Retro(synthesis) is back in fashion

On Friday the 10th March 2017, SCI Headquarter in Belgrave Square, London hosted a celebration of organic chemistry, as it was the venue for the final of the 4th National Retrosynthesis Competition. This event was jointly organised by members of the RSC's Heterocyclic and Synthesis Group and the Fine Chemicals Group and Young Chemists Panel of the SCI, under the leadership of Dr Rob Wybrow of Syngenta, UK. From ~40 teams who entered the preliminary round in December 2016, 10 were selected for the final by the judging panel, Dr Ross Denton (University of Nottingham), Professor Paul Davies (University of Birmingham), Dr Robin Attrill (GSK) and Dr Sharan Bagal (AstraZeneca). The finalists were drawn from a broad cross-section of chemistry-based organisations, universities and academic institutions, pharmaceutical companies, CROs and agrochemicals. At the final, teams presented their synthetic strategies for the as yet un-synthesized natural product, eucalrobusone D (**DOI:** 10.1002/chem.201601732), and answered questions from the audience and judges challenging their reasoning and route selection. The winning team was "SnaAZzy Synthesisers" from AstraZeneca and the runners up were "Dysfunctional Group" from the University of St. Andrews while "We Mean Bismuth" from the University of Oxford took third place. Special commendation from the judges was also made to Concept (previously Peakdale) "Chapel Team" for a very valiant effort.

The organising committee would like to thank all of the teams who entered the competition for their contributions as well as the judges, guests, attendees, sponsors and exhibitors for their significant input into the event. We would particularly like to thank the SCI for their generous support for this year's competition, which included the donation of a year's membership to all the members of the winning team and e-memberships to the runners-up. Based upon enthusiastic positive feedback from participants and special guests on the day the competition was hugely successful, underlining the key central importance of synthetic organic chemistry in both fundamental and applied research in the UK. Taking that positive momentum forwards, the organising committee has already begun their planning for the 5th National Retrosynthesis Competition, to be held in early March 2018. For further details on the next competition follow us on Twitter @UKRetroComp and LinkedIn.