



## Department of Chemistry

# Chemistry Newsletter

Number 267

Friday, 22 June 2007

Tomorrow sees the CHEM 111 and 113 exams (yes I made a mistake in the last newsletter), so next week you should leave me alone to let me get on with my part of the marking! This week has been fairly quiet, except for a couple of administrative meetings that I have summarised below.

One activity that has been going on in the department is visits from year-13 school pupils. These have been arranged by *Rebecca Hurrell* and run by her and *Richard Rendle*. The schools to have visited so far are Middleton Grange, Christchurch Girls High School and Cashmere. It has been good to see some of the chemistry teachers again, including *Alex Houliston*, *Rudy Jansen* and *Dave Paterson*. And I was especially pleased to see *Dave MacDonald* visiting with the Cashmere pupils yesterday. Dave spent many years as an excellent technician in this department before deciding to go to teaching. Roncalli College pupils are travelling up from Timaru on Monday.

Bryce

## University administration news

### Academic Board Meeting (2.00-2.19 pm, Wednesday 20 June)

This was a record (for me) shortest Academic Board Meeting - 19 minutes on the clock, but I think that we started 5 minutes late! Despite its brevity, there was some business. (1) The Blue Gene computer is already here and will be operating soon. (2) The VC is setting up some new reporting lines following Tom Gregg's retirement. (3) The Tertiary Reform Bill, which the VC thought would not make much difference, is now causing concern in the NZVCC. (4) The Academic Committee and the Academic Programmes Committee presented reports. The second sees two proposals, for Mechatronics Engineering and Environmental Science, being forwarded to Council on their way to CUAP. (5) Next year, Easter occurs at an inconvenient time, so the last day of the first term will be on a Monday. This is sure to cause "confusion" with students (and probably some staff).

### Head of Departments Workshop (12.20-5.00 pm, Thursday 21 June)

This was the third annual meeting of HoDs and members of the SMT. It was a fairly slow but largely worthwhile meeting, and an opportunity to interact with other people in similar or senior "leadership and management" positions. In brief: *Ian Town* (DVC) talked about academic promotions; *Ursula Cheer* (Proctor) talked about student discipline and the proctorial role; and *Ian Shaw* (PVC Science) and *Nigel Healey* (PVC Commerce) ran a short interactive forum on the HoDs' roles. By far the most informative part of the meeting was the VC's information about the Tertiary Education Reform Bill. I have mentioned this several times in previous newsletters, so will try not to repeat the same information here. The new slant is the VC's view that the Bill is, perhaps, not as innocuous as he had thought earlier (the details of the Bill can be obtained from the NZ Gazette no. 35, 29 March 2007, pp 911-912). The worrying aspects are that TEC is being very cagey about what is intended and the Minister for Tertiary Education is signalling his believe that the Universities are owned by the Government and therefore answerable to him. A similar claim arose many years ago and ended up in legal action, won by the universities. It is possible that legal action may be needed again. There are questions as to who is driving this: TEC or the Minister. The fact that the National Party's

shadow minister for tertiary education is ranked in the 20s for his party does not suggest that the situation could be "saved" by a change of government either.

## Department administration news

### Vice-Chancellor's Visit

This is an earlier forewarning that the Vice-Chancellor will be visiting the department on Monday, 13 August at 11 am in Room 531.

### Burbling Beaker

Dear loyal supporters of the Burbling Beaker,

After careful consideration we are proud to announce that the next issue (to be published when we get around to writing it) will be delivered to your desktop in PDF format. This is a great step forward for the publication and should help to offset the significant cost of the usual printed newsletter. With no income from subscriptions and the increasing cost of producing the Beaker (prizes, gatherings at the pub to sort out composition etc) we have little choice and must move to email distribution. We wish to create a mailing list to assist in the dissemination of the next and subsequent issues. If you wish to receive the Burbling Beaker, please email us at [burblingbeaker@gmail.com](mailto:burblingbeaker@gmail.com) with the subject heading 'mailing list'. Alternatively add your name and email address to the list provided in the tea room next to the IOU list (by the biscuits). Please don't hesitate to forward this email to anyone else who may be interested. This month's prize winner has yet to be notified, but we're getting there. Thanks for all the emails some of which may make it into the next issue. Kind regards, Ed.

### Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Thank you for another edition of your interesting and informative newsletter. While commending the normally very high standard of journalism, I did feel rather "taken in" by the article on - Physical Sciences Library News, *New* Chemistry Titles (Issue #265). Two of the titles took my fancy - Beer (which needs no explanation) and The Relation of Food to Disease (a very rapidly progressing and exciting field). Beer was published in 1934 and Food and Disease in 1932!! This was before even my time.

Young Bill

## People

### Visiting Student

On Monday this week, *Moriah Sandy* joined the department for a spell of collaborative work. She writes: "I'm from San Diego and I'm currently my second year of the chemistry doctoral program at the University of California, Santa Barbara working under the supervision of Dr. *Alison Butler*. I have been awarded a fellowship from the National Science Foundation East Asian Pacific Summer Institute (NSF EAPSI) program to spend three months working with Profs *John Blunt* and *Murray Munro*. While here, I will be working on the structure characterization of new siderophores isolated from different marine bacteria. Siderophores are low molecular weight organic compounds that bind iron with high affinity. The isolation and study of siderophores is the primary focus of my research group at UCSB. In addition to characterizing siderophores produced by different marine bacteria, I will also be using the assay systems developed in the Blunt and Munro lab to examine the bacterial extracts for occurrence of antimicrobial and cytotoxic compounds. This is something that I am unable to do in my UCSB lab and I'm very excited about using these analytical techniques for the detection and characterization of biologically active compounds in small samples. As for extracurricular activities, I enjoy hiking, rock climbing, surfing, swimming, cycling, running, skiing and anything else outdoors."

### Comings and Goings

*John Blunt* returned to the department earlier this week. *Leon Phillips* is away on an Erskine Fellowship, returning September 17.

## Seminars

**NZIC Public Lecture** (5.00pm, Tues 26 June, Avon 2 theatre, College of Education, Dovedale Avenue)

**Penny Le Couteur** Co-author of *Napoleon's Buttons: Seventeen Molecules That Changed History*  
*The Chemistry of History*

Penny will be visiting Christchurch prior to ChemEd007. There is no charge for the lecture, but seating is limited to 250. The presentation is about historical connections and chemical bonds. Global exploration, slavery, trade, commerce, transportation, warfare, migration, democracy, advances in medicine, public sanitation and health, and cultural, legal and gender changes can all be attributed to a small number - seventeen - of very crucial molecules according to "Napoleon's Buttons". Penny Le Couteur, one of the authors, will discuss how the book came to be written, why they chose the molecules they did and some of the interesting and unexpected chemical connections they uncovered. This is not about the history of chemistry; the presentation (and "Napoleon's Buttons") is about the chemistry of history. Penny's visit to New Zealand is sponsored by the New Zealand Institute of Chemistry.

## Conferences and society news

**ChemEd007 Chemical Educators Conference, 1-4 July, University of Auckland**

This biennial conference is for secondary and tertiary chemistry educators. To assist potential one day registrants, the full programme can now be accessed at <http://www.chemed007.auckland.ac.nz>

## Recent publications

Amy C. Cruickshank, Emelyn S.Q. Tan, Paula A. Brooksby and Alison J. Doward. Are redox probes a useful indicator of film stability? An electrochemical, AFM and XPS study of electrografted amine films on carbon. *Electrochemistry Communications*, 9, 2007, 1456-1462

## Physical Sciences Library News

### Extended Library Hours

During exams the Physical Sciences, Engineering and Law Libraries provide extended hours. **1-29 June:**

Monday - Thursday close at 11.00 pm

Friday 15 & 22 June close at 9.00 pm

### Matariki Art Competition for Children of Staff and Students

<http://library.canterbury.ac.nz/news/index.shtml>

All children of staff and students are invited to celebrate this special time of the year by creating their own Matariki masterpiece. Pictures will be included in our Matariki exhibition. There will be a prize for each age group for the "best" picture and prize(s) for runner ups in the age groups. For more information on the entry conditions refer to the [entry form](#) (PDF 48 KB). Entries must be handed in by 5pm on Friday 22 June to any library service desk.

[www.archive.org/web/web.php](http://www.archive.org/web/web.php)

If you're looking for a website that no longer exists, or cached content from a page that has changed over time, type the URL into the Wayback Machine. It serves as a repository of hypertexts from the earliest days of the World Wide Web to the present.

<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/>

Travelling for holidays or conference leave? This link allows you to calculate your individual or household carbon footprint.

## Career and job opportunities

### Lecturers in Chemistry - University of Otago

#### *Confirmation path, two positions*

Applications are invited for up to two positions of Lecturer in Chemistry. The primary criteria for appointment will be a demonstrated potential for excellence in research and a strong commitment to research-informed teaching. Although applications are welcomed from any area of Chemistry, the Department is particularly interested at this time in making appointments in any area of *synthetic chemistry*. The successful applicant(s) will have a PhD degree, high quality published research, and will be expected to establish an effective individual research programme in the Department, including seeking external funding support for research. In addition to contributing to the teaching programme in their relevant specialist area of Chemistry, the successful applicant(s) will also be expected to teach general Chemistry at the first year undergraduate level. Consideration will be given to the appointment of an exceptional candidate at the level of Senior Lecturer. Specific enquiries may be directed to Professor Keith A Hunter, Head of Department, Department of Chemistry, Tel 03 479 7917, Fax 03 479 7906, Email [khunter@chemistry.otago.ac.nz](mailto:khunter@chemistry.otago.ac.nz). Information about the Department can be obtained from the website <http://www.otago.ac.nz/chemistry>. Each application must include an Application Form, an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Form, a covering letter addressed to the Recruitment Consultant and two copies of full Curriculum Vitae. Reference Number: A07/87. Closing Date: **Wednesday 15 August 2007**.

## Degenerate states

### You know you're addicted to coffee when:

- You're employee of the month at the local coffee house and you don't even work there ...
- your eyes stay open when you sneeze ...
- you chew on other people's fingernails ...
- you can type sixty words per minute with your feet ...
- you can jump-start your car without cables ...
- you don't sweat, you percolate ...
- you've worn out the handle on your favourite coffee mug ...
- you walk twenty kilometres on your treadmill before you realise it's not hooked up ...
- you've worn the finish off your coffee table ...
- you're so wired, you pick up radio signals ...
- your birthday is a national holiday in Brazil ...
- you'd be willing to spend time in a Turkish prison ...
- you go to sleep just so you can wake up and smell the coffee ...
- you name your cats 'Cream' and 'Sugar' ...
- your lips are permanently stuck in the sipping position ...
- you have a picture of your coffee mug on your coffee mug ...
- you don't tan, you roast ...
- you don't get mad, you get steamed ...
- your coffee mug is insured by Lloyd's of London ...
- you introduce your spouse as your coffee mate ...
- you think CPR stands for "coffee provides resuscitation" ...
- you ski uphill - sometimes without skis ...
- you get a speeding ticket even when you're parked ...
- you haven't blinked since the last lunar eclipse ...
- you just completed another jumper and you don't even know how to knit.

## Contact details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Chemistry newsletter, then contact Alice Prendergast before noon on Thursday at: [alice.prendergast@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:alice.prendergast@canterbury.ac.nz) or phone 364-2100 / extension 6100.