

# THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY

## NORTH WEST REGION ANALYTICAL DIVISION

### Honorary Secretary's Report (May 2010 – December 2011)

#### Committee

Following the AGM of the North West Region Analytical Division (NWR-AD) held at the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre, Widnes on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2010, the committee consisted of the following officers and ordinary members:

<b>Chairman</b>	Elsa Faria-Billinton	2010 – 2012
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Steven Black	2010 – 2012
<b>Honorary Secretary</b>	Stuart Forbes	
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	Peter Doyle	
<b>Honorary Assistant Secretary</b>	Glyn Connolly	2007 – 2010
<b>Immediate Past Chairman</b>	Megan McLean ( <i>ex-officio</i> )	2010 – 2012
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Vera Thoss	2008 – 2011
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Alan Handley	2008 – 2011
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Caryn Hughes	2009 – 2012
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Tom Hawkins	2010 – 2013
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Geraldine Monjardez	2010 – 2013

During the intervening period Caryn Hughes and Steven Black resigned from the committee owing to work commitments, and Stephen Holman, Sanja Potgieter-Vermaak and Graeme Clemens joined the committee. Sanja Potgieter-Vermaak has recently taken over the role of Honorary Assistant Secretary from Glyn Connolly, so the committee now has the following composition:

<b>Chairman</b>	Elsa Faria-Billinton	2010 – 2012
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Vacancy	
<b>Honorary Secretary</b>	Stuart Forbes	
<b>Honorary Treasurer</b>	Peter Doyle	
<b>Honorary Assistant Secretary</b>	Sanja Potgieter-Vermaak	2011 – 2014
<b>Immediate Past Chairman</b>	Megan McLean ( <i>ex-officio</i> )	2010 – 2012

<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Vera Thoss	2008 – 2011
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Alan Handley #	2008 – 2011
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Tom Hawkins	2010 – 2013
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Geraldine Monjardez	2010 – 2013
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Stephen Holman	2010 – 2013
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Glyn Connolly	2007 – 2010
<b>Ordinary Member</b>	Graeme Clemens	2011 – 2014

# Because Alan Handley is President of the Analytical Division he is also an *ex-officio* member of the NWR-AD Committee

Committee meetings were held at Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010 and 7<sup>th</sup> February, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 12<sup>th</sup> September and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Given the relatively large size of our region and because all committee members are in full-time employment, some members join committee meetings by teleconference and a considerable amount of business is conducted by e-mail between meetings.

It was an honour for NWR-AD that Alan Handley, an active and long-serving committee member, became AD President in 2011. In addition to his national responsibilities, Alan continues to be a valued member of the region and is the main organiser of the annual *Long Service Members Lunches* and the biennial *Chromatography Meetings* described later in this report.

### **Educational Activities**

The Schools Analyst Competition (SAC) has continued to be a flagship event for the AD and over the years schools from our region have enjoyed great success in the national final of this competition. During both 2010 and 2011 four successful regional heats were held at UCLAN (Preston), MMU (Manchester), John Moores University (Liverpool) and Bangor University. In these competitions teams of AS-level chemistry students carry out a variety of experiments using both classical and instrumental analytical techniques and are assessed on their skill, understanding, accuracy, safety and teamwork. These events rely on sponsorship from companies in the region and from the ACTF, for which we are truly grateful; our gratitude is also extended to staff at the host institutions for their dedication and hard work in preparing and supervising the experiments carried out by the competing teams.

In the 2010 regional heats the winners were Ysgol Brynrefail, Llanrug, Caernarfon; Sacred Heart Catholic College, Crosby; Manchester Grammar School; and Cardinal Newman, Preston and these four teams progressed to the SAC National Final which was held at the University of Huddersfield on 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Unfortunately none of the NWR-AD finalists achieved a podium position at the 2010 SAC National Final.

Winners of the 2011 regional heats were Sir John Deane's College, Northwich; Arnold School, Blackpool; Withington Girls School; and Ysgol Brynrefail, Llanrug, Caernarfon. These four teams represented our region at the SAC National Final at

Reading University on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June and it is very pleasing to report that two NWR-AD teams took top positions with Sir John Deane's College winning the event and Arnold School in second place, a tremendous performance given that over 250 schools from across the UK were originally involved in the competition.

The school from our region finishing highest in the national final wins the Gerry Davison Memorial Prize providing that the school finishes in one of the top three positions. Sir John Deane's College therefore won the 2011 prize, which is sponsored jointly by NWR-AD and the Industrial Division, and was awarded to the students at the SCI Liverpool and N.W. Regional Group Student Awards Ceremony held in Manchester on 10<sup>th</sup> November. NWR-AD also made an additional award to the students from Arnold School in recognition of their successful performance at the SAC National Final.

A recent development by the RSC has been the appointment of Regional Coordinators across the UK to promote RSC educational resources and activities and to increase confidence and engagement of those teaching chemistry. Given the region's active role in many educational activities aimed at promoting interest in analytical chemistry, it makes good sense to develop a close working relationship with these coordinators and Katayune Presland and Dayna Mason, who represent the North West and Wales Regions respectively, therefore joined our committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011 to explain their roles and hear about the NWR-AD educational activities.

## **Meetings**

The region has continued to organize or co-sponsor a variety of scientific and social meetings with the aim of providing meetings of interest to all our members including students, practicing and retired chemists.

A new initiative, which commenced in 2010 and was successfully repeated in 2011, is the *Christmas Lecture and Buffet* which is a free annual event for members and their guests. The first *Plants as Providers of Fine Chemicals* Meeting was held at Bangor in September 2011 and, owing to the success of this event, a second meeting is planned for 2012. The biennial *Chromatography Meeting*, organised jointly by the NWR-AD and the Chromatographic Society, continues to be highly successful with the 2011 meeting being over-subscribed; this has become the leading chromatography meeting in the UK and provides a major contribution to the NWR-AD income stream. The annual *Long Service Members Lunch* continues to be a popular and enjoyable occasion attracting some 60-70 members and guests.

NWR-AD organized or was associated with the following meetings during the review period:

- *AGM of North West Region Analytical Division*  
Catalyst Science Discovery Centre, Widnes (29<sup>th</sup> April 2010)
- *Long Service Members Lunch*  
Burton Manor College, Wirral (17<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

- *SPEC2010*  
Manchester (26<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010)
- *Recent Advances in Sample Preparation Techniques*  
The Heath, Runcorn (27<sup>th</sup> October 2010)
- *Inaugural Christmas Lecture and Buffet*  
Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre (25<sup>th</sup> November 2010)
- *Long Service Members Lunch*  
The Grange Country Club, Thornton Hough, Wirral (2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011)
- *Plants as Providers of Fine Chemicals*  
Bangor University (1<sup>st</sup> September 2011)
- *Recent Advances in Gas Chromatography*  
The Heath, Runcorn (9<sup>th</sup> November 2011)
- *2011 Christmas Lecture and Buffet*  
Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre (6<sup>th</sup> December 2011)

The committee is always eager to receive suggestions from members for both social and scientific events that they would like to see held in the region.

### **Grants, Bursaries and Sponsorship**

Several grants have been made by NWR-AD during the review period to assist post-graduate students studying in the region to attend meetings or conferences relevant to their studies, and to cover the travel costs of schools in the region visiting universities and colleges to gain hands-on experience of modern analytical instrumentation.

Recent grants have been made to:

- St-Benedicts Catholic High School in West Cumbria to cover the transport costs of 13 students making a two day residential visit to York University during which they gained hands-on experience of several instrumental techniques and organic synthesis procedures.
- Chapel-en-le-Frith High School in Derbyshire to cover the transport costs of 11 students visiting Manchester University for a day of hands-on analytical chemistry and organic synthesis activities.
- Two postgraduate students to attend the *SPEC2010* Meeting held in Manchester where one of them presented posters on their research work.

- A postgraduate student to attend the *Mass Spec Europe 2010* Meeting held in Florence, Italy where she presented a poster on her research work.
- A postgraduate student to attend the *Electrochem 2010 Conference* held in Wolverhampton where he presented a poster on his research work.

*Ad-hoc* payments have also been made to support relevant meetings and organizations in our region:

- £750 was provided for the *RSC Younger Members Symposium* held at Manchester University in October 2010.
- £200 was provided for the *Electrochem North West Meeting* held at Bangor University in June 2010.
- £500 was provided for the Chemistry Masterclasses organized by Liverpool University in July 2010 to provide intensive practical sessions on spectroscopic techniques for AS-Level students.
- £1000 was donated to the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre to continue their programme of science education visits for school children following the withdrawal of local government funding in 2011.
- £500 was provided for the *Plants as Providers of Fine Chemicals Meeting* held at Bangor University in September 2011.

### **Communications**

Maintaining contact with our ~1200 members spread throughout the region from the Scottish Border to Mid-Wales remains a challenge, particularly if there is a need to provide information on events at relatively short notice. Special mailings to all members require considerable effort and are very expensive and *N.W. Chemistry News*, which is an excellent publication circulated to all RSC Members in the North West, is only published twice a year.

We have therefore become increasingly reliant on our website ([www.nwad.org](http://www.nwad.org)) to maintain contact with NWR-AD members, and the latest news on forthcoming events is now shown on the homepage to facilitate communication. We also pass on information via the RSC using their e-mail address database and this now appears to be fairly successful although it depends on the accuracy of the address list, and we are unable to incorporate flyers into these communications.

### **Financial Matters**

NWR-AD continues to enjoy a healthy financial balance (~£30K) which, as previously illustrated, enables us to offer a range of grants and bursaries, and to sponsor a variety of scientific and social meetings such as the annual *Long Service Members*

*Lunch and Christmas Lecture and Buffet.* Our funds also enable us to invest in new projects aimed at stimulating interest in analytical chemistry, particular amongst young scientists working in schools and colleges throughout the region.

Owing to our financial health we no longer receive an annual grant from AD and most of our income is therefore self-generated, mainly from organising successful scientific meetings which attract a significant number of delegates. Our accounts are subject to annual audit by Colin Peacock, a former officer and committee member of NWR-AD, and we are most grateful to Colin who has performed this task voluntarily for many years. Following audit, NWR-AD accounts are submitted to AD for review and approval.

**Stuart Forbes**

*Honorary Secretary - RSC Analytical Division, N.W. Region*

31<sup>st</sup> December 2011