

Chemistry Newsletter

Spring 2024

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Important Dates

2023/24 Term Dates:

Summer: Mon 22nd April 2024 to Sat 15th June 2024

Semester 2: Mon 29th Jan 2024 to Sat 15th June 2024

Semester 2 Exams:

Monday 20th May 2024 – Saturday 8th June 2024

Graduation:

17th-26th July 2024

University Closure days:

Monday 6th May 2024 (Public Holiday)
 Monday 27th May 2024 (Public Holiday)
 Monday 26th Aug 2024 (Public Holiday)

2024/25 Term Dates

Semester 1:

Mon 23rd Sept 2024 to Mon 27th Jan 2025

Induction Mon 23rd September 2024

Autumn Term:

Mon 30th Sept 2024 – Sat 14th Dec 2024



Global Women's Breakfast 2024

On 27th February, the Chemistry EDI committee organised an event in the Coffee Room for the IUPAC Global Women's Breakfast. The event is held annually in conjunction with the U.N. Day of Women and Girls in Science, the goal of the GWB series is to establish an active network of people of all genders to overcome the barriers to gender equality in science. The theme this year was "Catalyzing Diversity in Science" and staff and students from across Chemistry enjoyed a breakfast of pastries and fruit before an interesting panel discussion. Manda Banerji (Faculty Associate Dean EDI), Maisha Islam (Research Culture Lead, Doctoral College) and Sarah Mattsson (Exxon Mobil Chemical Ltd) shared details of their work to improve diversity in science, higher education and industry.



International Women's Day 2024

To mark International Women's Day on March 8th we highlighted the work of women crystallographers across our social media platforms.

At the UK Nationally Crystallography Centre at Southampton Chemistry each piece of equipment is named after one of these outstanding scientists. Rosalind Franklin, Kathleen Lonsdale, Dorothy Hodgkin, Ada Yonath and Elspeth Garman.

 **UoS Chemistry** @UoSChemistry · Mar 8
 2/6 On International Women's Day #IWD2024 we celebrate the work of Rosalind Franklin @UK_NCS [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosalind...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosalind_Franklin)

University of Southampton School of Chemistry **Ros - Rigaku FR-E+ Ultra High Flux Diffractometer**

Named after **Rosalind Elsie Franklin** (25 July 1920 – 16 April 1958) who made critical contributions to the understanding of the fine molecular structures of DNA, RNA, viruses, coal and graphite.

She is best known for her work on the X-ray diffraction images of DNA which led to discovery of the DNA double helix. Her data, according to Francis Crick, were "the data we actually used" to formulate Crick and Watson's 1953 hypothesis regarding the structure of DNA. She also led pioneering work on the tobacco mosaic and polio viruses.

Rigaku FR-E+ Ultra High Flux Diffractometer
 Ros is the left-hand part on our FR-E+ SuperBright Molybdenum X-Ray generator with a highly focused beam (70 µm). The setup is completed with a universal goniometer (UG2), intelligent goniometer head (IGH) and a HyPix-6000HE detector.



Do you have an article you wish to contribute to a future edition?

Please email Julie Herniman J.M.Herniman@soton.ac.uk or Dawn Dunlop D.Dunlop@soton.ac.uk

Graduations and Awards

Congratulations to the following students on their PhD Awards since our last newsletter:

James Read - *A novel sensitive coherent Raman imaging method for cellular imaging of photodynamic agents*

Marek Plata - *Protein NMR on a Chip: Development of an integrated Microfluidic Platform for Studying Protein-Ligand Interactions by Nuclear Magnetic Resonance*

James W. Easton - *An Investigation of Computational Techniques for the Conformational Determination of Therapeutically Relevant Cyclic Peptides*

Goulielmina Anyfanti - *Understanding and Controlling Organic Solid-State Switches by Combining Variable Temperature and High-Pressure Crystallography Measurements with Quantum Mechanics Studies*

Kelsey Cairns - *Coordination chemistry and properties of trivalent group 13 and divalent group 14 triflates with a range of neutral donating ligands*

Nabil A. Mohamed - *Electrochemically controlled deposition of nanomaterials*

Sidrah Hussain - *Advanced characterisation of next generation battery cathode materials using X-rays*

Rose Banister - *Peptidomimetics of β -Secondary Structure*

Leonie Windeln - *Identifying antibiotic precursors by screening genetically encoded cyclic peptide libraries*

Oryn Purewal-Sidhu - *Phosphodiester Foldamers*

Monika Papayova - *Development and optimisation of high throughput screening systems in mammalian cells*

Celebrations and Congratulations

University of Southampton is part of £1.5m investment in opportunities for technology specialists nationally

The University of Southampton is part of a £1.5m investment from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to support opportunities and development activities for the national research technical professional (RTP) community. This was funded through a Strategic Technical Platform call, with £16m investment in 11 projects from EPSRC and the UKRI Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) funds.

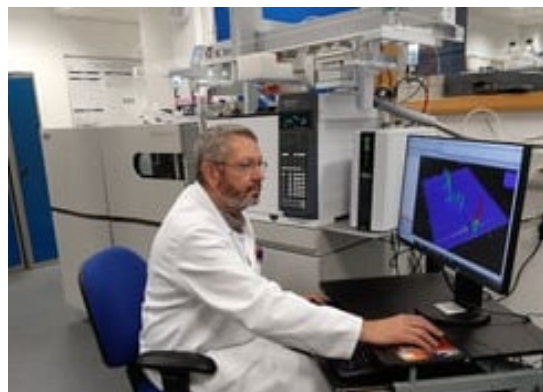
The project will be truly collaborative, with project led by the University of Warwick, with co-leads at the University of Bath, University of Edinburgh, University of Manchester, University of Newcastle, University of York and the Natural History Museum.



Dr Julie Herniman, RTP in Chemistry and co-lead, said: 'This is a great opportunity to share best practice, skills and knowledge across the whole TSN community, which has grown to over 300 members in its first year. Here in Southampton, we have many RTPs working

across five faculties and the project will provide support for travel, accommodation and carer responsibility bursaries. This will ensure that opportunities are as inclusive as possible and benefit RTPs at all career stages.'

The Chromatographic Society has awarded the 2024 Jubilee Medal to Professor John Langley



John is head of the Characterisation and Analytics Research group here in Chemistry.

John's research focuses mainly on separation and detection of polymeric material, organometallics, and various (bio)pharmaceuticals utilising a multitude of separation techniques interfaced with mass spectrometry and works closely with many companies within the pharmaceutical and petrochemical industries.

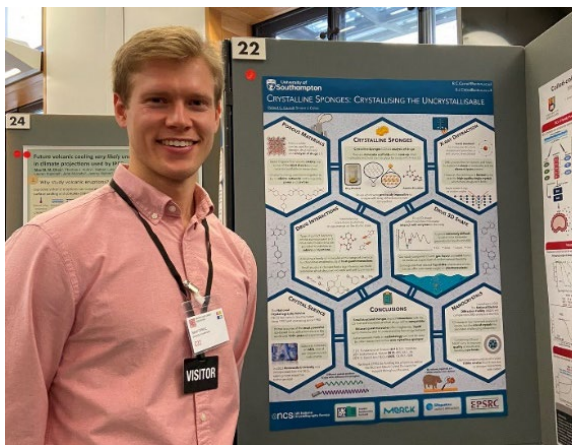
He has published over 130 publications (>4000 citations) and has an h-index of 35. He was recognised by the British Mass Spectrometry Society through their BMSS Medal in 2021.

Outside of research John has played a significant leadership role in UK separation science, through his teaching (internal and external to the University), research and advocacy. He is well known for his support of diversity and inclusion within the separation science (and mass spectrometry) communities. As Chair of the Royal Society of Chemistry's separation science group for several years, he has worked collaboratively with a variety of societies to deliver several national and international symposia including HTC, SinS (Solutions in Science) and the International Mass Spectrometry Conference.

Celebrations and Congratulations

STEM for BRITAIN 4th March 2024

Two of our PhD Chemists were selected for the STEM for BRITAIN event at the Houses of Parliament. This is a poster competition in the House of Commons – involving 120 early stage or early career researchers – judged by professional and academic experts, each winner receives a cash prize with a medal for the gold recipient.



Rob Carroll a PhD student supervised by Professor Simon Coles talks about the experience.

“Being selected as a STEM for Britain finalist was an amazing honour and a nice change to specialist conferences! It was definitely more challenging presenting work to a general audience but as I’m coming to the end of my PhD, I found it useful to discuss the whole narrative of my work over the past 4 years. Talking to other PhD students and postdocs in Physics and Maths was also a lot of fun, especially because their areas of application can differ so much from ours in Chemistry.”

Maciej Walerowski supervised by Professor Robert Raja also attended and was awarded one of the top prizes at the event.



“It was a fantastic opportunity to talk about my research with a broader audience that I normally wouldn’t have an opportunity to talk to, such as members of parliament and peers. I’ve also been able to meet a lot of fantastic early career researchers in other scientific fields and learn about some really exciting research, such as improving cancer treatments or understanding how birds navigate using the earth’s magnetic field. To top off the great day in parliament, I was awarded the gold (Roscoe) medal in the Chemistry section for my poster! I will now also have the opportunity to compete for the Westminster medal which is judged on the ability to convey complex scientific information in an accessible format. I would highly recommend taking part in the Stem for Britain event!”



Photo Credit: John Deehan Photography and the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee

Congratulations to Syed Zaheer Abbas - Lecturer and MSc Chemical Engineering Programme Lead who becomes a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA)



“In January 2023, I started working as a lecturer at UoS. Soon after joining, I began getting my portfolio ready to become a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). Prof. Simon Coles was my mentor, and his advice really helped improve my portfolio. Crafting case studies and aligning them with UKPSF dimensions was an incredible journey. Thanks to the guidance of Simon, I became a Fellow in February 2024.”

Chemistry at SOTSEF 2024!



 **G. Pileio NMR Methodology Research Group**
@GPileioGroup

Great day running a live MRI demo for the 5th time at the annual science and engineering day. 200 people visited us to learn about MRI and see it run on a very sweet patient, a sour patch kid! Thanks to a great team: Hayley, Cody and Tom @MagResSoton @TRobertsonSci #SOTSEF



Congratulations to our Undergraduate Poster Prize winners who each receive a £50 prize:

Agata Dawidowicz
Keziah Langdon
Katherine Marris
Victoria Nathan-Maister



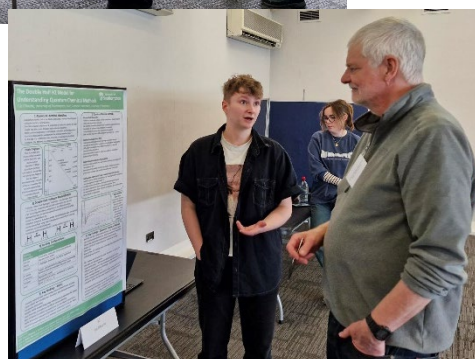
Here are a few more pictures from Poster Day 2024.



Congratulations to Dr Mohamed Hassan-Sayed, Director of Programmes and Assoc Prof in Chemical Engineering Systems seen here receiving a World Association Sustainability Award.



“Sustainability encapsulates the 4 Ps: Profit, People, and the Planet, through Partnership fostering a cooperative vision for a brighter future. Engaging with the World Association for Sustainable Development as an associate has been an honour and an illuminating voyage, allowing for invaluable insights from experts and a platform to exchange knowledge”.



Congratulations to Prof Ali Tavassoli:

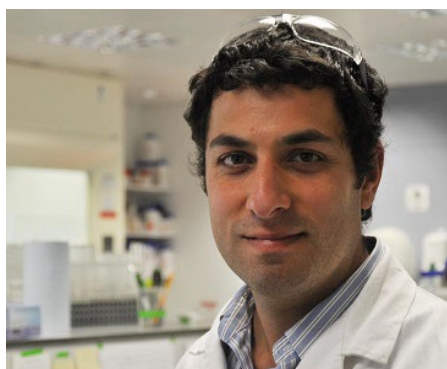
Curve Therapeutics raises £40.5 million to turbocharge discovery platform and advance breakthrough pipeline.

Southampton, UK, 27 February 2023 - Curve Therapeutics ("Curve" or the "Company"), a private biotechnology company pioneering a revolutionary intracellular screening platform addressing complex and challenging disease targets, today announces the close of its successful £40.5 million Series A financing. Pfizer Ventures led the round with participation from Columbus Venture Partners and British Patent Capital, which join founding investor Advent Life Sciences and co-lead from the seed round, Epidarex Capital.

Curve's powerful Microcycle® platform enables the direct discovery of biologically active molecules against targets that have been difficult to address using conventional drug discovery methods. Curve has built a discovery pipeline of assets including a first-in-class dual-inhibitor of HIF-1 and HIF-2 that addresses survival mechanisms in more than half of solid tumours, and a first-in-class inhibitor of ATIC dimerization that targets an important vulnerability in multiple cancers. The financing will enable the Company to progress development of these assets rapidly towards clinical development and to expand the discovery platform beyond challenging and complex intracellular protein targets.

Simon Kerry, PhD, MBA, Chief Executive Officer of Curve Therapeutics, said: "This financing will enable us to expand our team, progress our lead assets into the clinic and to expand our drug discovery platform. We welcome our new investors alongside our existing strong syndicate and look forward to working together to take Curve to its next stage of growth."

Professor Ali Tavassoli, Chief Scientific Officer of Curve Therapeutics, added: "Curve's Microcycle platform is a powerful tool for drug discovery,



enabling an unparalleled advantage in the discovery of functional hits and leads. We look forward to maximising the potential of our platform to further develop a rich pipeline of programmes with the potential to treat unmet clinical needs in a diverse range of diseases, including cancer."

Stem Cell Donation - Dan Singleton

At the end of 2023 I received a phone call out of the blue from a phone number I did not recognise. I answered it to find out it was from The Anthony Nolan Charity to tell me that I was a match for a patient who required stem cell donation. The Anthony Nolan charity visited the university around 15 years ago to ask people to sign up to their register for stem cell/bone marrow donation. I was told by the charity that the patient required a stem cell donation which would be obtained by a peripheral blood cell (PBSC) collection. This method of collection is used in ~90 % of donations rather than the bone marrow transplant.

A nurse came out to see me to take some blood samples for initial confirmation that I was fit to donate. A few weeks later I went to King College Hospital for a medical and discussion with a consultant where I was informed about the collection process. Four days prior to donation I was given GSS-F (Granulocyte colony stimulating factor) injections to take which stimulates the bone marrow to increase the number of stem cells in the blood. This process can make patients feel unwell and towards the end of the injections I was feeling particularly fatigued. However, I felt well enough to go about my daily business and the Antony Nolan team were always in touch to make sure I was ok. The night before the donation I was put up in a hotel by the charity to make sure I was comfortable and well for the donation.

The donation itself was fine. My blood was taken to make sure there was a decent level of stem cells present. My blood was then taken over a period of 4 hours in which the stem cells were separated from the blood in a centrifuge and then the blood returned back to me. I was well looked after by the team at Kings College Hospital and although I felt tired out, I was back to normal the following day. Luckily for me, I donated enough stem cells for the patient so that I didn't need to return again the next day for a second donation.

Unfortunately, it will be at least a year before I hear how the patient is doing but it nice to know that this donation may save their life. The process of donating was a bit daunting, but the reality of the experience was fine. I certainly would encourage people to sign up to the register and give this a go should they become a match.

Link to join the register:

<https://www.anthonynolan.org/help-save-a-life/join-stem-cell-register>

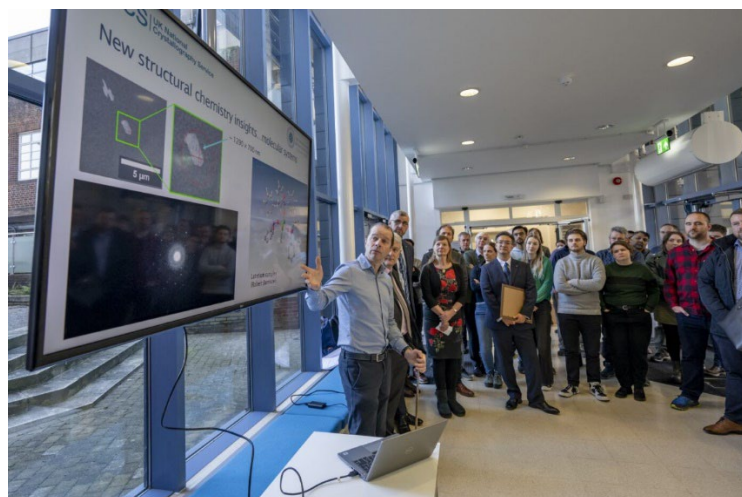
Link to donate: <https://www.anthonynolan.org/help-save-a-life/donate-money>

National Electron Diffraction Facility

January saw the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Synergy-ED electron diffractometer. This was an event celebrating the opening of the Southampton side of a new National Electron Diffraction Facility (NEDF), in partnership with the University of Warwick. This is the first national facility for electron diffraction in the world and only the third installation of such a dedicated instrument. The facility boasts two of these instruments, following a £3.2 million strategic equipment grant from EPSRC.



Electron diffraction is a powerful technique which allows us to expand single crystal diffraction beyond the one micron sample size barrier to nanocrystalline materials. This opens up the technique to several new areas of chemistry, where the growing of suitably sized crystals was often prohibitive, including inorganic materials, perovskites and MOFs.

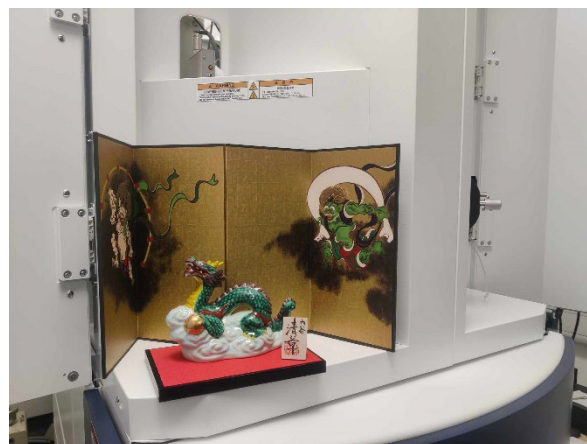


The event was well attended by faculty members, as well as visitors from outside the university including Rigaku and Jeol (the instrument manufacturer) colleagues travelling in from Japan and France as well as being joined by our collaborators from Warwick. There were short presentations given by Prof Simon Coles, Mark Benson (Rigaku) and Prof Mark Smith. There was also a talk given by Prof Elspeth Garman, the instrument's namesake (ELS). The NCS has a history of naming their instruments after prominent female scientists in the field of crystallography.



Dr Mark Benson, General Manager, Global Sales, and Marketing at Rigaku, said: "We are extremely proud to continue our long partnership with the UK National Crystallography Service. The NCS has been using Rigaku X-ray instruments for 13 years and will shortly be adding two of the world's first dedicated electron diffractometer, the XtaLAB Synergy-ED, to their service at the universities of Southampton and Warwick. Our partnership will drive innovation and development in the rapidly growing field of electron diffraction."

The diffractometer was even gifted its very own dragon!

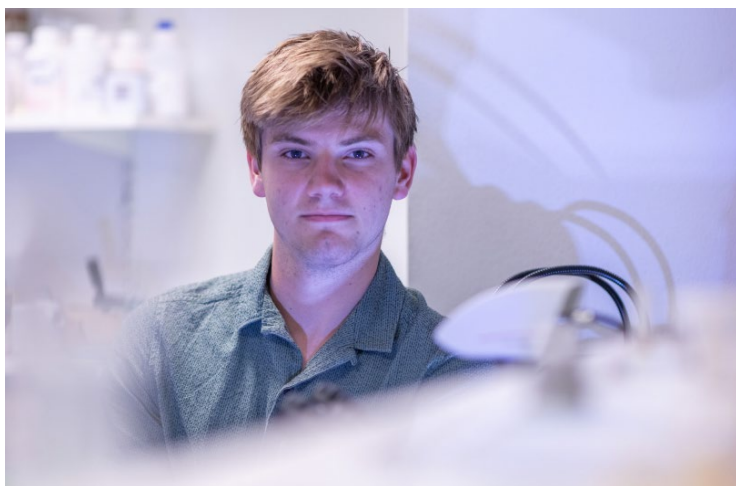


Following the event, we hosted a very successful electron diffraction advanced data processing workshop with talks from Petr Brazda (of the Lukas Palatinus group in Prague), Christian Göb (Rigaku) and David Waterman (STFC/DIALS). The workshop was a valuable experience, which 'trained the trainers' and gave those who are going to be leading the field of electron diffraction a solid foundation to work from.

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2023/01/crystal-electron.page>

<http://www.ncs.ac.uk/NEDF>

Staff One to One: Q&A with Owen Hewitt



Job title and a brief description of your tasks

I am an Apprentice Laboratory Technician as a part of the NCS.

My tasks range from manual handling to regular lab inspections and maintenance, to assisting with research, and any other duties that may be asked. Recently I have conducted a short research project into the formation of cocrystals and their characteristics.

How did you get the job in Chemistry?

I was searching for a way into the world of chemistry any way that I could and had been told from others that apprenticeships were a fantastic way to get stuck in the deep end and that I could get so much out of it, which I certainly have so far.

What is the best thing about working here?

The best thing about working here is the astonishing number of opportunities I have been given to get involved with. Everyone here is welcoming and I am grateful that I've been able to branch into parts that are far beyond my expectations such as 3D printing, electron diffraction and crystal sponges. The amount of advanced equipment here would be difficult to find anywhere else so to be able to work on them has been a privilege.

What is the hardest thing about working here?

I think the hardest part about working here is trying to keep up with the new things I am pulled into. The incredible breadth and depth of knowledge that my colleagues have is astounding to me and I've only scraped the surface of what I could learn.

What do you want to do in the future?

In the future I would like to continue to expand my knowledge and skills in science, to progress further in my job role and be able to offer more. I think it's important to develop ability throughout one's whole life, so I intend to do that. Additionally, I do see myself teaching at one point but have no idea if I actually will, or when it would be.

What do you do when you are not working?

I spend my weekends football coaching small children (18 months to 8 so really small children!) which is very rewarding as I get to see them develop their ability over time.

When I'm not doing that, I try to get outside as much as possible and fill my time with whatever I can. I have recently started a kickboxing class with my brother to keep my fitness up and hopefully learn something along the way.

I like to do random things like rock climbing, bowling and hiking as I try to go to The New Forest regularly and have plans to climb Ben Nevis soon.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ED&I is central to the ethos in Chemistry, and we have a committed team that works hard to build a positive environment for all members of our School to be able to develop and succeed. As a school we have been involved in the [Athena SWAN charter](#) for the advancement and career progression of women in science for many years and its principles run through all we do.

Chemistry holds a Silver Athena SWAN Award that was renewed in 2023, the first department at the University of Southampton to achieve this status three times.



If you would like to know more about our work, there is lots of useful information on our website which also includes our Early Career Support Hub.

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/chemistry/about/Equality/index.page>

For more information about the ED&I or to raise any issues or concerns please contact Dr Paul Duckmanton or Dr Julie Herniman.

Revisiting Places: From Post-Doc to Plenary Speaker: Jeremy G. Frey

Forty years ago I was a post-doc with Prof. Yuan Lee in the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, and in the summer of 1983, I flew from San Francisco to Southampton for a lectureship interview (I did not at that stage get a job offer from Southampton, but that is another story) and in a 'Changing Places' type scenario, this summer, 2023, forty years on I was flying back over the north Atlantic, crossing my past self's path somewhere over Greenland, as I flew to the ACS National Fall Meeting to give my first ACS Plenary Talk (Sunday August 13th 5pm 2023). Despite having been to many of the ACS National Meetings over the last 20 years, I had not fully appreciated the significance of the ACS Plenary sessions.

The Theme of the 2023 Fall ACS meeting was Harnessing the Power of Data. I think my invitation to give the plenary was certainly helped by the opportunity to give a talk on Data at the award symposium to celebrate the 2020 Herman Skolnik award to Wendy War that was finally held at the 2022 ACS Spring meeting – long delayed due to covid - and in fact I gave that talk online due to ongoing travel issues.

San Francisco was as marvellous as ever, more homeless and more closed shops, but wonderful views, great food, but all at an astonishing cost. Walking into the Moscone Conference Centre the day before my talk to give the tech team a copy on a USB stick (the attempt at the electronic transfer as usual failed to get to the required people) I found out a first-hand what it is like to see your own name up in lights as I saw my talk being advertised on a foyer huge screen at registration (I asked a rather surprised ACS staff member at a help desk to take the photo of me and my picture on the display – she had to wait until the right picture came round).

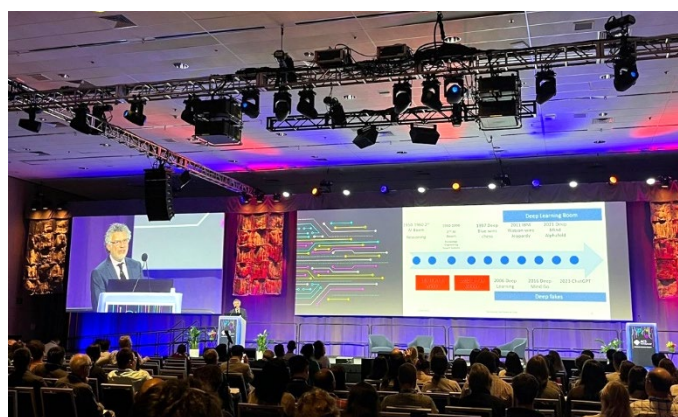


The lecture room was another surprise. The room capacity was ~ 1400 which a wide stage at the front and

a control platform at the back. In a Wizard of Oz moment, I discovered that the tech team was hidden behind the stage backdrop curtain. Some last minute editing to make sure all displayed correctly and a practice at controlling slides from the stage.

Next day, afternoon photocall and interview, then checking again by the tech team that all was set. Looking out from the stage I could see a screen showing my slides, and with a magic pointer could point and control without having to look back at the stage (not that I always remembered this) and a big screen with elapsed time (clearly the organisers are used to academic time keeping).

Walking up to start my talk what hit me first were the bright lights shining, no need to worry about the large audience, I could not see them!

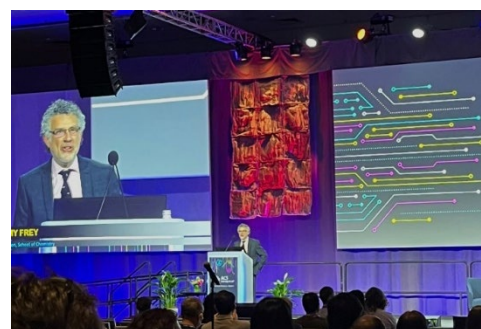


My talk seemed to go well, the animations worked, and with at least some understanding and responding to my sense of humour. The video recording of the whole session is available at:

<https://www.acs.org/meetings/acs-meetings/past-meetings/opening-session/harnessing-the-power-of-data.html>

However, one of the most amazing things that you won't easily see on the video, is the simultaneous sign language translation provided by two remarkable people. Each of them taking a 10 minute turn throughout the whole of the two hour session, and this was all done without any prior information on our talks! A truly incredible team.

I am very grateful to Prof. Kennie Merz for the invitation to give this plenary talk and to all my students and colleagues, from Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Maths, Statistics, and to my family with putting up with me being away for so much time.



Teaching in Benin by Peter Horton (Research Fellow)

For about a week last September, I found myself teaching crystallography in Cotonou, Benin to a group of tremendously intelligent individuals, all extremely eager to learn. This was a small component of a 2-week X-TechLab training session there involving many aspects of X-ray diffraction.

I have two people to primarily thank for that opportunity. Firstly, my boss, Prof. Simon Coles, who has been involved in helping to spread scientific expertise into Africa for many years, and secondly Dr Sidoine Bonou, who had visited Southampton from Benin for a couple of months earlier in the year, spending significant time with the NCS.

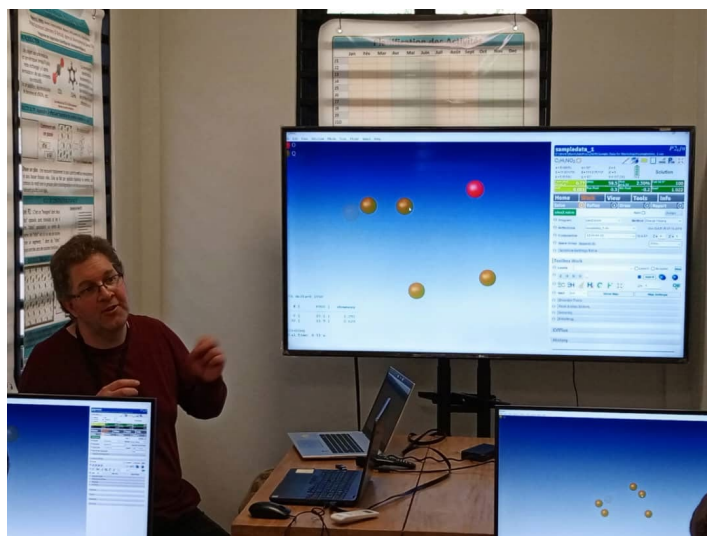
This was to be my first trip anywhere in Africa, and probably my main worry was going to be the heat and sun strength (I consider the UK can get too hot in the summer!). Luckily my GP managed to quash those by proceeding to tell me everything (in rather too graphic detail) that could go wrong health wise even while they made sure I was up to date with various jabs.

To be honest though, as soon as I arrived in Cotonou and had met up with Sidoine and others helping out for the training sessions, those worries disappeared.



X-TechLab was started in 2019 with the aim of advancing Science in Africa and gaining skills to help solve Africa-centric issues. The training session places are limited and much sought after, with participants coming from all over Africa.

Although everything was in theory timetabled, they were pretty much 'advisory', with sessions extended and adjusted, often due to the many thought-provoking questions sometimes resulting in further group discussions.



From a personal perspective, there was a definite challenge in gauging how to teach and explaining the often tricky concepts of crystallography to a wide range of experience in the technique and also for those where English is not their first language. Luckily crystallography can be very visual and one of the best ways to learn is through repeated trials and errors.



Anyway, whatever I thought, they have invited me back to help out again, so I must have been doing something right!

The whole time in Benin was an experience I will never forget, and I am so glad that I took the opportunity to go.

Beyond Chemistry

Meet Tyler Nagbe, Chemistry Undergraduate Student – Black Women’s Project

My name is Tyler L Nagbe, and I am a third-year Chemistry student on the MChem course. Currently, I hold the position of Co-President of the 'Black Women’s Project' society. Additionally, I serve as a panellist on the Widening Participation team, focusing on addressing the current attainment gap. Previously, I held the role of Publicity Officer for Southampton’s Afro-Caribbean society.



The Black Women’s Project (BWP) is an organization dedicated to nurturing and developing Black female leaders at university. Our focus lies on enhancing their well-being and skills throughout their academic journey and as they transition into their careers. We achieve this by hosting annual conferences, leadership academies, and social events.

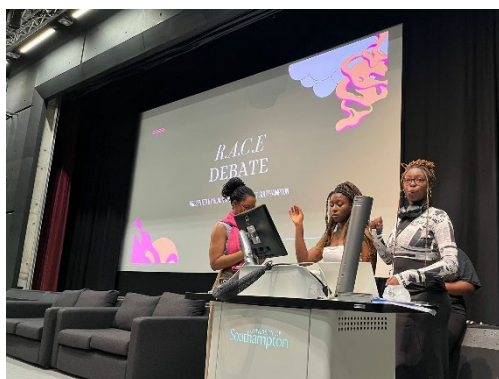
My involvement with BWP began during my first year at university when I attended bunfight.

I was immediately drawn to their mission and attended all their events, including their Leadership Academy, which significantly boosted my confidence as I embarked on my university journey. Subsequently, I was recommended and nominated to serve as Co-President for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 terms. While I briefly stepped down in my first term to focus on my studies, the unwavering support from the committee members encouraged me to run again.

Serving as President has been an incredible learning experience, teaching me valuable lessons in patience,

organization, and tactfulness. It has been an honour to support and empower Black female students at the University of Southampton and level the playing field.

We encourage you to all follow our social media @bwpsouthampton on Instagram for updates, and if anyone would like to contribute or assist with our events, please feel free to contact me.



Meet Chloe Howells, Postdoc with the Stulz group, and volunteer for St. John Ambulance

Most people who know me in the department know me as the PDRA in the Stulz group. But outside of my life of a post doc, I volunteer for St. John Ambulance.

I have been volunteering for about 10 years now. I originally joined during my undergraduate degree as a first aider and have now progressed to advanced first aider and unit manager. I’ve covered all kinds of events in the past decade, from small village fayres to big pop concerts with 10000+ people in attendance. I also run the Southampton unit, which can be a lot of work as I run the weekly training nights, organise members to cover events, run logistics and make sure our kits are fully stocked, as well as do all the admin behind the scenes.

I love having the opportunity to help people when they need it and knowing first aid means that I can also help outside of my role too, such as when I helped support an ambulance attending a car crash as well as being a first aider in the department. It’s a really useful skill to know and saves lives. I plan on further progressing my skills to become a qualified emergency responder and eventually move up to emergency ambulance crew, where I can attend 999 calls to help the NHS.



Meet Uluk Rasulov, 3rd year PhD student and President of the Southampton University Boxing Club

I am currently in my third year as a PhD student in the SpinDynamics group within the Chemistry department. My daily work revolves around simulating spin dynamics for NMR studies, which is both challenging and rewarding. However, after the academic day concludes, I transition from science to the realm of boxing as the president of the Southampton University Boxing Club.



By night, I train, coach, compete, and oversee the club's daily operations alongside my dedicated committee. We offer six varied training sessions each week, catering to all levels, from beginners to amateur competitors. I am passionate about inviting everyone, especially those from the Chemistry department, to join us. Regardless of the day you choose, we guarantee an engaging session tailored to your interest and skill level.

Having practised boxing, Muay Thai, and BJJ for many years, I view martial arts not just as physical activities but as disciplines that sharpen both body and mind. In academia, where intense mental focus is paramount, boxing serves as a unique form of meditation. It provides an escape to a state where one temporarily sets aside cognitive demands and reconnects with primal physical instincts. This discipline offers an unparalleled way to cultivate mental and physical discipline.

We, as a club, also take great pride in organizing Fight Nights, events that are a thrilling spectacle for the entire university and the public. Our most recent event held at a venue in the city centre, was our largest yet, drawing an audience of over 400 people.

These occasions offer our fighters a unique opportunity to showcase their skills under the bright lights, experiencing the intense rush and primal instincts of competitive combat.

While I don't have the time to train as intensely for competitive bouts, I have transitioned more to coaching younger fighters and organising these events.



The intersection of chemistry and boxing might not seem obvious, but I've discovered they complement each other remarkably well. As you are sparring, dodging punches, and counterattacking, your mind is hyper-focused in an incredible state of flow. That is when you find the solution to the academic problem which has been bothering you for a long time.

Do you have an article you wish to contribute to a future edition?
We also welcome your feedback on the newsletter.

Please email Julie Herniman
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or Dawn Dunlop
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Student Wellbeing Resources

Here are some resources that may help students' find support with their Wellbeing and Mental Health.

Student Hub, Student Wellbeing Sharepoint:
<https://shorturl.at/qXY23>



Managing Assessments, Study and Wellbeing
<https://shorturl.at/yTZ48>



With Semester 2 exams period approaching, see these guides for managing stress before, during and after your assessments; and a guide to what you need to know about your assessments.

Wellbeing – Before, during and after exams
<https://rb.gy/Or93q6>



Exams and assessments: A guide of what you need to know
<https://rb.gy/c11r52>

