

Women sharing a chemical moment in time

A CHEMICAL HANDSHAKE AROUND THE WORLD

Women from 37 countries shared a chemical moment in time on 18 January. This unique networking event marked the start of the International Year of Chemistry and celebrated the centenary of Marie Curie's Nobel Prize for Chemistry. Participants reflected on the current landscape for women in chemistry; this was made poignant by the results of a UK survey, which found that boys are twice as likely as girls to want a scientific career (see page 4). Breakfasts started in New Zealand and Australia, and cascaded around the world through different time zones. Groups used Skype and social media to link up with other countries in similar time zones, and many organisers commented to *RSC News* on the value of this as a networking tool. Many groups hope to hold similar events in the future and thanked Mary Garson from the University of Queensland, Brisbane, for coordinating the meetings.

01. LONDON

London's meeting generated many stories of positive experience as female scientists from the UK, India and Beijing shared their views and inspirations. Vivian Wing-Wah Yam of Hong Kong University relayed a valuable message from her secondary school biology teacher, who constantly reminded her to "Enjoy your work and respect your work". Chair of the meeting, Helen Fielding, urged young women scientists to "Be bold and look for a big challenge. Trust your instincts and never be afraid to ask for advice". The videos can be seen online. www.rsc.org/womensbreakfast See page 4 for more details.



01. LONDON



02. LIVERPOOL

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Over 30 women came together at the Liverpool John Moores University to discuss how to encourage more women to take up careers in chemistry.

03. BEIJING

The meeting in Beijing was co-organised by the RSC, and linked to events in Brisbane and Singapore. The former Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Madam Gu Xiulian, RSC chief executive, Richard Pike, and the youngest female Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Vivian Wing-Wah Yam, gave keynote addresses to the meeting.



03. BEIJING

04. TAIWAN

The breakfast in Taiwan linked to Singapore and Brisbane via Skype. Attendees are now keen to use Skype as a more regular means of scientific networking.



04. TAIWAN

05. ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

The 20 women who work at Huntsman in Rotterdam came together to celebrate IYC and discuss the role of women in their company.



05. ROTTERDAM



06. MELBOURNE



07. PRAGUE



08. UTRECHT



09. ASUNCION



10. PERTH



11. KUWAIT



12. MILTON KEYNES



13. TENNESSEE

06. MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Helping to kick-start the 'Mexican Wave' of breakfasts from Australia, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) hosted the event in Melbourne.

07. PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Distinguished female chemists took part in a panel debate at the headquarters of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The breakfast meeting then linked up with the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow.

08. UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS

Students, lecturers, alumni and teachers from the area attended the networking event at Hogeschool (University of Applied Sciences), Utrecht. This linked to events in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, and Cairo, Egypt.

09. ASUNCION, PARAGUAY

Chemists from all areas of the profession connected to Brisbane, Canada, Mexico and Peru from the Information Center of the United Nations in Asuncion.

10. PERTH, AUSTRALIA

Western Australian Chief Scientist, Lyn Beazley (pictured in the centre) opened the event in Perth, which linked to female chemists in Brisbane, Taipei, and Singapore.

11. KUWAIT

Many female chemists at the networking breakfast in Kuwait enjoyed the city scene from the impressive Kuwait Towers.

12. MILTON KEYNES, UK

Chemists at the Open University celebrated the chemical handshake with links to the National Physical Laboratory, Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Lisbon.

13. OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE, USA

Women from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory networked with students, teachers and post-docs in Philadelphia.

