

Dear NWAD member,

Welcome to the NWAD's first online AGM. Since we all face constant demands on our time, it can be difficult to find time and motivation to attend meetings. Thus, the committee decided to carry out the AGM online in the hope that by organising it in this way more of you would be able to engage with it.

After three years as Chair of the NWAD, it is at this AGM that I will pass on the responsibility to Sanja Potgieter-Vermaak. I would like at this juncture to thank the committee for their continued support and contribution over the last three years and to reflect on the committee's activities over this time and how we fulfilled our mission of promoting analytical science in the region and engage and enhance communication with you, our members.

Engaging with young students

The Schools' Analyst Competition (SAC), our flagship event for AS-level students, has continued successfully, with yearly regional competitions in Bangor, Liverpool, Manchester and Preston. In the last two years, NW schools have done exceedingly well in the national finals. In 2011 Sir John Deane's College (Northwich), won the 2011 final and Arnold School (Blackpool) was placed second. In 2012 Arnold School won the final and Altrincham Grammar School for Boys came third. Sir John Deane's College and Arnold School received the Gerry Davison Memorial Award in 2011 and 2012, respectively for being the best placed NW team in the top 3 in the final.

The SAC events take great effort to organise, so I would like to thank all the local organising teams, for their continued good work in providing these events for our young students, as well as the sponsors of the individual competitions for their generous contributions over the years.

In addition to the SAC we also awarded travel grants to schools that wished to visit an institute of higher education to gain hands on experience in analytical science and we sponsored practical masterclasses in Liverpool for year 12 students.

Engaging with graduates and early career researchers

We awarded travel bursaries to research students studying at a NW higher education institutes to attend national and international conferences and we sponsored transport to enable students to attend meetings.

We sponsored several meetings: SPEC2010 (Manchester Jul 2010); RSC Younger Members Symposium (Manchester Oct 2010); ARF11 (Manchester Jul 2011); Emerging Analytical Professionals (2012) Careers Researchers Bioanalysis (2012); Emerging Analytical Professionals (Knutsford May 2012); Application of Analytical Biosciences (Liverpool Jun 2012).

In 2012 we participated in the BMSS summer studentship scheme and co-sponsored 2 studentships, which allowed students to carry out projects in a NW based research group over the summer.

Engaging with our members

We organised jointly with the Chromatographic Society the Recent Advances in Gas Chromatography meeting (Runcorn Nov 2011) and in conjunction with the Separation Science Groups the Recent Advances in Sample Preparation meeting (Runcorn Oct 2010).

We sponsored the Electrochemistry North West meeting (Bangor Jun 2010) and the Plants as Providers of Fine Chemicals meetings (Bangor Sep 2011 & Aug 2012).

We held the yearly Long Service Members' Lunches, where we had the opportunity to engage with our longer serving members. It is always with great pleasure that I have met with our long serving members. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend this year, but I am sure it will be a success again.

Our now established Christmas Lecture started in 2010 with an excellent talk on *What has mass spectrometry ever done for us?* by Prof. Frank Pullen; this was followed in 2011 by *Spectral Histopathology: Shedding New Light on Prostate Cancer* by Prof. Peter Gardner and in 2012 by *Biodiesel, new fuel, new analytical challenges* by Prof. John Langley. We were delighted that so many of you attended with your guests. We will continue to organise this free yearly event and hope to see you there. Each year we raised around £40 for the RSC Benevolent Fund with our raffle.

Engaging with the wider community

During the International Year of Chemistry we acquired 4 Streamwatch kits for loaning to groups of all ages (e.g. schools, cubs, brownies, WI, etc) who would like to learn about water analysis with fun easy experiments. These are still available to loan and we will be acquiring more soon.

We sponsored the Catalyst museum in Widnes by sponsoring the element Pt in their Periodic Table.

Before I finish, I would like to note with sadness the passing of John Ogleby who tirelessly served on the committee for decades holding each of the offices during that time, Anne Bennet who worked for the RSC since the mid-90s and who was always very helpful in our dealings with the RSC, and Prof. Stuart Bark who served on the NWAD committee before I joined and who was the first member of the NWAD to become President of the Analytical Division.

As I am sure you appreciate, although we all carry out our duties gladly, all these activities require the effort and commitment of all the committee members, who are all in full-time employment and often have to carry out committee activities in their spare time, which is always in short supply. To all the committee members I sincerely thank for their support, contribution and commitment.

I hope you will continue to attend our meetings and I look forward to meeting you at one of our events. If you have any suggestions on how we can further promote analytical science in the region or enhance communication with you, our members, e.g. suggestions of meetings (scientific or social) which you would like us to consider organising, speakers for our Christmas Lecture, etc. or would like to get involved in our activities please do get in touch via our Hon. Secretary Stuart Forbes.

Elsa C. Faria-Billinton (Chair - RSC NW Region Analytical Division)

2nd May 2013