

News on Organic Programme for SACI

2011

The Year of Chemistry!!

PLENARY ORGANIC SPEAKER



Professor Herbert Waldmann is Head of the Department of Chemical Biology at the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Physiology and concurrently also holds the position of Professor of Biochemistry at the Technical University Dortmund. He is active in the fields of organic synthesis and chemical biology, and has been awarded numerous academic distinctions for his work, which include the Otto Bayer Prize and the Max Bergmann Medal.

The organic programme for the SACI 2011 conference at Wits in Johannesburg is beginning to take shape. The scientific aspect of the programme will run from Monday 16 January until Wednesday 18 January 2011. The plenary speaker will be Professor Dr H Waldmann from the MPI in Dortmund, Germany. We have also been able to secure funding from the Royal Society of Chemistry (UK) to invite four young dynamic speakers, including the President-elect for the RSC Organic Division Executive, David Rees. These have been matched by four South African speakers. Other slots will be available for short presentations based on abstracts submitted.

Please join us in **January 2011** for this event. More information can be found on <http://www.saci2011.org.za/index.html>.



SACI 2011

Chemistry — the key to Africa's future

If you require further information please contact Charles de Koning at Charles.deKoning@wits.ac.za

Four RSC Members

invited keynote speakers



RSC | Advancing the
Chemical Sciences



David Rees
(Astex, UK)

David Rees joined Astex in January 2003 and is Senior VP Medicinal Chemistry. Astex have pioneered fragment based drug discovery and have progressed several compounds from their internal research into clinical trials in cancer patients. Prior to Astex, he had 19 years experience as a medicinal chemist in the pharmaceutical industry,

working with Parke-Davis, Organon and, most recently, AstraZeneca where he held the position of Director of the Medicinal Chemistry Department with some 140 staff at the research and development laboratories in Mölndal, Sweden. David is a co-recipient of the Royal Society of Chemistry Malcolm Campbell Memorial Prize 2007 for the discovery of the anaesthesia drug sugammadex whilst at Organon. Sugammadex (Bridion) received regulatory approval in Europe in July 2008. He is a co-author of over 80 publications and patents and has served as an honorary Professor at Glasgow University. He is President-elect for the RSC Organic Division Executive.



Ben Davis
(Oxford University, UK)

Ben Davis obtained his B.A. (1993) and D.Phil. (1996) degrees from the University of Oxford. During this time he learned the beauty of carbohydrate chemistry under the supervision of Professor George Fleet. He then spent 2 years as a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Professor Bryan Jones at the University of Toronto, exploring protein chemistry and biocatalysis.

In 1998 he returned to the U.K. to take up a lectureship at the University of Durham. In the autumn of 2001 he moved to the Dyson Perrins Laboratory, University of Oxford and received a fellowship at Pembroke College, Oxford.

His group's research centres on chemical biology with an emphasis on carbohydrates and proteins. In particular, the group's interests encompass synthesis and methodology, inhibitor design, protein engineering, drug delivery, molecular modeling, molecular biology, and glycoscience.

Hon Lam
(University of Edinburgh, UK)

Hon Wai Lam was born in Harrow, England in 1976, and grew up in northwest London. Hon obtained his PhD in 2001 from the University of Nottingham working under the direction of Gerald Pattenden. In January 2002, Hon moved to Harvard University as a GlaxoSmithKline Postdoctoral Fellow to work with David

A. Evans on asymmetric catalysis. In October 2003, Hon joined the School of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh as a Lecturer, where his group's research interests are based around the development of new synthetic methodology, enantioselective catalysis, and natural product synthesis. The first Ph.D. students entered the group in September 2004. Hon was promoted to the position of Senior Lecturer in 2009.



Andrew Smith
(University of St Andrews, UK)

Andrew Smith obtained a D. Phil under the direction of Professor Steve Davies. His doctoral research focused upon the development of methodology for asymmetric intra- and intermolecular consecutive conjugate addition reactions, the preparation of polyfunctional and differentially protected β -amino scaffolds and the discovery of a novel oxidative deprotection strategy. He was then awarded the cross-disciplinary Weston Junior Research Fellowship (by open competition) at New College, University of Oxford in 2000 for post-doctoral studies.

In 2005, he was awarded a Royal Society University Research Fellowship at the School of Chemistry, University of St Andrews and began his independent research career. Research within the Smith group is currently directed towards the development of novel catalytic methods for the promotion of a range of synthetic transformations with varying applications in asymmetric synthesis. This group has a particular interest in the development of efficient nucleophilic organocatalysts and probes their utility for the synthesis of chiral building blocks. Current research interests include the use of N-heterocyclic carbenes and amidines as organocatalysts, and the application of these strategies to natural product synthesis.



The Year of Chemistry!!



Four SACI Members

invited keynote speakers



Erick Strauss
(Stellenbosch
University,
South Africa)

Prof Erick Strauss leads a research group in Chemical Biology, an interdisciplinary field at the interface of chemistry and biology. His group uses and exploits enzymes - especially those

involved in the biosynthesis of the ubiquitous and essential metabolic cofactor Coenzyme A (CoA) - for drug design and development and biocatalysis. He has a special interest in the development of new antibacterials, and treatments of so-called 'neglected diseases' such as tuberculosis, malaria and human sleeping sickness.

Erick, born and raised in Pretoria, received his PhD in Chemistry and Chemical Biology from Cornell University (USA) in 2003. He returned to South Africa in the same year as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemistry and Polymer Science at Stellenbosch University. He accepted a position as associate professor in the Department of Biochemistry, also at Stellenbosch University, in 2008.

Chris Parkinson
(CSIR, South Africa)

Chris Parkinson has more than 20 years of experience in the chemistry field as an academic and also as chief research scientist in the AECI research and development department before joining the CSIR in 1999. Currently, Chris leads the Discovery Chemistry research group at the CSIR. Examples of projects his group is working on are: application of kinase inhibitors as agents against tuberculosis, the design of novel peroxides and quinolines active against the malaria parasite, agents that inhibit reverse transcriptase in HIV and applications of slow release formulations.

He was awarded a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Sydney in 1990 before embarking on a post doctorate with Professor Tony Barrett at Colorado State University, US and Imperial College in the UK.



Ross Robinson
(University of Kwa-Zulu
Natal, South Africa)

Professor Ross Robinson completed his PhD in the laboratories of Professor Perry Kaye at Rhodes University in 1998. He then joined the Department of Chemistry at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal as a lecturer in organic chemistry and

is currently an Associate Professor. Ross has also spent a sabbatical with Professor Richard Taylor at York University. His research interests lie in the development of synthetic strategies towards the synthesis of heterocyclic compounds with medicinal potential as well as the kinetic and mechanistic studies of selected reactions.

Jo Michael
(University of the
Witwatersrand,
South Africa)

Born and educated in South Africa, Jo Michael received his PhD in 1975 from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He spent the following two years as a post-doctoral research fellow at Cambridge University before returning to his alma mater in 1978

as a lecturer. After progressing through the ranks, he was appointed to the Chair of Organic Chemistry in 1994. In the intervening years he enjoyed sabbatical periods at the University of California, Berkeley (1984) and the University of Nottingham (1991-1992). His research interests are in synthetic methodology and the synthesis of natural products, especially alkaloids. He was appointed as Head of the School of Chemistry at the University of the Witwatersrand in January 2008.



The Year of Chemistry!!