A belated happy new year to everyone and best wishes for a successful and productive 2019. In some respects this is already happening. We welcome formally, as of the start of January, Remzi Becer to our academic staff, and our new appointee in structural biology, Marcio Dias, will be joining us any day now from Brazil. Recruitment to four more assistant professor posts is in progress: an inorganic post (to replace Jon Rourke) has attracted an outstanding applicant pool, and the posts agreed in the strategy renewal for Catalysis, AI / Machine Learning and Energy Materials are imminent. We had an appointee for the ‘energy materials’ post but disappointingly he withdrew late so that will be re-advertised soon. As mentioned in the last Orbital editorial, having done the work of the strategy renewal during 2017/18, we will reap the benefits as the new investment in academic, technical and administrative staff materialises in 2019. And a very recent bit of good news: many congratulations to Reinhard Maurer for his £1.1M RCUK fellowship which was awarded in the first round, one of only 50 across all of the science and engineering portfolio in the UK and one of only two in Warwick.

In the background, work led by Mike Shipman is going on around new estate, and the university council were very enthusiastic about the proposed plans for a new ‘science block’ - even to the extent of questioning if we were being ambitious enough and wanted an even bigger building, which had the university’s finance director looking slightly nervous. So this will happen - eventually - and meanwhile we are working with the Estates department to alleviate the ever-present problems associated with the infrastructure in C-block and see what can be done to keep it limping along for a few more years. So hang in there, inhabitants of C-block: the cavalry is only a few years away…

**Visit to China**

In October/November last year, Professor Peter Sadler visited GoldenKeys High-tech Material Ltd in Guizhou Province, China. The CEO of GoldenKeys is Dr Yingjian Xu, a Warwick Chemistry Alumnus (PhD Prof Martin Wills 2005).

Together they attended a symposium in Jiaxing (Zhejiang province) aimed at encouraging teenagers to participate in science and technology innovation and create the future.

On Peter’s immediate left is Fa-ren Qi, one of China’s chief rocket designers, and on his far left is Dr Xu.

GoldenKeys supports two collaborative PhD students in our department (with MW and PJS).

Peter also visited Wuzhen which is the permanent site of the world internet conference.

**Grant award**

Congratulations to Dr Ahmed Eissa, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Chemistry, who has recently been awarded a Wellcome-Warwick Seed Grant funding through the Quantitative Biomedicine Programme (QBP), Warwick Medical School (WMS).

The seed fund project, which will further Dr Eissa’s research portfolio and support the expansion of his team, is entitled “Womb in a Dish: Ex Vivo Human Embryo Implantation exploiting Biocompatible Polymer Scaffolds to Investigate and Treat Miscarriage”.

The project will involve collaboration with the Implantation Research Clinic at the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW), led by Prof Jan Brosens, where primary tissue samples will be obtained, consolidating links between Warwick Chemistry and WMS and its partner UHCW.

The results obtained from this project is expected to form the basis of future major grant application to the Wellcome Trust.
On 5 February, Nat Rodrigues Lopes (an IAS/IATL Early Career Fellow working in the Stavros group) hosted the ChemContext event.

Following the format of a poster session, the ChemContext event aimed to bring the PG and UG student communities together: PG students were asked to produce posters where they showed how a key UG chemistry concept was relevant to their research and then present them to UG students.

This activity not only provided an opportunity for UG students to contextualise the learning of lecture content in light of current research being carried out in the department, but also allowed PG students to develop their communication and teaching skills. There was even time and space for some spontaneous networking, with some interesting science conversations unfolding!

The feedback from both student communities was overwhelmingly positive. UG students found the event very useful for a number of reasons: the predicted contextualisation of their learning was mentioned, as was learning about research, chatting to PhD students about pursuing postgraduate studies, and the opportunity to see examples of good posters (which helped getting ideas for a poster assignment they had due in a few weeks!). PG students, on the other hand, enjoyed the opportunity to review the UG topics and to learn about the research other PhD students are involved in within the department. Praise for the catering was universal!

The event included a poster competition. Daniel Coxon won 1st prize and will receive £100, while Andrew Lunn and Garrett Jackson will each receive a £50 runner up prize. Well done!

A huge well done and thank you to all students involved, particularly the PG students who took the time to make the posters and answer UG students’ questions – your enthusiasm, expertise and approachability was also mentioned in the feedback!

This event was made possible thanks to the funding received from the WATE PGR award (£500), the Royal Society of Chemistry (£500), Warwick Careers&Skills (£300) and the Warwick Institute of Advanced Study (£350).

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RSC Organic Division Midlands Regional Meeting 2019

This annual one-day conference will take place on Tuesday 19 March in the Zeeman Building. It will include lectures from early career researchers from the Universities of Birmingham, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Sheffield and Warwick, and an award lecture by the 2018 RSC Natural Product Award Winner, Professor Bradley Moore (University of California at San Diego).

Researchers at PhD and postdoctoral level will have the opportunity to present a poster (click 'Abstract submission' on the registration website to submit a poster abstract). For more information, email s.roesner@warwick.ac.uk.

Food and drinks will be provided, and registration for the meeting is free and now open until 8 March.

Congratulations to students (right) from MSc Polymer Chemistry, MSc Polymer Science, MSc Analytical Science and Instrumentation, MSc Molecular Analytical Science, MSc Scientific Research and Communication, MSc Chemistry with Scientific Writing.

(Left) PhD in Chemistry and PhD in Mathematical Biology and Biophysical Chemistry (MOAC).

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Dates for the diary

Monday 20 – Wednesday 22 May: Pint of Science

Wednesday 22 May: Women in STEM Conference.

Wednesday 29 May: the PG Symposium 2019
News from Charlie, Senior Careers Consultant

On Monday 21 January, 20 undergrad Chemists found their way to the Headquarters of the British Coatings Federation on Westwood Business Park near campus to hear assorted employers and one of our placement students, Matt Duckett, talk about opportunities in the coatings industry.

Speakers, many from small businesses, enthused about the opportunity to get involved in all aspects of what’s going on in their companies, from R&D to advising manufacturers, to liaising with sales people. Matt also shared how he is exploring robotics as a way to reduce repetitive evaluative work on new paint formulations at a large paint manufacturer. We all enjoyed chatting afterwards over prosecco and pizza and look forward to continuing to liaise with BCF at future events.

Research Fellow Forum Seminar

On Thursday 10 January, the second Warwick Chemistry Research Fellow Forum took place as part of the RSC seminar series. This was a fantastic opportunity for Postdocs to present their work, followed by a cheese and wine networking event which was well attended by Postdocs with a few staff coming along to show their support also.

Matthew Gyton and Natercia das Neves Rodrigues Lopes delivered talks on macrocycle synthesis and quantum beats in next generation sunscreens respectively. The event was once again a great success with at least one new collegiate collaboration resulting from it. Here’s to the next one being even greater with even more postdocs and permanent academic staff coming along to share their science and foster our excellent chemistry community.

If that was not enough to satisfy your postdoc science presentation needs, on Tuesday 7 May, the Second Warwick Postdoctoral Science Symposium will take place at the Medical Training Centre on Gibbet Hill. This is a faculty-wide event for postdocs and early career researchers to meet, share thoughts and ideas, and generally foster a tighter and stronger community among science PDRAs. Last year’s event was a fantastic success with over 100 attendees, more than 40 posters and 15 contributed talks. This year’s keynote speaker will be Professor Russell Foster CBE, FRS, who is the Head of the Nuffield Laboratory of Ophthalmology and Director of the Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute at the University of Oxford. This promises to be another fascinating and rewarding event and we encourage all PDRAs and early career researchers to attend. Register FREE today at go.warwick.ac.uk/wpss.

Finally, the Research Fellow Forums will soon be starting up regularly again, and it kicked off with a round table discussion on patent law and how it affects early career researchers with James Lapworth of Warwick Ventures.

If you would like to be involved in helping to organise future RFFs, please contact Mick (m.staniforth@warwick.ac.uk), Anthony (anthony.Lucio@warwick.ac.uk) or Anish (ananish.mistry@warwick.ac.uk) and let us know.
Welcome to Visitors

Dr Jiajia Li – Visiting Research Fellow
Dr Jitka Pracharova – Visiting Research Fellow
Anna Soares – Visiting Research Fellow
Dr James Tomlinson – Visiting Research Fellow
Dr Vijyesh Vyas – Visiting Research Fellow

Departures

We say thank you and goodbye to:

Athina Anastasaki – Marie Curie Global Fellow
Dr Stephen Argent – Senior Research Fellow
Mr Setuhn Jimaja – Marie Curie Early Stage Researcher
Dr David Perry – Research Fellow
Dr Jonathan Rourke – Reader
Richard Whitfield – Research Fellow

Arrivals

We extend a warm welcome to the following staff:

Jasbir Bhaghe-Vaan – Electronics Technician
Despina Coursari – Research Technician
Dana Druka – Research Assistant
Panagiotis Georgiou – Marie Curie Early Stage Researcher
Dr Ed Greenough – EU Project Administrator
Arun Gupta – Research Fellow
Stephen Hall – Research Fellow
Chau Ho – Postgraduate Co-ordinator (maternity cover)
Haytham Hussein – Research Assistant
Xinyun Jian – Research Fellow
Andrew Kerr – Research Fellow
Adam McSloy – Research Fellow
Elzbieta Pietrzak-Jamroz (Ela) – Accounts Assistant
Sam Walton – Administrative Assistant
Sam Wilson-Whitford – Researcher in Chemical Engineering

Contributions to News and Events

We have created an online form on ChemIntra for submitting all your news and forthcoming events which means we will be able to upload the information immediately or use it for future Orbital newsletters.

Please do make a note of the link below and remember to use it as often as you can so we can keep the department informed:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/chemistry/chemintra/wellbeing/news/newsubmissions

Christmas Quiz and card tricks

Way back in December, the ‘HO HO HOMO-LUMO gap’ team won the Christmas quiz with 52 points, beating ‘Quiz in my Pants’ by a mere half point. The Walton Wanderers came in last with 30.5.

The Owls however managed to construct the tallest tower of cards (right), measuring a wobbly 38 inches.

Many thanks to Robert Richardson for compiling the tricksy quiz.

Join Warwick Staff Walkers for scenic country walks every other Sunday in the scintillating company of colleagues from across the university.

All you’ll need to join us are some stout shoes or boots, warm and waterproof clothing when appropriate, a packed lunch and a sense of humour. See https://warwick.ac.uk/assoc/warwickstaffwalkers/ for more details.

Baby congratulations

Many congratulations to Sukhjit Takhar and the safe arrival of Diyaan Singh Takhar on 15 December 2018.