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# Sletter



1st NANODRUG Summer School and International Scientific Meeting 24-30 June 2012 Queen Mary, University of London



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Take different cultures and scientific backgrounds, add a professional network, broad many experts and a warm and sunny week of summer London, mix all together, bake in a oven called Queen Mary University for one week and you will "taste" an amazing experience that frames knowlachievements, profesedge growth opportunities, sional networking and eventually why not consider the chance to make new friends.

This is the kind of event you feel slipping by really fast but when you stop and think about it, you realize a lot has been done and achieved during this week: A complete and clear NANODRUG project guideline; An overview on Nanoparticles and their potential and current applications; How to deal with social dynamics that can occur during the project fulfillment, Knowing in person the PI, ER and ESR and so having the chance to build collaborations and exchange useful ideas; Producing a video for the webcast project; Learning about the experimental works of all the members of the NANODRUG group.



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From the 24th to the 27th of June students and researchers (ESRs and ERs) being part of the network met in London at the Queen Mary University, to take part of the first NANODRUG summer school organized by the co-ordinator of the project, Dr. Marina Resmini. Participants were coming from: Queen Mary University of London (UK), Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, Compiégne University of Technology (FR), University of Innsbruck (AU), Cranfield University (UK), University of Coimbra (PT), Université Catholique de Louvain (BG), MJR PhramJet (DE) and Sanofi-Aventis (FR).

The program of the Summer School was based on lectures and practical trainings by experts of drug delivery systems and about, among the others, drug development, drug carriers preparation and characterization, nanothechnology in drug delivery, nanomedicine, nanoparticles and colloidal systems,



modern techniques of analysis and multifunctional delivery systems. All the materials of these courses has been uploaded on the NANODRUG website.

In addition participants received trainings on important subjects like "Working with your supervisor effectively" and "Communicating your research effectively". Those trainings were given by experts in the field invited from The Learning Institute of the Queen Mary University.



An expert of webinar and webcast projects was also invited to explain to the researchers how to make a scientific webcast. After the training all the researchers were thus involved in the preparation of a real webcast: two different projects were realized and the videos were shown later on during the international meeting to all the PIs. Videos were uploaded into the website as well.



On 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of June the first international meeting of NANODRUG took place at the same venue as for the summer school, the Queen Mary University of London, under the guidance and the perfect organization of the co-ordinator Dr. Resmini.

All the Principal Investigators of the NANODRUG project joined the event together with the ESRs and the ERs.

During this event there was a lot of space for each researcher to present their current scientific projects and the way to contribute to the NANODRUG deliverables and milestones. The event helped researchers and PIs to know expertise of each other and starting creating collaborations and networks,

which are the base for the realization of the NANODRUG project.

The researchers nominated two representatives, Mr Gabriele Saito from Queen Mary, University of London and Miss Jacqueline Maximilien from the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, Compiègne University of Technology. Together they will keep the researchers community proactive. They have already decided to create a forum to discuss opinions, experiences in the lab, help each other with scientific paper writing, among other things.



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Dr Resmini stressed a lot both the PIs and researchers about the importance of secondments and trainings. Thus the researchers started planning their secondments inside of the network (schedule will be produced soon and uploaded on the website) and already proposed few arguments for future trainings.

The meeting ended with an amazing experience on the London Eye, from which all the city of London is shown under your eyes.



All the participants went back to their base countries ennew scientific riched of knowledge, ideas and motivations, but also with new friendships and collaborations. They all were thankful with Dr. Resmini for the efforts she put in organizing a very intense and productive **NANODRUG** Summer School and International meeting.

Written by the QMUL team



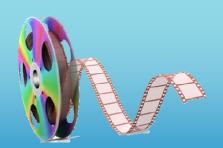
### CNBC in London

By

Michela Comune & Miguel Lino Dr Lino Ferreira's Group, CNBC, Coimbra, Portugal

At the first NANODRUG Summer School all students from different laboratories involved in this project met for the first time, sharing their experiences and expectations regarding their research. PIs with other students from their group also attend to the summer school and scientific meeting, which created the opportunity for potential scientific collaborations.

In the summer school we had some interesting lectures about nanotechnologies and drug delivery presented by DR. Diana Velluto, Dr. Zarbakhsh and Prof. Sukhorukov. Besides the scientific topics we also benefited from Dr. Resmini and Dr. Byron's tips and advices on how to give an oral presentation and communicate our research. (it was very helpful indeed, since in the end of that week we would have to give the first presentation at the International Scientific Meeting). Dr. Forristal's workshop on how to work effectively with our "bosses" was very helpful. Speaking about our personal experience with our supervisors was funny a somehow cathartic! We realized that a lot of aspects were common to every supervisor! Fortunately, in the end we assimilated two important concepts that will help us to survive...



We had the opportunity to work in the laboratory and learn how to make nanogels and how to work with a tensiometer. These two activities were the base for our webcast projects, which were later shown to all supervisors! But we already knew some secrets about the art of webinars (Dr. Shreedharan is a specialist on this subject) so we immediately defined a strategy to make a webinar with **WOW!** 

#### **Feedback**

Frequent

Accurate

Specific

Timely

#### **Action Plan**

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-bound



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After three days of summer school, the 1st NANODRUG International Scientific Meeting started. At 9am sharp everyone was in the conference room to start presenting their work.

Some students were more stressed and nervous than others but in the end everyone made an excellent presentation of their work, answering every question!

It was good to attend to this 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and to understand the main research lines of each group. Immediately, on students' minds, the idea of collaborations and secondments suitable to their work started to grow.

During this week we also had some activities outside the university campus. We went to the Centre of the Cell, where we felt like kids playing inside a cell, and to the London Eye where we had an unforgettable journey inside a capsule, seeing all the emblematic places of the city.

We got to know everyone better during breakfast, lunch time, coffee break and dinners and spare time. Talking about dinners, we went to the Morgan Arms where all the Italians were really stressed about the match Italy vs Germany (Italy won!) and then we went to a pub close to the university to celebrate this

victory. We also had dinner in Covent Garden in a very nice English restaurant (British food is not so bad, we really appreciated the food at Porters).

We had a farewell party in a disco and some PIs joined us in this celebration. We look forward to repeat this in the next meeting (but everyone should be present, it's mandatory!)

We would like to emphasize how good the organization of this meeting was, thanks to the availability of all members of Dr. Resmini's group.

During this week we finally met Sylvie. She conquered us with her kindness and a smile!

We already miss everyone. It was an amazing week and it is a fantastic group that hopefully will have successful results.

We definitively love London



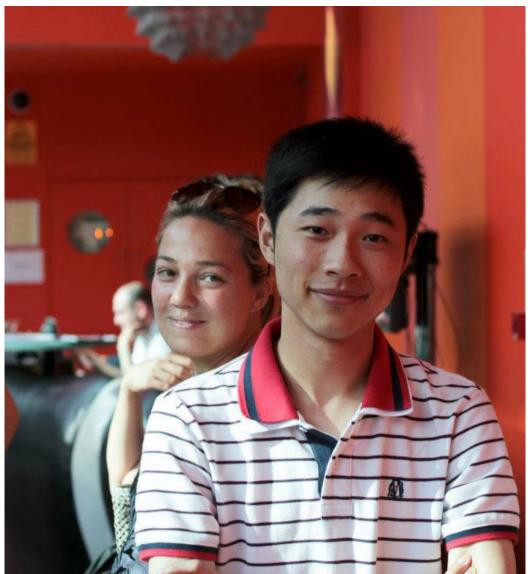












In the last semester of my master study, I decided to pursue a PhD study because of my enthusiasm for scientific research. I feel so lucky that when I was doing my PhD application and finding information on the Internet, the NANODRUG website caught my eyes at first sight. Both the research topics and the training platform looked very attractive. I submitted the application to Dr. Klaus Liedl at the University of Innsbruck. I really appreciate that Dr. Klaus Liedl granted me the opportunity to work in his lab.

The focus of my project is on computational studies of the nanoparticles' interactions occurring during the applications to patients.

I started my research career and attended the 1st NANODRUG Summer Training School and the 1st International Scientific Meeting in London. My research topic was mainly on inorganic chemistry during my master study so I needed to learn lots of biology to prepare the required presentation at the scientific meeting. By attending the school and meeting, I had a deeper insight into this project and got some ideas about this project.

What surprised me the most was the chance of

visiting and working at the lab on the first day. After doing computational simulation for three years, I felt exciting about lab work, experimentally. NANODRUG fellows and partners are all very helpful and have infinite patience. They repeated again and again just to make me understand. I really appreciated the programme that gave me the opportunity to work with these excellent intellectuals.

Besides all these, the NANODRUG programme also gave me a chance to learn a lot of communication skills in that week. Especially those lectures that taught us how to communicate with our supervisors and how to prepare a presentation were all very helpful.



ESR @ UIBK

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When I started my PhD, about two months ago, my Supervisor, Dr. Huijin Zhu, almost immediately said to me 'Ok, in a couple of months you will have to go to the first NANODRUG meeting and you will also have to present your work. To say I was shocked was an understatement: I had never been to a conference, let alone presented anything in front of a crowd of people other than from my university professors, so I was absolutely scared.

As the fateful day approached, my tension reached new heights: my presentation was ready in a reasonable amount of time, no particular rush, but having started the real lab work only a couple of weeks before the meeting, I had no results to add to my presentation, so I felt like my work for the meeting was not complete.

The journey to London didn't start well. Mostly because of my super heavy suitcase (30 kg up and down the underground stairs), but also because I felt lost in a campus I knew nothing about, fearing

that, given my quiet and sometimes unsociable character, I would be all alone for the rest of the week.

Thankfully, I couldn't have been more wrong. During the very first few minutes of our first morning lesson, I met Michela from Coimbra and Diana from Queen Mary, Italians just like me, and Miguel, a PhD student also from Coimbra. And then, during Dr. Resmini initial presentation, I found out that there were many Italians involved in the project, which made me feel a little bit better...Italy roockks!!

From then, it was fairly easy to bond with my fellow colleagues, because every single one of them was going through the same experience as me: living in a foreign country, adapting to new social and cultural rules, speaking a different language, eating different food... we could confront our own experiences, but also the differences between our own mother countries.

Bonding with everyone made the morning lessons more bearable (I'm not a morning person, so I tend to be sleepy and zombie-like until 11 am), and the lab experiments funnier. The webcast was absolutely the most strange and amazing experience I have ever had! I never had to film myself or people in a lab situation in which we had to explain something the clearest way possible, and I'm camera-shy, so I offered to be the cameraman. It was interesting seeing my group partners bickering about who gets to speak in the video and who gets to be just 'hands' in the video! In the end everything was sorted out and I think that, given it was the first time we tried it and we only had one afternoon, the result was pretty good.

In the end, the meeting went fairly well despite my incredible nervousness. It also helped my supervisor

and me to decide on where I might spend my three secondments during my PhD.

I was really sad when it was time to leave, because I got used to life in London (who cannot get used to it?) with my new friends. But what I know is that we will remain in contact (thanks Facebook) and we will see each other again in these three years sharing work, feelings and experiences.



Claudia Moia ESR at CRAN



# First time first meeting: What a great meeting!

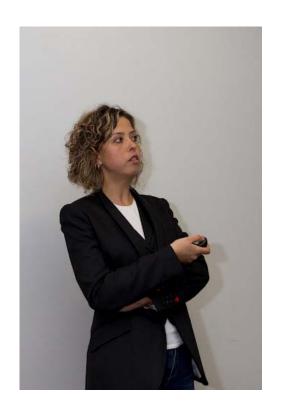
I was in London for the first time in my life. My dear friend Conny and I were trying to find QMUL campus, suddenly someone shout out "I know you". I was shocked I did not expect to meet someone in London streets who might know me. I must confess that I was a little bit terrified but when I saw smiling face of the person standing right across me, I was relieved. Afterwards she added "I know you from Nanodrug newsletter I saw your picture in newsletter" This smiling face was Jacqueline Maximilien. After this friendly welcome there was no reason not to believe that first meeting will be memorable!

We started with summer school. Beside scientific part, complementary training was very beneficial for me. This training provided me a lot of useful skills that will for sure help me to create my future and my academic evolution. But most important thing was to learn what the true meaning of Marie Curie Early stage researcher is.

In Scientific meeting part Prof Resmini gave us lots of information about Nanodrug project and I was able to find out what the other project partners are working on. It was such a friendly and comfortable environment which resulted in strong friendship bonds. And dear Sylvie, after all this e-mails I was impatient to meet her. As I expected she is incredibly nice and was helpful to us.

If I need to say something about London, the city is very impressive. Actually I don't like big cities. Maybe I was in nice part of London, maybe London eye maybe all friendly group members or unbelievable nice weather lead to that good impression on me. As a conclusion we really had a great time.

Asli Arslan
ESR at MJR PharmJet,Germany



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(School of Biological & Chemical Sciences, Queen Mary, University of London)

Gabriele Saito was born in 1984 in Palermo, Italy. He studied in his hometown and obtained a MSc degree in Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Technology (CTF) in March 2011.

During his university career he was fascinated by development of technologies for the modified release of drugs, as well as the possibility to chemically modifying the drugs.

At the Institute of Nanostructured Materials - CNR of Palermo, he wrote his thesis entitled 'Solid lipid nanoparticles as carrier of R-Flurbiprofen in the Central Nervous System for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease' and he had the opportunity to work on formulation, physical-chemical characterization, stability and kinetics of release of nanostructured lipid carriers. In that period he also improved his skills on chemical modifying, HPLC, spectroscopy UV-vis and FT-IR and biological and toxicological assays.

He joined Dr Marina Resmini's research group in May 2012 at the School of biological and Chemical Sciences - Queen Mary, University of London where he started his PhD. He is employed as an Early Stage Researcher within the Marie-Curie Initial Training Network NANODRUG. In his spare time Gabriele likes hanging out with friends, photography, music, doing open air sports, travelling and read about science and geography.



Yin Wang (University of Innsbruck, Austria)

Yin was born in Suzhou. It is a very old city in the eastern China and is a beautiful tourism destination also known as Oriental Venice. He lived there until he chose to study chemistry at Nanjing University of Technology in 2005.

Right after earning the B.S. degree in 2009, he started his M.S. program majoring in Physical Chemistry at the same University. During his master program, he focused on molecular dynamics simulation and acquired lots of skills such as modeling and programming. His work was mainly about the stability of alkali halides confined in carbon nanotubes.

In 2012, Yin was employed as an early stage researcher at the University of Innsbruck, Austria within the Marie-Curie Research Training Network NANODRUG.

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Claudia Moia (Cranfield University, UK)

I was born in Trecate, a small town about 40 km from Milan, Italy, in 1987. In 2006, after High School graduation, I moved to Pavia to start my university studies in Biotechnology, as I wanted to do a study course that involved both Chemistry and Biology.

I obtained my First's Degree in 2009, with my thesis' title being 'Cloning of the enzimes Udp2 Uridine Phosphorylase from *Aeromonas hydrophyla* and Ndt2 Nucleoside deoxyribosyltransferase from *Lactobacillus delbrueckii*'. I chose to do my thesis work in Bacterial Genetics because I came to love the way bacteria worked; in particular, my project regarded the expression of two different genes codifying for two enzymes involved in the recycle pathway for nucleotide production, and their subsequent cloning in *E.coli* in order to have heterologous production.

After working in a Biology lab, I wanted to prepare my Master's Degree Thesis in a Chemistry lab, therefore I got my degree in October 2011 with the thesis title 'Synthesis and characterization of core-shell magnetic nanoparticles for nanomedicine applications'; my work consisted in the synthesis of Magnetic Iron Oxide Nanoparticles and their functionalisation with two different polymers in order to obtain systems suitable for Drug Delivery of anti-cancer drugs.

As of May 2012 I live in Cranfield as a PhD student, working under Dr. Huijin Zhu supervision as an Early Stage Reasearcher within the Marie-Curie Initial Training Network NANODRUG.



Giorgio Chianello (School of Biological & Chemical Sciences, Queen Mary, University of London)

Giorgio was born in Palermo (Sicily, Italy) in 1985, He lived and studied in his hometown until September 2009. In May 2009 he obtained an Erasmus studentship in London that started in September 2009 and was completed in May 2010; then he went back in Palermo where he obtained an MSc degree in Pharmaceutical Chemistry and

Technology in March 2011 at Università degli studi di Palermo. He has been living in London since February 2012.

His experimental thesis was carried out at the School of Pharmacy, University College of London. The aim of his studies was producing and characterizing nanoparticles costitued by polyglutamic acid and tocopheryl polyethylene glycol succinate for drug delivery systems. He is also a qualified pharmacist (from June 2011) and registered as a member of the General Pharmaceutical Council (March 2012). In July 2012, he joined Dr M. Resmini's research group at the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences - Queen Mary, University of London where he started his PhD. He is employed as a Marie Curie Follow Early Stage Researcher within the NANODRUG Network.

He is a joyful person always ready to meet new people, lend a hand, cope with unusual problems and deal with different situations and conditions.

He likes hanging out with friends, photography, travelling and discovering different places and cultures, practicing all kinds of sport, listening music, learning new things, reading and writing.

## Outreach Activities





In May 2012 Dr Resmini organized a 'Scientist for a day' event at Queen Mary, University of London. 31 Children from the Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School in London attended the event and carried out simple experiments in the lab, supervised by the PI, the Marie Curie Fellows and researchers from Dr Resmini's Group.

The aim of this visit was to increase young people's choice and chances through science and open the door to a whole new world for young people, helping them to see science subjects with a fresh perspective and engage their interest and imagination in new ways.

The children were divided into groups and were provided with instructions, materials and tools to perform a real science investigation project: "which ingredient(s) in the taco sauce really do clean a

penny?"

Dr Resmini explained to the junior scientists the experiment, providing them with a clear and easy procedure to follow like experienced scientists. Each team of kids were supervised by one of the assistants.

First, the junior scientists started proving that the taco sauce really cleans pennies. The next step was to find out which cleaning agent(s) in the taco sauce causes it to clean? They were really interested and started to run multiple tests and isolated one variable at a time to see which one was the real cleaning agent for the pennies. As nothing happened with the individual ingredients, they tried a combination of ingredients and isolated the variables to eventually reach the conclusion that the combination of vinegar and salt cleaned the pennies.

To finish off they wrote a report with all their observations during the experiment and their report sheets were assessed by a panel of scientists. The teams were judged on 3 main areas: 1. Very clean and neat handwriting, 2. Good answers presented in a logic

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On the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 Dr. Marina Resmini organised two science days at a London Primary School, involving children from 5 to 11 years old.

To support these activities, Dr. Resmini's group including the Marie Curie Fellows dedicated their time and knowledge to guide the young children through exciting experiments with the aim of attracting them to science.

#### Day one

The first group of children from year 1 and 2 performed the nappy experiment. The students worked in small teams each supervised by a member of Dr. Resmini's team. Children were able to extract and weigh the polymer from two nappies of different qualities and found out which of the nappies was most absorbent. The pupils based this on the absorbance capacity of the polymer itself, that they measured by repeated addition of a specific amount of water to 1g of the polymer extracted. The children enjoyed the experiments, helping each other and understanding the significance of how science could help to improve our daily life even with just a simple invention such as the NAPPY!

The second group from year 4 performed experiment on the preparation of slime. Dr. Resmini first explained how a polymer changes its appearance upon addition of a second element called a "crosslinker." Next, working in pairs, the children used a solution of PVA (linear polymer) and another solution of Borax (cross linked) to prepare the slime and they observed the polymer changing from a liquid to slime! The students needed to focus on the chemical process that causes the change and they were enthu-

siastic about preparing the slime and testing its physical properties: strength, extensibility and malleability.

After the first two sessions the team was busy clean-

ing up and then went off for a well deserved lunch break, to gather more energy for the next class!! The third group was comprised of very young scientists... just 5 years old! Even though they were very young, those little children got really involved in the "magic" taco sauce experiments. The aim of this experiment was to work out which 'magic' ingredient(s) in Taco sauce cleans coins. Each collaborator of Dr. Resmini was responsible for one group of 6 children, helping them to perform the experiments. At the end of the full day everyone was really exhausted by happy to have seen so many excited children enjoying science. The team packed up everything and left the school ready to return the following day.

#### Day two

Children of year 5 and 6 performed the nappy experiment, but this time the children did not get any help from the team and they had to write protocols like real scientists! They worked in teams and they performed the experiment twice to test their ability to reproduce the results. At the end they had to write a report and the best team was awarded a certificate and a special pen from the UK Royal Society of Chemistry.

This scientific event was aimed mostly to bring young people closer to science and technology. The study of these subjects benefits all of us whether we realise it or not. Scientists like Dr. Resmini and her team, have a very important role to play in inspiring the next generation to see these areas as exciting both through sharing experiences and offering young people the chance to get involved in practical work in a real-life scientific environment.

(articles written by Dr Diana Velluto, Marie-Curie Intra-European Fellow , QMUL)



## Outreach Activities



In June 2012 Michela Comune, ESR at CNBC, gave the second presentation in the "Centro de ciência junior" managed by Margarida in the presence of 18-19 years old students and their professor.

The students enrolled in the last year of the high school before starting the University, so one of the aims of these meeting was to stimulate their interests for biosciences and nanotechnologies fields. In this 2nd meeting, Michela preferred spending more time in the experimental activity with the students and giving a shorter talk. The presentation was about the application of gold nanoparticles in skin diseases treatment due to their easy functionalization with therapeutic molecules. She explained a little bit of her ongoing PhD project that is related to this subject.

As promised, after the presentation, she started to make gold nanoparticles with the students in the "Centro de ciência junior" laboratory by using a reducing agent and hydrogen tetrachloride (HAuCl4).





When the reducing agent is added, the Au3+ ions are reduced and gold atoms are formed in the solution and then particles are formed. This formation of gold nanoparticles can be observed by a change in color. Indeed, the first goal of the experiment was to show to the students the gold NPs color that in colloidal solution is red because of their peak of absorbance in 530 nm.

The second goal was to explain and demonstrate to students what happen in the solution when NaCl is added. In fact when a strong electrolyte is added to the solution, the high concentration of ions screens the repulsive electrostatic forces between nanoparticles and the gold nanoparticles aggregate. At this state the gold nanoparticles solution appears blue.

Students helped Michela to synthesize gold nanoparticles solutions and their task was to pay attention to the change in color and the time of the reaction. Before finishing, students discussed the results with Michela and the teachers Margarida, Angela and Margarida. The appointments is for the next October when the activity of the Centro de ciência junior starts again...

Michela Comune, ERS, CNBC

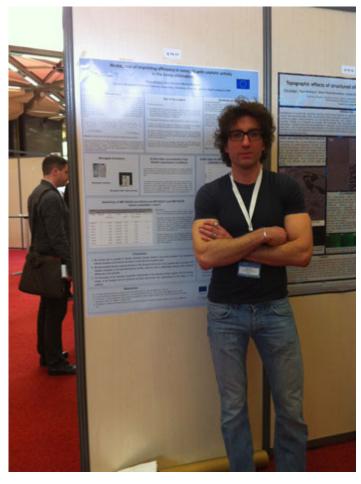
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Dr Marina Resmini and Dr Paolo Bonomi from The School of Biological and Chemical Sciences at Queen Mary, University of London presented posters and oral communication at the largest and most exciting 2012 Spring Meeting of the European Materials Research Society (E-MRS) that was held on 15-18 May 2012 in Strasbourg, France.

Over 3000 people from around the world attended the conference. Dr Paolo Bonomi had the opportunity for networking, especially during the poster presentation sessions that were well attended and where he presented his poster "Modulation of imprinting efficiency in nanogels with catalytic activity in the Kemp elimination".

On the last day of the conference Dr Resmini gave an interesting talk on the work that she has been doing at the School of Biological & Chemical Sciences on the improvement of the molecular imprinting technique to prepare synthetic catalysts.





#### First NANODRUG birthday party @ QMUL!! Giorgio Chianello, ESR at QMUL, enjoyed his surprise party with his colleagues. There was lots of welcoming presents and of course the famous chocolate cake!

Dr Resmini's office: "Giorgio could you please come to my office and bring your lab book?" In the while time Judith, Dolça, Sylvie, Paolo, Gabriele, Diana, Huihui were filling my desk with cakes, presents and joy. I could not expected such a great sur-At that time I had joined the prise. group for not even two weeks but the warm I felt was like they had been part

Everything started with a "meeting" in of my life for a really long time. I have never been good in conveying my feelings face to face so the words may help me to thank Dr. Resmini and all the members of the group who have been and are so important to me, and make my research environment so pleasant, enjoyable and challenging.

Thank you all

Giorgio **ESR** at **OMUL** 

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If only you could choose the day you are born!

I always thought I was lucky to have my birthday in the 'summer,' I say summer loosely as with the British weather you never really know when/if summer will arrive! However as my 18th Birthday came around, along with two A-level chemistry papers on that very day, I soon came to the conclusion that in actual fact 29th of June was not a good day to be born!

Last year we had our annual international meeting in Paris on my birthday and my presence was required. So this year, I was going to spend the week in France for my birthday. Wrong! The IRMED and NANODRUG International meeting had been scheduled for that very week!

Oh well I thought, I will celebrate on the weekend instead. Half way through a very useful and animated talk by Rita on her PhD experience as an ESR she was saying how important it is to celebrate people's birthdays and not to forget them as it can be hard being so far away from your close friends and family... when everybody burst into song!

I would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who was there and for the cake, card and gift it was really touching and maybe the 29th June is not such a bad day to be born... the sun was even shining!

After all having 35 people come to your birthday party once you pass 25 is definitely an achievement especially when its not a special year!

Judith Ray
Phd Student, QMUL

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# Forthcoming Events

#### **NETWORK EVENTS**

IoN Workshop—Introduction to Nanomedicine and Nanotoxicity.

March 2013 - Cranfield, United Kingdom

2nd NANODRUG School—Characterisation of nanomaterials and applications in nanomedicine.

2-4 September 2013 - France

NANODRUG Mid-Term Review Meeting and 2nd NANODRUG International Scientific Meeting

5-7 September 2013 - Paris, France

#### CONFERENCES

Molecularly Imprinted Polymers - Science and Technology—MIP2012

2-30 August 2012—Paris, France http://www.mip2012.com

**E-MRS Spring Meeting 2013** 

May 27-31, 2013 - Strasbourg, France http://www.emrs-strasbourg.com/index.php

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