

Editorial

Proceedings of the 15th Annual Conference of the Groupement des Pharmacochimistes de l'Arc Atlantique (GP2A) Guest Editors: Michael D. Threadgill, Guillaume Le Baut and Marc Le Borgne

The "Groupement des Pharmacochimistes de l'Arc Atlantique" (GP2A) or Group of Medicinal Chemists of the Atlantic Arc is a study group on research and teaching in Medicinal Chemistry, which was created in 1992. It gathers medicinal chemists, mainly working in Faculties of Pharmacy and located in the different regions of the Atlantic Arc in the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal. More recently, this grouping has welcomed new members who do not belong *stricto sensu* to this area (such as Lille, Saarbruck, Duesseldorf), in the framework of the *GP2A network*. This Grouping constitutes a focus for the exchange of ideas among scientists (including undergraduates) interested in basic research in medicinal chemistry but also in special areas of research in drug design, including combinatorial chemistry, quantitative structure-activity relationships and molecular modelling. GP2A gives an opportunity, especially to young scientists, to strengthen and extend their collaboration and exchange programmes. The circle is open to external participation and is mainly constituted on the basis of previously existing bilateral co-operations between various laboratories. At the instigation of the starting core, it was decided to hold a scientific meeting each year in the shape of the GP2A Conferences.

In 2006, the Conference was held in the World Heritage City of Bath, UK, at the University of Bath on 7–8 September. The meeting was organised by Dr. Michael Threadgill, Dr Victoria Phillips and Dr Stephen Husbands of the University's Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology. The University of Bath celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2006 but the Department of Pharmacy & Pharmacology can trace

its roots back further to the Bristol & West of England College of Chemistry & Pharmacy, an independent college which admitted its first students of pharmacy in 1907. Thus the Department, which now has over 600 students, is 100 years old in 2007!

The 2006 Conference saw a broadening of the scope of GP2A, both in welcoming many new participants from Ireland and from the new Schools of Pharmacy in the UK and in extending the definition of "pharmaceutical chemistry" for the subject of the meeting. Colleagues from Cork and Dublin, from Kings College (London) and Kingston, from the University of East Anglia (Norwich) and Reading joined the large number of scientists from the traditional GP2A member Universities at the meeting; we even welcomed speakers from Germany and Jordan in a variation of the usual geographical definition of the "Atlantic Arc". This year, the topics ranged from the core concepts of medicinal chemistry (drug design, chemical synthesis and early-stage pharmacological evaluation) through to the role of natural products as sources in drug discovery, to modern integrated approaches to academic drug discovery and development and the importance of chemical structure to crystal shape and formulation of drugs into medicines for administration to patients.

Previous GP2A Conferences took place in Bordeaux (1992), Caen (1993), Cardiff (1994), Angers (1995), Glasgow (1996), Rennes (1997), Caen (1998), Cardiff (1999), Tours (2000), Nantes (2001), Caen (2002), La Rochelle (2003), Rennes (2004) and Angers (2005); we look forward to an exciting meeting in Bordeaux in 2007.