



Warsaw, 17 September 2014

Scientists become closer: Young chemists from Warsaw and Cambridge tighten cooperation

On the map, Warsaw and Cambridge remain at the same distance. In chemistry, however, both research centres are getting closer and closer – due to another edition of the Cambridge-Warsaw Young Scientists Meeting “Breaking Boundaries in Chemistry”.

Scientific communities of young chemists from Warsaw and Cambridge had an opportunity again to widen their knowledge, tightening cooperation and enhancing personal ties. The historical walls of the Cambridge University hosted the two-day 2nd Cambridge-Warsaw Young Scientists Meeting “Breaking Boundaries in Chemistry”. The meeting addressed numerous topics from nanotechnology to state-of-the-art polymer, organic and inorganic chemistry.

“The meeting gathered some of the best young chemists from Poland’s leading chemical institutions, including the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the PAS, the Faculty of Chemistry, Warsaw University of Technology, and researchers from the University of Cambridge – over 130 participants in total”, says one of the meeting’s principal organisers, Prof. Janusz Lewiński (IPC PAS, WUT).

“The initiative launched last year in Warsaw received an extremely warm reception and support from the researchers and authorities of the Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge, thus setting up an excellent environment for organisation of the event. This ensured a high scientific level of the conference and an abundant cultural programme”, adds Prof. Dominic Wright from the University of Cambridge.

“The scientific programme was tight and comprised a number of plenary lectures delivered by outstanding researchers from Cambridge and Warsaw, and a few dozen oral communications. In addition, the participants presented over 70 posters. It was extremely exciting to observe such a dynamically developing cooperation, resulting in presentations of findings from common research projects”, stresses Anna Cieślak, a doctoral student at the IPC PAS and a co-organiser of the present meeting edition.

“Our colleagues from Cambridge discussed mainly topics from modern polymer and macrocyclic chemistry, dynamic self-assembly systems, and nanoparticles, including those made of gold and silver”, says Michał Leszczyński, a doctoral student at the IPC PAS, and a winner of a “Diamond Grant” awarded by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. “On the other hand, the

Polish group focused on the chemistry of functional materials, including the synthesis and functionalization of metal and semiconductor nanoparticles and hybrid organic-inorganic porous materials”.

The research topics and the new materials discussed during the meeting in Cambridge will likely find future applications in solving problems in key areas of life such as medicine (intelligent therapeutic systems), power industry (hydrogen technology, photovoltaics and super-efficient batteries), or computer technologies. Many of the materials presented display interesting luminescent or conductive properties, and their use in the electronic industry could significantly improve the operation of diodes and displays.

An important element of this year's meeting was also the social events, which not only enabled the Warsaw's chemists to learn about Cambridge more, but also to speak freely to their colleagues from the UK.

“Events such as the Cambridge-Warsaw Meeting combine perfectly top level science with the tightening of ties on friendly terms. Both factors are extremely important from the perspective of modern science management through networking research teams and institutions”, stresses Setu Kasera from Dr Oren A. Scherman's research group (UCAM), one of the main organisers of the meeting.

The present edition of the meeting was already the second in the “Breaking Boundaries in Chemistry” series. During the first event, Warsaw hosted a group of nearly 30 young researchers from the University of Cambridge. That meeting was attended by over 100 young researchers from Warsaw's scientific institutions who participated in a few dozen presentations, lectures, and sessions at the IPC PAS. The first meeting was followed by a common ski retreat involving 60 participants from Warsaw and Cambridge to the mountains of Slovakia.

“The excellent atmosphere of both meetings, contributing to tightening of both scientific and personal ties between the communities of young, outstanding chemists from Warsaw and Cambridge, produces the foundation of a tradition that we hope will be continued for many years in future”, sums up Prof. Lewiński.

Both meetings of the communities of young chemists from Warsaw and Cambridge were possible thanks to the NOBLESSE grant that is just about to come to an end. The over three million Euro grant is one of the largest grants awarded to a single Polish research institution under the “Research Potential” activity of the 7th European Union Framework Programme. The most important IPC PAS activities implemented currently under the grant include development of scientific contacts of the Institute with international research centres, organisation of international conferences and meetings and setting up of new research teams headed by young researchers. At present, research topics pursued by these teams include quantum nanostructures, biospectroscopy, biosensors and green nanotechnology. The research covered by the grant is conducted with involvement of researchers from over a dozen European countries.

The University of Cambridge is one of the world's oldest and most renowned universities. It can boast of the largest number of Nobel Prize winners: the prestigious prize has been awarded to as many as 65 Cambridge-based scientists. The list of the present and past researchers affiliated with Cambridge includes well-known names, with physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking, Francis Crick and James Watson, discoverers of the DNA structure, Alan Turing, co-founder of computer science, Ernest Rutherford, discoverer of the structure of atomic nucleus, James Clerk Maxwell, author of the first physics unification theory, Charles Darwin, founder of the theory of evolution, Isaac Newton, founder of classical mechanics, to mention a few only.

The Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences belongs to the Academy's Institutes with the highest visibility. Ranked among the top Poland's chemical research centres, the IPC PAS employs more than 200 researchers publishing yearly nearly 200 research papers in journals listed in the ISI Master Journal List. The IPC PAS maintains cooperation with more than 40

universities and research institutions from Poland and worldwide, including Germany's Max-Planck-Institutes, France's École Normale Supérieure, US Harvard University and UK's University of Cambridge.

This press release was prepared thanks to the NOBLESSE grant under the activity "Research potential" of the 7th Framework Programme of the European Union.

The Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences (<http://www.ichf.edu.pl/>) was established in 1955 as one of the first chemical institutes of the PAS. The Institute's scientific profile is strongly related to the newest global trends in the development of physical chemistry and chemical physics. Scientific research is conducted in nine scientific departments. CHEMIPAN R&D Laboratories, operating as part of the Institute, implement, produce and commercialise specialist chemicals to be used, in particular, in agriculture and pharmaceutical industry. The Institute publishes approximately 200 original research papers annually.

CONTACTS:

Prof. Dominic Wright

Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge
tel. +44 1223 763122
email: dsw1000@cam.ac.uk
web: www.ch.cam.ac.uk/group/wright

Prof. Oren Scherman

Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge
tel. +44 1223 331508
email: os23@cam.ac.uk
web: www-melville.ch.cam.ac.uk/scherman/scherman

Prof. dr hab. inż. Janusz Lewiński

Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences
tel. +48 22 3432077
email: lewin@ch.pw.edu.pl
web: lewin.ch.pw.edu.pl

LINKS:

<http://www-melville.ch.cam.ac.uk/CambWarsaw/Camb.html>

The website of the 2nd Cambridge-Warsaw Young Scientists Meeting.

<http://www.ch.cam.ac.uk/>

The website of the Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge.

<http://ichf.edu.pl/noblesse/>

The website of the NOBLESSE grant.

<http://www.ichf.edu.pl/>

The website of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

<http://www.ichf.edu.pl/press/>

Press releases of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

IMAGES:

ICHF140917b_fot01s.jpg

HR: http://ichf.edu.pl/press/2014/09/ICHF140917b_fot01.jpg

Participants attending the 2nd Cambridge-Warsaw Young Scientists Meeting "Breaking Boundaries in Chemistry". (Source: IPC PAS)