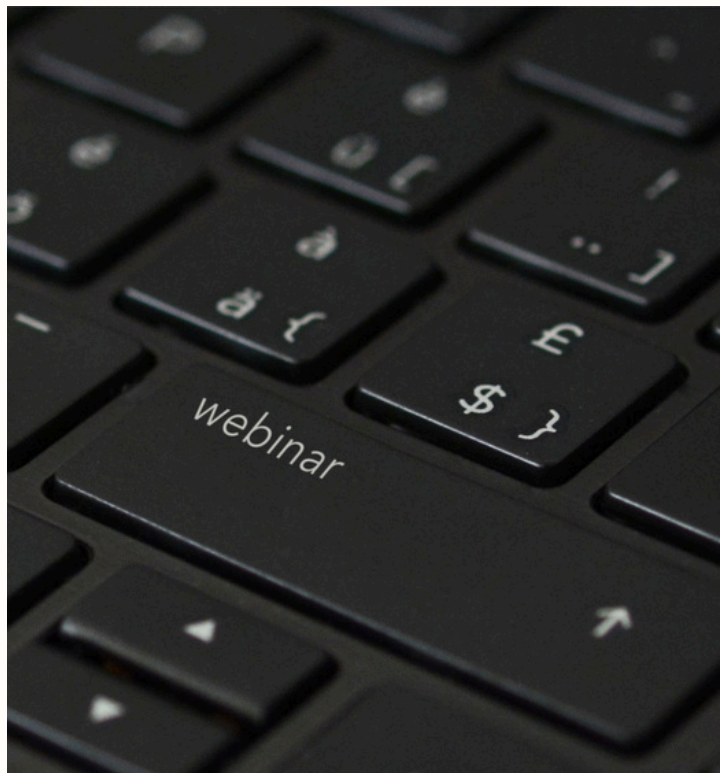
Register for our upcoming Melanoma Webinar:

LabSkin-Mel is a full-thickness 3D human skin model incorporating melanoma cells, developed to provide a more tissue-relevant platform for in vitro research.

Our upcoming webinar will explore:

- The development of the new LabSkin-Mel 3D melanoma model
- The science behind the model and its characterisation
- How LabSkin-Mel can be used for preclinical drug testing
- The potential of 3D human skin models to support more relevant melanoma research

[REGISTER](#)



EVENTS AND INDUSTRY PRESENCE

Human Research Centre North Opening 3 September 2026

On 3 September 2026, Nicola Kingswell and Matteo Capocéfalo attended the launch of the Human Specific Research Community North at the University of Bradford. Established by Animal Free Research UK in 2024, the Centre for Human Specific Research provides practical support for researchers interested in adopting human-focused approaches and transitioning away from animal-derived products. Members of the North community can benefit from insights shared at virtual events, connect with fellow scientists through a dedicated online forum, and access micro-grants to support the

purchase and validation of animal-free reagents. The launch included round-table discussions exploring the barriers to adopting human-specific research methods and technologies, and how collaboration across the research community can help overcome them.



LabSkin is pleased to support the growing human-specific research community, with Nicola set to take on the role of a Dragon in the Dragon's Den at the upcoming launch of the Human Specific Research Community Midlands at the University of Nottingham on 24 November 2026.

Our Business Development Director, Stewart Sale, will also be attending the launch event providing another opportunity to network with researchers, exchange ideas as they explore practical ways to advance human-specific approaches in research.

Upcoming Events

You can find the team at the following upcoming industry events:

- Lab Innovations 4th and 5th Nov 2026 at Birmingham NEC
- SCS Formulate 10 and 11 Nov 2026 at Coventry Arena
- Human Specific Research Community Midlands 24 Nov 2026 at the University of Nottingham
- Melanoma Webinar 7th December
- Skin@Bath 10 and 11 Dec 2026 at the University of Bath

We look forward to connecting with customers, collaborators, and industry colleagues over the coming months.

CLIENT VOICE:

Oriel Marine Extracts ask how and why?

Oriel Marine Extracts, based in County Louth, Ireland, has worked with LabSkin for almost 10 years across burns, wound and skincare research. For this latest study, the team wanted to understand why Hydrasphere™, their deep seawater mineral and trace element matrix, was having such a rapid impact on skin health. Using LabSkin's advanced imaging capabilities, the study followed the movement of Hydrasphere™ through the skin in real time.

The results provided a clearer visual understanding of both intercellular and intracellular movement, as well as its impact on key enzymes and proteins involved in skin health.

For Oriel, this provided valuable insight into the product's mode of action and opened up new opportunities for future applications and research. Read the full Client Spotlight and discover more about how LabSkin helped Oriel explore the science behind Hydrasphere™.

[**READ THE CLIENT SPOTLIGHT**](#)



LabSkin INSIGHTS

THANK YOU

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