

Chromatography Focus

THE THIRD AND FINAL CHROMATOGRAPHIC SOCIETY GOLDEN JUBILEE 'TRIAD' SYMPOSIUM

John Lough

GSK, Stevenage - 21st & 22nd November 2006

As UK separation scientists congregated on Stevenage in November last year for the third and final meeting inside two months of the Chromatographic Society's Golden Jubilee 'Triad' series there was no sign of weariness in the air, even amongst the few hardy souls that had attended all three events. Indeed there was still a buzz in the air. Much of this, of course, was still to do with sub-2 μm particles (high temperatures or high pressures or both?).

However the meeting was to go on to demonstrate that the future of UK separation science is not unidimensional and that there are plenty of other interesting advances to get excited about. Also, it goes without saying that the GSK organisers put on their usual impeccable show, on the science, the exhibition and the excellent social event, a dinner in the GSK Rotunda restaurant complete with string quartet accompaniment.

**MEL EUERBY
(ASTRAZENECA)
DELIVERED HIS USUAL
HIGH QUALITY INSIGHT
INTO REVERSED-PHASE
LC COLUMN
CHARACTERISATION**

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Following the opening address by local organiser and Society president, Chris Bevan, the meeting proper began with one of its highlights. Jim Waters, founder of Waters Associates, one of the most prominent manufacturers in HPLC over the past thirty years, was presented with the Society's Martin Gold Medal, an award thoroughly deserved in light of Jim's pioneering role in his company in the important formative years of the technique and the fact that his company became and remains one of the strongest manufacturing forces in the field. The subsequent lecture was a tour-de-force as Jim charted the development of Waters recounting stories, to delight the more long in the tooth in the audience in particular, behind such ground-breaking models as the famous M6000A dual piston reciprocating pump. Did anyone not break a sapphire piston rod!?

The Waters name was still to the fore in subsequent sessions, particularly with respect to the sub-2 μm particles. There were sound contributions to this saga from, for example, Melissa Hanna-Brown (Pfizer) and Neil Herbert (Grace). However, perhaps the most welcome presentation in this area was by Mike Webb (GSK, Stevenage). Here at last was someone setting out exactly when and how high efficiency at very high speed would be able to make a beneficial difference to "the business". Perceived wisdom (e.g. Fritz Erni way back in the early 80's at the outset of fast LC) is that speed in chromatography is beneficial when the chromatographic run time is the rate limiting step. Webb made the case that it went further than this in that it was beneficial to carry out all the chromatography quickly so that all the analyses could be carried out on fewer instruments (lower capital expenditure, less valuable lab space required).

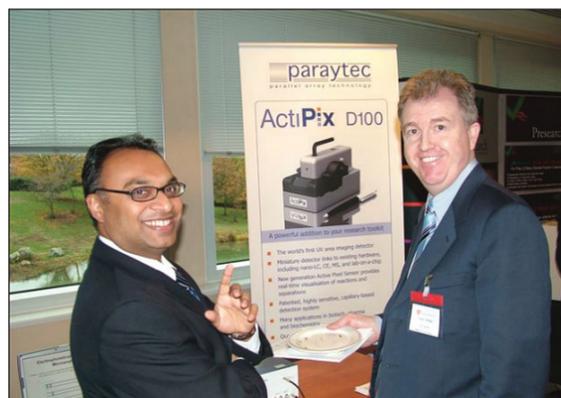


Figure 1. Avid discussion at the Trade Exhibition



Figure 2. Ian Anderson, Society committee member touts for new members



Figure 3. Jim Waters, recipient of the Society's Martin medal, accompanied by wife Faith



Figure 4. Enthralled audience listening to lectures

While the entire programme was sound, there were some that caught the eye as being of topical interest and/or a bit different. David Goodall (University of York) described his rather clever new miniature UV imaging detector based upon active pixel technology suitable for capillary separations (but is there really a large enough market for this?).

Mel Euerby (AstraZeneca) delivered his usual high quality insight into reversed-phase LC column characterisation. On the detection front, Alex Mann (Shimadzu) pointed out the difficulties involved in MS detection for very rapidly eluting peaks, Stephen Bullock (Polymer Labs) introduced sub-ambient evaporative light scattering detection and most interestingly of all, Christine Eckers (GSK, Stevenage – "Analytical Sciences Stevenage Spectroscopy & CIP Support"!) discussed the use of ion mobility techniques combined with liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry for the detection and measurement of trace impurities in formulated drug products (i.e. used to investigate counterfeit products).

To highlight just a few of the talks does an injustice to the other speakers. All in all, every speaker helped make this a most fitting way to round off 50 years of The Chromatographic Society.

Very importantly though (!!) note that The Chromatographic Society moves on and a vibrant programme of meetings for the next two years is already well past the formative stages.

Catch our website (www.chromsoc.com) to keep up with the new developments as they break.