

# ChemNet News. *Issue 2*

## Welcome to Issue 2.

Issue 2 already? Lots of good stuff for you this month including your first issue of InfoChem - I hope you enjoy it.

## Chemistry in the news.

The Nobel prize for Chemistry has gone to Roger Kornberg of Stanford University in California for his studies which have led to a more detailed understanding of the underlying chemistry behind RNA transcription. This is the process by which the double stranded DNA molecule, which makes up a gene, is copied into a single strand of genetic material called messenger RNA (mRNA). mRNA acts as the messenger molecule which transports the genetic information for making proteins from DNA in the cell nucleus to the site of protein synthesis in the cells cytoplasm. This is pretty fundamental to our understanding of life itself. Kornberg's key contribution to understanding how this works was made in 2001, when he demonstrated the chemical structure of RNA polymerase II, the vital enzyme at the heart of transcription, and he has continued studying the process ever since.

What's really great about this Nobel chemistry prize is that it shows how chemistry crosses over with, and is vital for, the understanding of other subjects, like biology. If you go on to study chemistry further, who knows where it'll take you?

## ChemNet events.

I'm busy putting these together at the moment so watch this space and the website too for details of forthcoming events. Can't say too much yet but watch this space and the website. I'm hoping to be able to start updating that from the end of the month.

The first ChemNet event has been confirmed by the West Midlands local section who will be offering a lecture on the 12<sup>th</sup> December involving a guest speaker and a free buffet for members afterwards at Birmingham University. There should be some events for everyone to attend, but some of you are making it really hard for me by living in remote or out of the way places! We've now got members from the Shetland Isles to France. Some of you are not going to be able to make it to your "local" event for geographical reasons. So that you don't feel left out we should have the discussion board up and running by the end of November so hang in there.

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### ChemNet on the web.

In an ever changing world occupied by single issue interest groups where do you turn for impartial scientific advice? Part of the remit of the RSC is to be able to offer independent scientific advice to those who need it. This is achieved by producing policy documents which can be read by anyone whether they have any scientific training or not. These represent the RSC's considered opinion on a whole raft of hotly contested issues and are written by the RSC in collaboration with top scientists in the field, and they offer a great way for you to get a feel for topics such as Global Warming. They offer cutting edge ideas and information for assignments and provide a way to stay informed.

<http://www.rsc.org/ScienceAndTechnology/Policy/index.asp>

### Careers spot.

I've been thinking hard about this month's career spot but have run into a problem - a lot of chemistry is about learning reaction equations and people find these boring and uninteresting until they realise how important they are. They might just seem to be numbers and letters on a page or a screen to you but their significance is that they represent chemical processes and products, which help to build economies and create jobs, maybe jobs you'll be doing one day. And we're not just talking about jobs in labs or manufacturing plants, those equations lead to real products from the chemical industry, and those products have to be researched and developed. These products have to be manufactured, packaged, transported, marketed and sold. Orders have to be fulfilled and customer service and after sales back up provided. All of the links in the chain offer opportunities of jobs for graduates in the chemical sciences. Makes you think doesn't it? So that's my problem: which of these opportunities do I focus on this month? Wait a minute, I've filled this paragraph and got you thinking - problem solved.

### Competition time.

We've been celebrating a big anniversary at the RSC this year with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of mauveine, the first synthetic dye. This led directly to the establishment of the synthetic chemical industry. There's more information about this on the RSC website, but to celebrate this significant milestone ChemNet are giving away prizes in our first ChemNet competition. A first prize of £20 HMV gift vouchers and two second prizes of £10 are up for grabs.

So here's the question:

On what date did Sir William Henry Perkin discover mauveine?

Here's a clue, the answer is somewhere on the RSC's website: [www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org)

Email your answer and ChemNet membership number to me at: [info@rsc.org](mailto:info@rsc.org). The closing date is 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

Got a chemistry related problem? Email us at: [info@rsc.org](mailto:info@rsc.org).

*R. Bowler.*