

1st Organic Chemistry and Chemical Biology Interface Symposium in Ireland



From left to right:

Ellen Friel (RSC), Prof. Margaret Brimble, Prof. Thorri Gunnlaugsson, Dr Francesca Paradisi, Prof. Donal O'Shea, Dr Eoin Scanlan, Dr Peter Crowley, Dr Paul Stevenson, Dr Rachel Evans

The 1st Organic Chemistry and Chemical Biology Interface Symposium in Ireland was held in the School of Chemistry, Trinity College Dublin on Thursday 4th November 2010. This event, hosted by Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson and Dr Rachel Evans and in conjunction with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) Chemical Biology Interface Division and Organic Division, was held in honour of Professor Margaret Brimble (University of Auckland), the 2010 RSC Natural Product Chemistry Award Winner.



Prof. Margaret Brimble (right) receives the 2010 RSC Natural Product Chemistry Award from Ellen Friel (left, RSC).

Over 70 delegates from Ireland and the UK attended this inaugural symposium. The programme featured presentations from six up-and-coming and leading scientists from across Ireland and a plenary lecture from Prof. Brimble.

The first session, chaired by Prof. Stephen Connon, was kicked off by TCD's own Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, who after his opening welcome speech put his chemistry cap on and delivered an enthusiastic lecture entitled "*Synthesis and Biological Investigation of Ruthenium (II) Polypyridyl Conjugates as Novel Anti-Cancer Agents*", which displayed innovative approaches to the design of novel luminescent therapeutic agents. Dr. Paul Stevenson (Queens University Belfast) followed with a talk entitled "*Chemoenzymatic Approaches to Bioactive Natural Products*", which focussed on new synthetic routes to biologically active alkaloids isolated in nature. Dr Francesca Paradisi (University College Dublin), one of our young lecturer speakers, closed the first session with "*Extreme Environments as Sources for New Biocatalysts*", providing an interesting insight into the catalysis of synthetic reactions using biological extremophilic agents.

After a quick coffee, the second session, chaired by Dr Rachel Evans, was opened Professor Donal O'Shea (University College Dublin), with an excellent talk entitled "*BF₂-Tetraarylazadipyrrromethene Based in vivo Fluorescence Imaging Platforms*", showing the superb potential of BF₂ chelates of tetra-aryl-azadipyrrromethenes as photodynamic therapeutic agents for cancerous tumour treatment and as in vivo molecular biosensors. This was followed by presentations from two young lecturers, Dr Peter Crowley (NUI Galway) and Dr Eoin Scanlan (TCD). In his presentation entitled "*Protein Interactions - In the Test Tube and Inside Cells*", Dr Peter Crowley delivered a fascinating talk about spectroscopic approaches towards the determination of the role of crystal packing on protein function. Dr Eoin Scanlan presented an excellent talk entitled "*Strategies for the Synthesis of Glycotherapeutics*", which demonstrated new approaches to glycoporphyrins based on complex synthetic oligosaccharides for photodynamic therapy.

The final session, introduced by Professor Rory More O'Ferrall, featured a plenary lecture from Professor Margaret Brimble (University of Auckland) entitled "*Nature's Medicine Chest: Opportunities for Synthesis*". Prof. Brimble provided an illuminating walk through the world of natural product chemistry demonstrating the vast amount of ingenuity, work and persistence needed to obtain these synthetically challenging materials. Following the lecture Prof. Brimble was presented with the 2010 RSC Natural Product Chemistry award by Ellen Friel from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

We thank everyone who attended the event for making it the success that it was and look forward to the RSC Organic Chemistry and Chemical Biology Interface Symposium becoming a regular feature in the Irish Chemistry calendar.