

## welcome to issue 27

We're well into winter now, the fireworks of November seem a long time ago and the Christmas break is looming on the horizon. I'm looking forward to my turkey and Christmas pud.

Whilst this time of year means revision for many of you, hopefully you'll take a bit of time out to enjoy this month's festive *ChemNet* offerings.

Have you finished your UCAS application yet? I hope you remembered to mention your *ChemNet* membership in your personal statement. If you are applying for a place on a competitive course then showing you are a *ChemNet* member and that you read magazines such as *Chemistry World* and *InfoChem* will indicate to your interviewer that you have a real interest in chemistry and that you are used to learning outside of lessons; a useful skill once you get to university. This month we have another magazine from the RSC, *Chemical Biology*, more information for you to relate to in your interview.



Robert Bowles – Editor



## Keep your options open...

### CAREERS SPOT

Here's a thought for the many of you out there who are studying chemistry to go on to another career such as medicine or becoming a vet, and I know you're out there! What happens if once you've qualified as a doctor you realise you don't want to spend all day on the internet checking Google for cures and it's not right for you? Your vocational degree will qualify you to be a doctor, a vet or a dentist, but if you want to change your mind at a later date your options might be limited. However, if you study

chemistry at degree level, once you graduate, your career options aren't reduced, in fact quite the opposite; a huge range of careers open up for you. It could be a research career at university or in industry, or you could be solving environmental problems as an environmental consultant. I could go on, but space is limited here in *ChemNet News*. A much better option for you is to check out the RSC's vast cornucopia of career information at: <http://www.rsc.org/Education/SchoolStudents/FAQsCareers.asp>

## Website of the month

### *ChemNet* discussion board

You may have filled in a username for the *ChemNet* discussion board on your application form. Those of you who gave us your email addresses should have received your username by now. If not don't worry, you can email [chemnet@rsc.org](mailto:chemnet@rsc.org) to ask for one. *ChemNet* now has over

3500 members so why not go onto the *ChemNet* discussion board and talk to fellow members. There are great opportunities to compare courses and university applications – you never know, you might meet *ChemNet* members applying to the same university as you.

TEXT US  
ON 07825  
186 304

## chemnet events

### Coming in 2009:

*Careers in Chemistry* event – Part of Cambridge Science Week  
**The RSC Cambridge**  
10 March 2009

*ChemNet lecture* at the **National Space Centre Leicester**, by Professor Paul Monks from the University of Leicester Earth Observation Science Group  
24 March 2009

*ChemNet meets ChemSoc*  
Careers in chemistry event with the undergraduates at **Sheffield University**  
31 March 2009

Visit to HFL Newmarket  
TBC

And I am pleased to announce plans for *Meet the Universities 2009* – **THE ChemNet event** – meet representatives from 20 universities offering chemical science courses at our event **central london**  
4 July 2009

More coming soon...

Let us know if you want more details about any of the above or want to book your place, email us at [chemnet\\_events@rsc.org](mailto:chemnet_events@rsc.org). If you live near any of these areas you'll get an invite in the post. Look out for them as they fill up fast.

## chemistry on the web

### Another competition from the RSC

Remember at the end of the film 'The Italian Job' when they're hanging over a cliff in a bus with their stash of gold, about to disappear over the edge? (sorry if you haven't and that's just given the ending away... Ooops!) Join the *RSC Facebook* group and answer the question about how to retrieve the gold and you could win a trip to Turin, here's the link: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=logo#/group.php?gid=45820220357> or here: <http://www.rsc.org/AboutUs/News/PressReleases/2008/ItalianJob.asp>



It's nearly Christmas so check out some chemistry carols here: <http://www.thecatalyst.org/m19holiday.html> There's more here too: [http://www.xs4all.nl/~jcdverha/scijokes/3\\_1.html](http://www.xs4all.nl/~jcdverha/scijokes/3_1.html) Some are quite good and some are truly, truly dreadful – the author of the page has a real obsession with caesium!

A chemistry reworking of Charles Dickens Christmas carol can be found here: <http://www.tinyurl.com/6092m4>

If you want to register to use the discussion board email [chemnet@rsc.org](mailto:chemnet@rsc.org)

## Chemistry in the news



The election of Senator Barack Obama to President of the USA represents quite a shift in US politics and in world politics too. So what does it mean for chemistry? One of the policies he is committed to is reducing the carbon emissions in the US. The world should breathe easier knowing that, but the development of the new technology to do this is likely to need a lot of investment. Given the current economic climate is this realistic? Can the US, or the rest of the world afford it? We can't afford not to, and what better way to rebuild the world economy than by investing in new fuel and energy technologies. Chemistry will be at the vanguard of this new economy in the US and here in the UK too, so there'll be lots of jobs for chemists out there <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/nov/06/renewableenergy-barackobama>

### Who wants to be a Millionaire?

It's easy really, put a chemical-free material into the hands of Dr. Neville Reed, a director here at the RSC, and it's all yours! What could be simpler? Oh, hang on, an actual chemical-free material? What could that possibly be? Well if its chemical-free it's got to be natural hasn't it? A nice organically grown tomato perhaps? No chemical fertilisers or pesticides used to grow it so it's going

to be chemical-free. Er... no, it's full of sugars, antioxidants (like lycopene, which make it red), and all of the other chemicals found within living cells. Plenty of chemicals there. Hmm, what about spring water? I mean, that's as natural and pure as it gets right? It must be chemical-free? Er... no, it's full of mineral ions, oh... and water, H<sub>2</sub>O – that's a chemical too!

<http://www.rsc.org/AboutUs/News/PressReleases/2008/ChemicalFree.asp>

This story is really about the perception of chemistry and chemicals. The media and advertising industry often misrepresents chemicals as poisonous or toxic. Some are, after all just about anything can be toxic if you eat or drink enough of it (yes even water:

<http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/6263029.stm>

but chemicals are crucial to our current standard of living and make the world a better place. Everything we eat, drink, drive, play with and live in is made of chemicals – both natural and synthetic chemicals are essential for life as we know it. So good luck if you think you're going to become a millionaire this way, I think you're better off trying to win the lottery, you could try doing it by picking your numbers from atomic numbers of your favourite elements.

“To book a place on a ChemNet event email: [chemnet@rsc.org](mailto:chemnet@rsc.org) or call 01223 432340”

### HAVE YOUR SAY!

Would you like to see your article in the next issue? If it's good enough we'll print it! Submit your article to [chemnet@rsc.org](mailto:chemnet@rsc.org)

## free stuff!



The two winners of the *Molymod* modelling kit last month correctly identified the jellyfish which provides GFP as *Aequorea victoria* they will be getting their kits soon.

There's another Molymod kit to give away this month. To win a Molymod Chemistry molecular modelling kit this month email the answer to this question: *Which element makes up the most mass of the human body?* Send your replies by 10 December to [chemnet@rsc.org](mailto:chemnet@rsc.org) or call 01223 432340.



### CHEMISTRY FACTS

The top 50 global chemical producers in 2004 had sales of 587 billion US dollars with a profit margin of 8.1% and research and development spending of 2.1% of total chemical sales.

