

## News and Views

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY CARBOHYDRATE GROUP MEETING, CRANFIELD 29–31 MARCH 1989

The annual spring meeting of the RSC Carbohydrate Group was held this year at Cranfield Institute of Technology, Bedfordshire, and was attended by over 140 participants from 14 countries. The theme of the meeting was 'Carbohydrate Structure, Function and Shape', emphasising the importance of conformation as a link between primary structure and physical or biological properties.

After a challenging and abrasive critique of the present state and future prospects of carbohydrate chemistry by the Chairman of the Carbohydrate Group, Dr Fraser Stoddart, the scientific programme opened with a lecture on the 'Controversial Conformational Properties of Maltose' by Professor R. U. Lemieux, FRS (University of Alberta). Subsequent lectures included X-ray analysis of solid-state conformation by fibre diffraction (Professor S. Arnott, FRS, St Andrews) and single-crystal studies (Dr W. Mackie, Leeds), advances in theoretical understanding of optical activity (Professor E. S. Stevens, New York State University), characterisation of primary structure by novel mass spectroscopy techniques (Professor G. Dutton, Vancouver) and advances in NMR imaging using image contrast agents (Professor L. D. Hall, Cambridge). Physical properties and industrial applications of polysaccharides, with particular emphasis on the underlying molecular structures and interactions, were described by Professor O. Smidsrød (Trondheim), Dr P. A. Williams (North East Wales Institute), Dr S. G. Ash (Shell, Sittingbourne), Dr V. J. Morris (AFRC Norwich) and Dr G. R. Sanderson (Kelco, San Diego). The final day of the meeting focussed on biomedical aspects, with lectures on the molecular basis of the anticoagulant activity of heparin (Professor C. A. A. van Boeckel, Organon, The Netherlands), the role of carbohydrates in bacterial pathogenicity and host defence mechanisms (Dr M. R. Lively, Wellcome, Kent), characterisation of glycoproteins by anion exchange and pulsed amperometric detection (Mr A. M. Adam, Dionex UK) and conformational studies of *Streptococcus* capsular polysaccharide (Dr C. Jones, NIBSC).

The programme featured three special lectures:

- The Haworth Lecture, 'Microbial Polysaccharides: New Approaches', by Professor N. K. Kochetkov (Zelinski Institute of Organic Chemistry, Moscow)
- The RSC Food Group Junior (Bronze) Medal Lecture, 'Polysaccharide Conformational Kinetics: A Greater Understanding of Ordering in Solution', by Dr I. T. Norton (Unilever, Colworth House, Bedford)
- The *Carbohydrate Polymers* Lecture, 'Microbial Polysaccharide Families: Designer Molecules for Future Development?', by Dr I. W. Sutherland (Edinburgh University), the first lecture sponsored by the journal.

Following the imaginative example set two years ago by Professor L. D. Hall, the programme also featured six short talks by research students, and an award for the best of these was presented to Mr P. Ellwood of Sheffield University. In addition to the lecture programme, the meeting included 33 poster presentations and a substantial number of commercial exhibits and displays.

The Carbohydrate Group again thank the 24 companies who generously contributed to the costs of the meeting.

**E. R. Morris**