

Meeting Reports

International biochemistry and molecular biology showcased in Brazil

Laura Woodland (Head of Membership Engagement, Biochemical Society)

This joint meeting was hosted in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, a place noted for its natural beauty and home to the Iguaçu Falls. The Society sponsored a symposium on ‘Energy Metabolism’ on 24 August 2015 with David Carling, Fraser Macmillan, Judy Hirst and Richard Cogdell as speakers. The symposium was a huge success with over 200 delegates attending with standing room only. Richard Cogdell, one of the speakers, commented that “the trip to Foz do Iguaçu as part of the Biochemical Society’s delegation to the 23rd Congress of the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the 44th Annual Meeting of the Brazilian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB/SBBq) was really excellent. I was surprised and encouraged to find such a large and youthful audience. The young Brazilian scientists were particularly enthusiastic and it was very rewarding to interact with them.”

From aging to metabolism, cell signalling to infectious diseases, bioengineering to science education, an array of topics were discussed by the 132 speakers in over 35 symposiums.

As part of the international relationship that the Society has with SBBq, its counterpart in Brazil, we supported the attendance of four outstanding postgraduate members. Karolina Pakos-Zebrucka from the National University of Ireland Galway, Elena Loche from Cambridge University, Thomas Vincent from the John Innes Centre and Meng Yuan from the University of Edinburgh all presented posters at the conference and received invaluable feedback.

Thomas had this to say about his experience “... with peers from across the world, sharing experiences and research ideas, this was extremely useful, despite the great diversity of the disciplines we study”.

Karolina highlighted that “the opportunity to interact with international community of inspiring people as well as adventure in experiencing different continent, country, culture, and amazing Brazilian’s landscape of falls will certainly have beneficial impact on my personal and professional life and became unforgettable moments”.

Meng said, “it was an unforgettable conference. Thanks to the Biochemical Society, I have experienced this top-level biochemistry congress located in the

heart of the miraculous place. The phrase ‘top-level’ is not a metaphor – actually it was indeed an uncommon opportunity to listen to talks given by so many successful and famous biochemists in a single conference. Not only the Nobel Laureates – Professor Tom Steitz, the ribosome structure solver; Professor Kurt Wüthrich, who developed the application of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) technique on understanding macromolecular structures; Professor Johann Deisenhofer, a pioneer who tried to understand the atomic mechanisms of photosynthetic light reactions from the aspects of structural biology, and Professor Martin Chalfie, who keeps pushing the boundary of the research of *Caenorhabditis elegans* – but also many other scientists who are working at the frontier at their respective research areas, including, but not limited to, Professor Salvador Moncada from Manchester and Professor Bonnie Wallace from London.”

Elena summed IUBMB/SBBq 2015 up with: “it was such a great scientific experience and I am really thankful to the Biochemical Society for giving me this great opportunity. I now go back to the lab with more inspiration, new friends, fantastic memories and...a few bottles of cachaça!” Also representing the Biochemical Society at IUBMB/SBBQ 2015 was Niamh O’Connor, Director of Publishing, Laura Woodland, Head of Membership Engagement, Nicola Gray, Honorary Membership Secretary and David Carling, Chair of the Editorial Board of the *Biochemical Journal*. With over 2700 attendees and 2000 posters being shown, the conference was buzzing with new ideas and techniques. ■



Left to right: David Carling, Nicola Gray, Judy Hirst, Fraser MacMillan and Richard Cogdell

5th European Lipidomics Meeting

Yugin Wang (Swansea University, UK)

Following previous meetings in Graz, Austria, and Pardubice, Czech Republic, the 5th European Lipidomics Meeting was held in Swansea on 2–4 September 2015. The meeting was hosted by Swansea University Medical School and was attended by 100 delegates from 14 countries. The meeting consisted of 20 invited lectures, including a plenary lecture given by Professor Kai Simons from Dresden, 10 short talks selected from submitted abstracts and 52 posters. Among the many highlights were lectures given by Marc Poirot from Toulouse describing the tumour-suppressing and neurostimulating properties of a newly identified steroidal alkaloid, dendrogenin A, and by Ruth Andrew from Edinburgh detailing the application of mass spectrometry imaging to locate steroids in brain tissue. All classes of lipids were covered at the conference, ranging from short-chain acyl-CoAs in plants to phosphatidylcholine in exhaled air. Emphasis was placed on the involvement of lipids

in immunity and neuroscience, the natural variations of lipids and their diversity, and emerging analytical methods for lipid analysis, especially supercritical fluid chromatography and ion-mobility mass spectrometry. Best poster prizes were awarded to Ondřej Kuda from Prague and Huipeng Neo from Singapore. Besides academic sessions, a conference reception was held at the National Waterfront Museum of Wales and a conference dinner at the Marriott Hotel, Swansea Bay. The 6th European Lipidomics Meeting will be held in Toulouse, France, in 2017. ■

In addition to the Biochemical Society, the meeting was sponsored by the Royal Society of Chemistry, EMBO, the International Mass Spectrometry Foundation, Avanti Polar Lipids, Agilent Technologies, Thermo Scientific, Waters, ABSciex and Advion.

