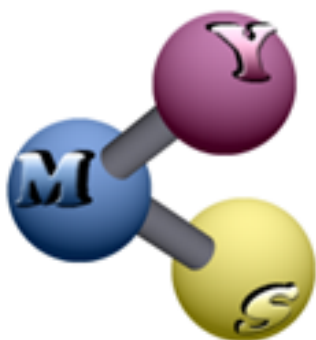


# **The Inaugural RSC Younger Members' Symposium**



**Manchester Metropolitan University**

**20<sup>th</sup> of October 2010**

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## 1. Introduction

This report describes the preparation for, and outcomes of, the inaugural RSC Younger Members' Symposium, which was organised jointly by the YMN's of Manchester, Liverpool and Northern Ireland Sections.

## 2. Organisation

The individuals that formed the YMS committee are listed in Table 1.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Local Section</b>	<b>YMS Role</b>
Adam McCudden	Manchester	Session Chair
Amy Lawrence	Manchester	Secretariat
Claire Rees	Liverpool	Session Chair
David Foley	Northern Ireland	Session Chair
James Gebbie	Manchester	Webmaster
Karl Broberg	Manchester	Treasurer
Kate Sullivan	Manchester	Administration
Lauren Rutherford	Northern Ireland	Session Chair

**Table 1** The YMS Committee

In addition, this event was made possible by the considerable support of David Berrisford (University of Manchester), Victoria Mansfield and Emma Jepson (Manchester Business School), Christopher Rego and Collette Schofield (Manchester Metropolitan University).

Given the disparate geographical locations, most of the discussions were conducted by email, with the occasional use of conference calls. In the early stages of the discussion, the full functionality of MyRSC was not understood by the committee members. In the future, a private group on MyRSC may be useful to facilitate long distance planning. In general, communication by email proved very effective and convenient for all involved.

## 3. Symposium Objectives

The symposium was established to address what we felt were obstacles in the career development of young researchers, namely: The lack of opportunities to present at national conferences and network specifically with their peers. We wished to:

- Organise a symposium by young scientists, for young scientists.
- Invite selected speakers that, in addition to showcasing the latest advances in their research, would demonstrate the skills required for a successful career in chemistry.

- Allow young chemists to present the latest research to an audience of their peers in an atmosphere we hoped would be less intimidating and more personal than other conferences.
- Provide the opportunity for both academic and industrial speakers to present their work on an equal footing.
- Bring chemical scientists from different geographical and expertise areas together.
- Demonstrate that there is a demand for this type of event from young chemical scientists.
- Establish this event as a significant and recurring one in the calendar of the young chemical scientist.

## 4. Preparations and Planning

### 4.1 Organisation

Preparations for the symposium began almost one year to the day of the event, with the symposium date of the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010 being agreed very early on. Manchester was chosen as the venue as it is easy to travel to from all across the UK and internationally. We believed we had secured the use of three lecture theatres within the Chemistry Department of The University of Manchester, however two weeks prior to the symposium deadline we were informed this would not be possible due to ongoing maintenance. This was a source of considerable stress for the entire committee and nearly resulted in the cancellation of the event. Fortunately, we were able to draw on the substantial network of contacts that the Manchester YMN has established over the years, allowing us to move the event to the Manchester Metropolitan University at very short notice. It should be noted that the MMU went out of its way to accommodate us, and the committee would once again like to extend its sincerest thanks to Christopher Rego and the MMU's Division of Chemistry and Materials for their assistance.

In order to ensure that the symposium had the widest possible appeal, we elected to run three parallel sessions, on general topics that covered all areas of the chemical sciences. The three sessions and their descriptions were:

#### Session One: Employing Chemistry

This section covered any area where chemistry is employed in the discovery and development of new technologies, medicines and materials, or sheds light on novel biological/toxicological/ecological pathways. Some examples of the disciplines involved include: medicinal chemistry, materials science, nanotechnology, environmental chemistry and chemical biology.

### Session Two: Understanding Chemistry

This section covered research that fundamentally improves our understanding of chemistry from across the Periodic Table. Areas of interest included the development of new reactions, compound classes or formulations and the study of reaction kinetics or physical properties *in vivo*, *in vitro* or *in silico*. Some examples of the disciplines involved include: radio and nuclear chemistry, process and formulation design and development, experimental design, physical chemistry and chemical engineering.

### Session Three: Analysing Chemistry

This section covered research focussed on analytical methodology and technology. Areas of interest included the improvement of analytical techniques or technology and novel applications of existing techniques. Some examples of the disciplines involved include: Separation science, mass-spectrometry, IR/UV/NMR spectroscopy, and any techniques utilised in forensic, chemical, environmental, solid state and biochemical analysis.

For each session, we hoped to have two invited speakers. One speaker would be an experienced, successful individual from academia or industry, the other an exceptional young researcher, again from either academia or industry. We felt these speakers would demonstrate, through their presentations and during networking sessions, "what it takes" to have a successful career in chemistry. In addition to being highly regarded scientists, we also chose people known to be dynamic and engaging speakers.

Each session would also have an additional 4-6 speakers chosen from submitted abstracts. An even proportion of the available poster space would also be allocated to each session, with posters again chosen from submitted abstracts.

The key challenges for the committee would be to:

- Secure sufficient funding for the event.
- Attract the required number of invited speakers and abstracts.
- Promote the event to ensure sufficient numbers and cater for these on the day of the symposium itself.

As the first event of its kind, with no "reputation" behind it, the committee understood that funding and attendance were likely to be the major challenges.

## 4.2 Sponsorship

Our initial efforts at securing funding were extremely successful and in only one series of emails we were essentially able to secure all the funding required. The list of companies/groups contacted and the responses are given in Table 2.

Company/Group	Response	Requirements
Aligent	No response	
Astra Zeneca	Financial Support	None
Bruker	Financial Support	Associated with the Analytical Session Promotional Stand at the Symposium Logo on all promotional materials
Chemicals Northwest	Financial Support	Promotional Stand at the Symposium Logo on all promotional materials
CIA	No response	
RSC CBiD	Financial Support	To be spent on promoting the chemistry-biology interface. Report on Conference
RSC CLS	Financial Support	Promotional Stand at the Symposium Logo on all promotional materials
RSC NW Analytical Division	Financial Support	To be spent on promoting analytical chemistry and the analytical prizes
SCI	Financial and Administrative Support*	To be spent on an industrial prize Promotional stand at the Symposium Logo on all promotional materials
Sigma-Aldrich	No response	
Manchester Metropolitan University	Venue and Admin**	None
Vitae (North-West)	Financial Support	None
Waters	No response	

**Table 2** Sources of funding. \* The SCI provided considerable support in the promotion of the event. \*\* In the form of free venue hire, A. V. Support and facilities management.

In our initial contact, we informed the group of sponsors as to our aims and ambitions, and essentially let them suggest how much they were willing to invest and what they required in exchange. We agreed that the amount of exposure would be proportional to the amount of support (both financial and administrative). Once

dialogue had been opened it became clear we had three levels of funding, with three levels of exposure:

- RSC Sources
  - Promoted on our website and in promotional materials
  - Individually acknowledged during the symposium
  - Associated with specific prizes and/or sessions
  - Advertising space in our conference book
  - Can include our event as part of their own annual reports
- Session Sponsors
  - Heavily promoted on our website and in promotional materials
  - Individually acknowledged during the symposium
  - Advertising space in our conference book
- Other Sponsors
  - Acknowledge on our website and in some promotional material
  - Associated with specific prizes

#### 4.3 Registration Fee

Initially the committee wished for the event to be free for all participants. However it quickly became apparent that securing enough funds to cover the anticipated costs would be extremely difficult. In fact, some sponsors raised the concern that, were a nominal registration fee not applied, people may register and then fail to attend. These concerns were taken on board by the committee and a registration fee of £15 was set. This £15 nominally covered the costs of catering (*vide infra*). Given that we had 40 registered delegates (out of 180) who failed to turn up on the day, we have concluded that having this nominal fee was the right decision, as the cost of “no-shows” would have been much higher without the registration fee.

The £15 was payable by secure online payment (*via* the services of PayPal) or by cheque to the conference secretariat. We chose PayPal as we did not want to have to adopt expensive systems that would comply with the Data Protection Act for a once-off event. Overall (and certainly from a delegate perspective), PayPal was an excellent choice of payment systems, but it did raise a number of issues for the committee:

1. As we were charging a registration fee, PayPal classified the transactions as pre-selling, and restricted access to the funds until after the event had been held. This had an impact on the cash flow of the Manchester YMN and LS who had to underwrite the event.
2. As the event exceeded expectations, and ended up being an international symposium, PayPal again proved a useful choice of online payment options as it is internationally recognised and trusted. However the level of international fund transfers meant that the account had to be investigated

under EU money-laundering legislation. This again resulted in additional work for the committee's volunteers.

#### 4.4 Promotion

A major step in both the promotion and the organisation of the symposium was the creation of a dedicated website. We set a deadline for the launch of the fully functional site for the first of May 2010. However, due to the issues over the registration fee, this was slightly delayed to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2010. The website can be viewed at [www.rsc-yms.co.uk](http://www.rsc-yms.co.uk).

Our event was then placed on the RSC website (both the abstract deadline and the conference date as separate events) and on MyRSC (in the Younger Members Group calendar). This ensured that the event and associated deadlines would be published in Chemistry World.

Our event was highlighted in the July issue of RSC News and on the home page of MyRSC as the deadline for abstracts approached. In August, we were given a full page advertisement on the back cover of RSC Northwest News, which was extremely useful as it targeted a key geographical area for us. Finally, our event was listed in the September issue of the RSC Grapevine.

The next step in promotion was *via* the various email lists held by the RSC and SCI. We specifically contacted Sarah Harrison at the RSC and Mike Pitts of the SCI for assistance. Additionally we contacted all RSC YM Representatives *via* email, Facebook and MyRSC asking them each to promote the event in their own way. The Secretary of each local section was contacted *via* the RSC website. A promotional poster was sent with these emails, giving details of the symposium website and speakers.

We attempted to contact as many schools of chemistry and chemical employers as possible through the committee's network of contacts. We tried to avoid unsolicited emails where possible, preferring instead to contact people we knew personally.

Finally, we knew the success of this event would be highly dependent on turn out from local chemistry departments and industries. To this end, we established close contacts with the Heads of School at the Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan Universities. We also heavily promoted the event to neighbouring schools in Liverpool, North-Staffordshire and Leeds, as well as major local employers such as Astra Zeneca.

Reminder emails were issued to all the above contacts two weeks before the closing date for abstracts and the closing date for registration.



#### 4.5 *Catering*

Initially we had planned to use a highly recommended company to provide our catering, going so far as to select the menu and place a deposit. However, the late venue change and MMU's policy on catering meant that we instead availed of MMU's catering facilities.

MMU catering was very good (*cf.* feedback section) and all the food was labeled so it was easy for those with special diets to tell which foods they could eat. Having a number of tables set up for the buffet would have cut down on the queuing and the staff could have been briefed better. However given the last-minute nature of some of the arrangements this can be understood.

There also was a post-conference dinner for invited speakers and the organizing committee at Zouk. Here we were able to get in-depth feedback from the invited speakers, many of whom were no strangers to symposia big and small. The feedback from all the invited speakers was over-whelmingly positive.

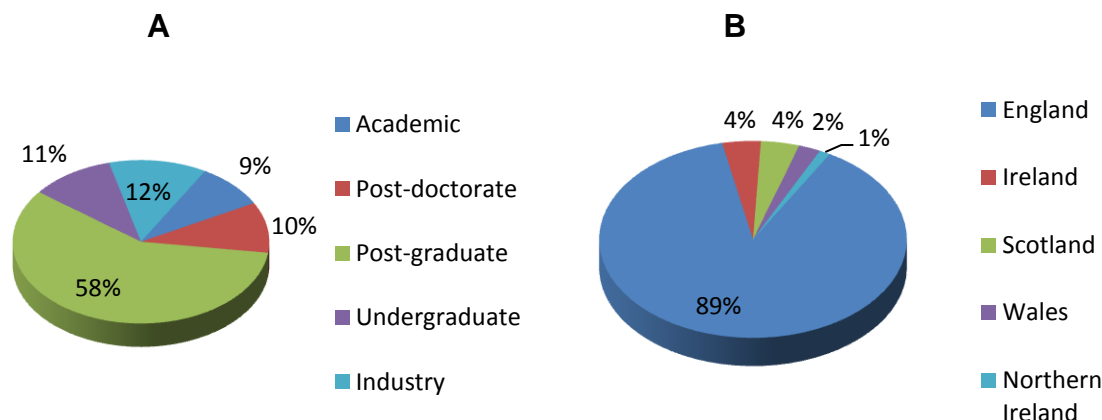
#### 4.6 *Printing*

Printing was a major cost for the symposium. We used our excellent relationship with the University of Manchester to order our book of abstracts through one of their preferred suppliers. This resulted in a substantial discount.

## 5. The Event

### 5.1 Attendance

Over 140 delegates attended the conference, broken down as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Composition of symposium delegates by A: occupation and B: country.

Our major objective was to provide chemists at the onset of their careers the opportunity to present and network. Gratifyingly, therefore, a significant proportion of the delegates were comprised of undergraduates and postgraduates. We hoped to bring together chemists from academic and industrial backgrounds. Despite our collaboration with SCI and several chemical employers, turnout from industry was less than anticipated and is an area for improvement. The generality of the symposium, combined with the difficulty in getting authorisation to present industrial work may explain the relatively poor turnout from industry.

We were pleased to have been able to attract delegates from all the Home Countries and the Republic of Ireland. We feel the percentages from each location reflect the distance and cost in travel to the venue.

### 5.2 Oral Sessions

The schedule for the event is shown in Figure 2. The Understanding session was allocated the largest lecture theatre (150), on the correct assumption that Prof. Hunter would draw in the largest audience. The other sessions were assigned 60-seater theatres. Each session had at least one Chair, whose responsibilities were to ensure the smooth and timely running of their session. This included ensuring all the

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	Analysing Chemistry	Employing Chemistry	Understanding Chemistry
12:30 - 13:30	Registration and Coffee		
13:30 - 13:40	Opening Presentation		
13:40 - 14:20	<b>Tony Bristow</b> , AstraZeneca <i>The application of mass spectrometry in pharmaceutical development</i>	<b>Andrew Wilson</b> , University of Leeds <i>Inhibition of protein-protein interactions using designed molecules</i>	<b>Eva Hevia</b> , University of Strathclyde <i>Understanding mixed-metal chemistry: Structural basis of alkali-metal-mediated-zincation (AMMZn)</i>
14:20 - 14:40	<b>Amelia Markey</b> , University of Manchester <i>A DNA extraction, amplification and storage microdevice</i>	<b>Andreas Economu</b> , University of Manchester <i>A novel approach to the synthesis of Steganone</i>	<b>Sean Ng</b> , University of Liverpool <i>New regioselective copper-catalysed allylic oxidation of cyclopentenes: Total synthesis of (±)-untenone A</i>
14:40 - 15:00	<b>Stephen Holman</b> , University of Manchester <i>The CoPY project: Absolute quantification of the proteome of <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i> using the QconCAT methodology</i>	<b>Anica Dose</b> , University of Kent <i>Syntheses of new isomeric analogues of HYNIC for evaluation as bifunctional chelators for Technetium-99m</i>	<b>Neil Grant</b> , University of Liverpool <i>Preparation of poorly water soluble drug nanoparticles</i>
15:00 - 15:20	<b>Allyson McIntyre</b> , University of Strathclyde <i>In-situ monitoring of Scotch whisky using mid-infrared spectrometry to detect counterfeit samples</i>	<b>Celine Cano</b> , Institute for Cancer Research <i>Development of potent inhibitors of the DNA-dependent protein kinase (DNA-PK)</i>	<b>Ronan Cullen</b> , Trinity College Dublin <i>Investigation of the structure of amorphous carbons using radical reactions</i>
15:20 - 16:30	Poster Session and Lunch		
16:30 - 17:10	<b>Mathias Nilsson</b> , University of Manchester <i>Advances in DOSY and pure shift techniques and applications</i>	<b>Timothy O'Riordan</b> , Imperial College London <i>Synthesis of the pyrrolidinone core of oxazolomycin A</i>	<b>Christopher Hunter</b> , University of Sheffield <i>A supramolecular approach to the liquid state</i>
17:10 - 17:30	<b>Lyrelle Lloyd</b> , University of York <i>SABRE: A new hyperpolarisation technique to enhance NMR sensitivity</i>	<b>Scot Phillips</b> , University of St Andrews <i>Rational design of PNN ligands for the ruthenium-catalysed enantioselective hydrogenation of ketones</i>	<b>Hassan Harb</b> , University of Manchester <i>Directing a <math>S_{\text{M}}1_2</math> radical cyclisation using a C-Si bond: A second generation approach to pestalotiopsin A and 6-epitaedolidol</i>
17:30 - 17:50	<b>Sue Shemilt</b> , Keele University <i>Source and maintenance of cuticular hydrocarbons in the ant <i>Formica exsecta</i></i>	<b>Mark Ahmad</b> , University of Warwick <i>Development of a novel spectrophotometric assay for lignin breakdown and characterisation of a novel bacterial lignin peroxidase</i>	<b>Alastair Lennox</b> , Bristol University <i>Are aryl trifluoroborates better than aryl boronic acids in Suzuki-Miyaura coupling?</i>
17:50 - 19:00	Closing Remarks, Drinks Reception and Awards		

Figure 2 YMS oral programme and symposium schedule

presentations were pre-loaded onto the computers, which allowed a quick change-over between speakers. No major difficulties were encountered during the oral sessions, with the only slight hitch being the lack of signs directing delegates to the relevant theatre. This was due to a policy of the MMU forbidding temporary signage from being placed on walls/doors etc. One speaker dropped out with only two days notice. Fortunately we were able to contact another delegate who had submitted an abstract for consideration for oral presentation, only to just miss out on acceptance, who agreed to present both a poster and oral version of his work.

### 5.3 *Poster Sessions*

Most of the poster boards for the sessions were provided by MMU, with a small number of additional boards hired from an external company. The boards were placed in "The Street", an open space in the building where we also planned to place the sponsors and the buffet. The final layout of the poster boards was set-up by members of the committee on the morning of the event. The poster session ran smoothly, with only two drop-outs. These were replaced by posters from members of the committee so as not to have empty boards detracting from the overall feel of the session.

### 5.4 *Sponsors*

Four sponsors required displays on the day: SCI, Chemicals Northwest, Bruker and the RSC. These were accommodated in an area in the middle of the posters, ensuring maximal "passing-trade" during the poster session. Feedback from the sponsors on their experience of the day was very positive.

### 5.5 *Judging and Prizes*

A standard score sheet was created to allow both oral and poster presentations to be judged. The presentations/presenters were assessed on their quality, interaction, interest and clarity with a maximum of 25 marks per category. Judges were selected from members of the committee (including the session chairs), invited speakers, members of the local section committee, and the SCI representative (for the industrial prize). Each presentation was assessed by a minimum of two judges. One time saving tip we employed was to assess the quality, clarity and interest of the posters during the oral sessions, when the area was less crowded. The presenter's interaction was then assessed during the formal poster session.

Prizes were awarded to the best speaker in each of the three sessions, as well as first, second and third place prizes for the posters from each session. An additional prize for the poster with the most relevance to industry was assessed and presented by the Chair of the SCI's Liverpool and North West Group, Trevor Rhodes.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

The balance sheet for the symposium is shown in Figure 3. A negligible deficit resulted from our running this symposium. This is thanks to our many generous sponsors. Special thanks go to NW Analytical Chemistry Division and SCI for providing both financial and administrative support. Again, the contribution of the Manchester Metropolitan University's staff cannot be overstated.

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<b><u>Financial Breakdown for RSC Younger Members Symposia (20-10-2010)</u></b>			
<b><u>Receipts:</u></b>		<b><u>Payments:</u></b>	
<b><u>Venue Hire</u></b>		<b>£1,400</b>	
<b><u>Prizes</u></b>			
<b>Analytical Prizes</b>		<b>£500</b>	
Poster Prizes (£150, £100 & £50)			
Oral Presentation Prize (£200)			
<b>Employing Prizes</b>		<b>£500</b>	
Poster Prizes (£150, £100 & £50)			
Oral Presentation Prize (£200)			
<b>Understanding Prizes</b>		<b>£500</b>	
Poster Prizes (£150, £100 & £50)			
Oral Presentation Prize (£200)			
<b>Prize For Best Industrial Presenter</b>		<b>£200</b>	
<b><u>Invited Speaker Expenses</u></b>		<b>£1,150</b>	
Invited speaker's expenses	£600		
Conference Meal	£550		
<b><u>Administrative Costs</u></b>		<b>£2,378</b>	
Conference booklet	£1,587		
Website costs	£110		
Poster board Hire	£201		
Delegate Bags and Freebies	£200		
Secretariat Expenses	£220		
Gifts for University Administrative Staff	£60		
<b><u>Catering</u></b>		<b>£2,197</b>	
Tea/Coffee and biscuits	£240		
Buffet Lunch	£1,575		
Drinks Reception	£382		
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>(£1030 of which is anticipated expense)</b>	<b><u>£8,825</u></b>	
			<b><u>£1,868</u></b>
			<b><u>Registration Fees</u></b>
			PayPal
			£1,643
			Cheques
			£225
			<b><u>Sponsorship</u></b>
			<b>£6,400</b>
			<b><u>Total</u></b>
			<b><u>£8,268</u></b>
			<b><u>Deficit (underwritten by Manchester Local Section and YMN)</u></b>
			<b><u>£557</u></b>

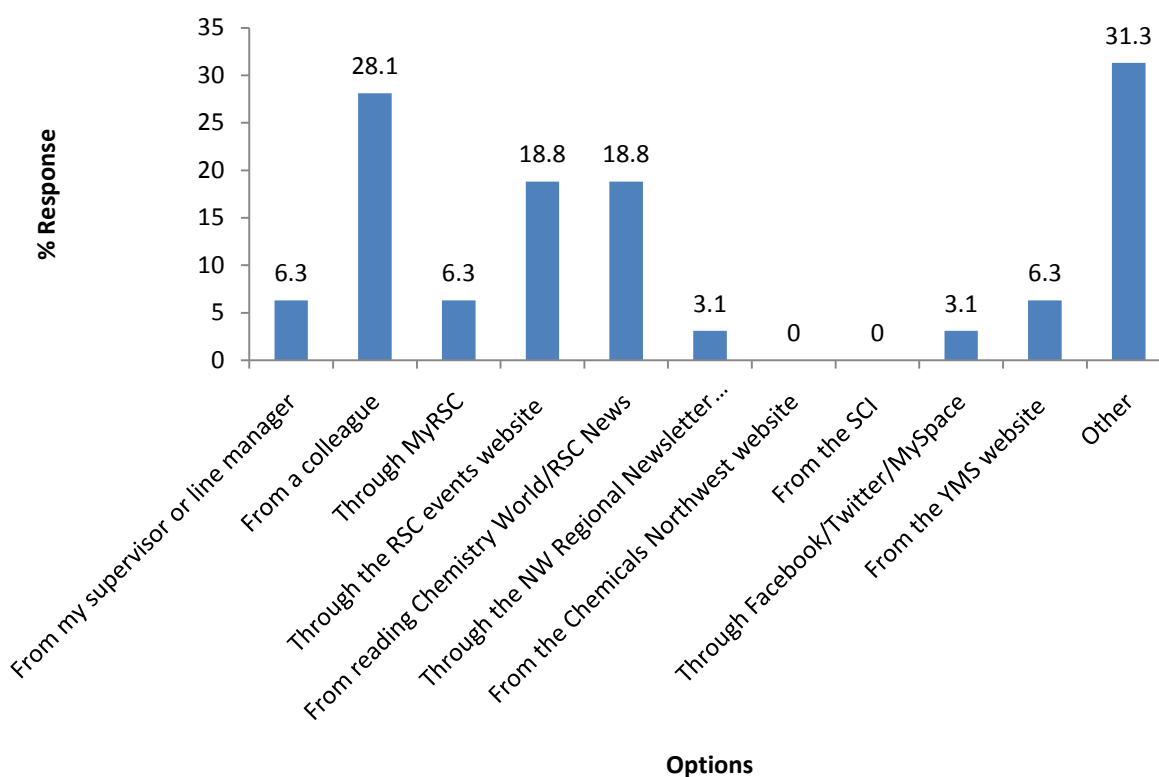
Figure 3 Treasurer's report.

## 7. Feedback

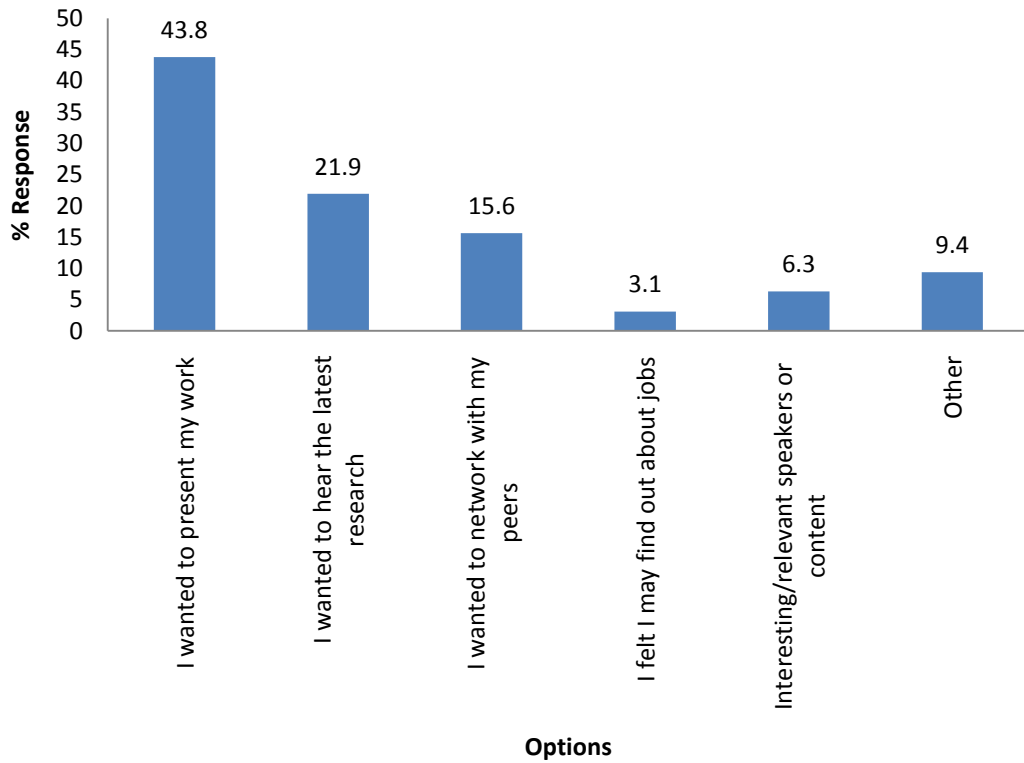
Feedback from the symposium was both over-whelming and extremely positive. The speakers and sponsors in particular were impressed by the conference overall, especially given some of the challenges we were forced to overcome.

Feedback forms were distributed to each delegate with his/her symposium book and collected at the end of the event. This feedback was copied into an identical survey on Survey Monkey to allow for easy analysis.

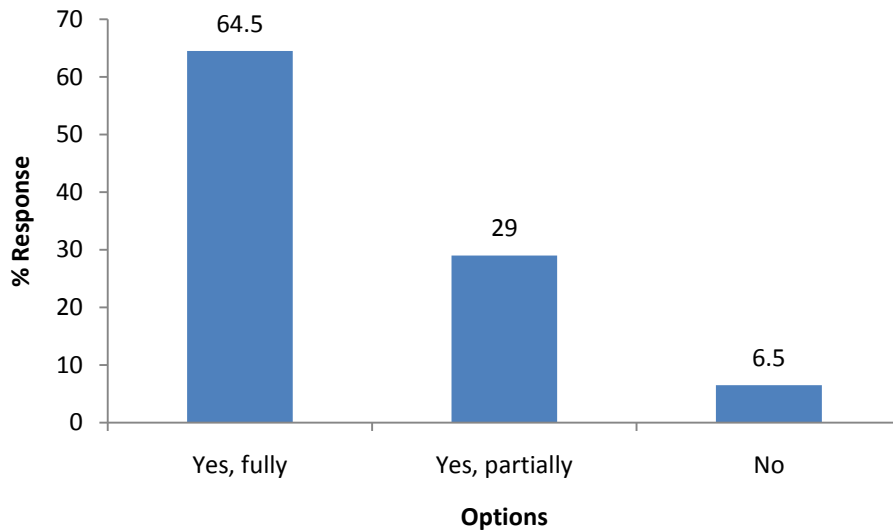
### 1. How did you hear about this symposium (tick all that apply)?



2. What was your main reason for attending this symposium?



3. Did the symposium fulfil your main reason for attending?





4. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with the conference (1 = Very dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 5 = Very satisfied).

	1	2	3	4	5
Conference Overall	0	3.1	12.5	<b>59.4</b>	25
Conference Topics	3.1	6.3	18.8	<b>59.4</b>	12.5
Invited Speakers	0	0	12.5	<b>56.3</b>	31.3
Other Speakers	0	3.1	28.1	<b>50.0</b>	18.8
Poster Presentations	0	0	21.9	<b>50.0</b>	28.1
Networking Opportunities	3.1	15.6	31.3	<b>34.4</b>	15.6
Venue Facilities	3.1	15.6	34.4	<b>40.6</b>	15.6
Ease of travel to venue	0	6.3	3.1	43.8	<b>46.9</b>
Catering	0	3.1	0	37.5	<b>59.4</b>
Registration Process	0	6.3	18.8	<b>46.9</b>	28.1

5. Please add any other comments you may have below.

- Best event ever! Thanks very much!
- The event was very enjoyable, and I enjoyed the speakers that I heard, but it would have been interesting to hear from a wider range of speakers from different industries/areas of research, there was a lot of pharmaceutical talks.
- To improve on this excellent event in the future I think more could be done to promote the different aspects of chemically related jobs for the undergraduates of tomorrow.  
  
As an undergraduate myself I felt a little disappointed with the material being delivered as the symposium wasn't geared for people such as myself.  
  
To help to engage the chemists of tomorrow I think personally you should try and work with that select group as well to bring them up to speed on what is actually going on within the chemistry realm.
- It would have been better if the lecture rooms were closer together to aid moving between talks. I hope the event runs again, it was excellent and there is nothing else that caters to early career chemists like this did.
- Would be nice to have a cloakroom  
Need a map/more signs regarding where the lectures were being held. Very hard to find the analytical chemistry talks.
- I know there was some last minute alterations to the venue beyond anyone's control but I felt

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that some people missed out on the analysing chemistry sessions as they could not find the room.

7. Possibly run the conference as a one-day meeting over two days i.e. afternoon one day, morning the next. This would allow the opportunity for a social event in the evening that would enhance networking opportunities.
8. The division of topics (analysis, understanding and employing) was excellent! But there were not many physical chemists and none from theoretical chemistry, which was disappointing.
9. More industrial speakers would be good in the future.
10. You could leave more time between speakers to allow us to move between speakers as they were sometimes in different rooms
11. Registration fees could be cut by not having a programme to attract more younger members. I felt it was not necessary to have a large booklet for a half-day symposium when you could visit the website for speaker/poster information.
12. - Parallel sessions need to be stricter on timings, as otherwise talks are missed moving between rooms  
- Orals seemed to be focused heavily on organic chemistry, perhaps a wider range of topics next time?
13. The acoustics were bad and I couldn't hear very well at all in the Understanding chemistry room. Would be nice to maybe have a whole day event, rather than a half. Also I would have liked to have seen the very nice abstracts book before the lectures as I didn't have time to look through it before hand and missed some lectures I would have enjoyed. Otherwise it was very good indeed. many thanks.
14. The topics were generally weighted towards Organic Chemistry. It would have been good to hear presentations in the other branches of chemistry
15. There were no presentations or posters in the fields that I am most interested in (atmospheric/environmental chemistry) and I think opportunities for networking were limited. People seemed to stick in the groups that they came in. Perhaps next time have tables set up with seating that puts different people together.
16. A very well organised event
17. More forthcoming information on registration as to the location of lecture rooms etc. I was simply

handed a bag and left be.

18. Had several people ask for a cloak/baggage room

As can be seen from the responses to questions 3 and 4 in particular, we achieved high satisfaction rates in every category assessed. We have identified three recurrent issues that will need to be addressed by the next YMS:

1. Signs/Timing/Venue: As we have discussed, we faced some serious last minute hitches regarding the venue, which did have an adverse effect on the smooth running of the event. Consequentially these issues, whilst significant, should be easy to eliminate by the next YMS committee.
2. Organic Chemistry "Bias": We were acutely aware of the need to bring together chemical scientists from all areas of chemistry. We established three parallel sessions which we felt were broad enough in scope to accommodate any chemical research. However, there were definitely more submitted abstracts with an organic focus. As a committee, we refused to "punish" those who had submitted work in good faith, simply on the basis of topic. Instead we marked all the abstracts using a standard template and selected the best, regardless of topic. This was the only way to be fair and to ensure the highest quality science was presented. The only way to overcome this perceived "bias" is to have more non-organic abstracts submitted. Therefore, the next YMS should use more focussed advertising towards inorganic, physical and theoretical sciences, collaborate with relevant RSC interest groups and divisions, as well as other organisations and generally "push" for more submissions from non-organic research.
3. Industrial Attendance: The confidential nature of industrial research makes getting permission to present at an open forum extremely difficult. We thought our collaboration with SCI and industrial sponsors would be sufficient to attract industrial presenters. However our efforts were limited to the North-West region and perhaps a broader drive could be considered for the next YMS.

A key objective for this symposium was to expose and address an unmet need in the professional development of young chemical scientists. It is clear from the feedback that this event was successful in highlighting the need for similar events and the benefits that can be gleaned from attending.

## 8. Overall Conclusions

Should the YMS be repeated? The answer to that question is a resounding yes!

The inaugural YMS was a truly exciting and successful event. The value of the symposium is clearly reflected by the excellent attendance, feedback and high level of sponsorship received from across the scientific sector. The selection and quality of the presentations and posters was superb, and some truly cutting edge research was presented by the next generation of UK scientists.

The symposium was the result of a monumental effort on the part of the YMN volunteers involved, collectively logging over 500 hours of voluntary work! Some of the key successes were:

1. Effectively piloting a new event, which had a highly demanding format, and addressed an unmet need.
2. Excellent collaborative work across regional boundaries, bringing together three YMN's and a number of organisations to focus on promoting the chemical sciences.
3. The removal of the obstacles facing industrial speakers. i.e. ensuring that it was explicit that the selection and judging process would be sympathetic to the intellectual property issues which industrial speakers face when presenting their work.
4. Addressing the changing face of chemistry: Organic, inorganic, physical and analytical are no longer appropriate when defining researchers in the chemical sciences. Discussing how chemistry is employed, understood, or analysed seemed more appropriate to the way research is conducted today, and more inclusive of some of the more interdisciplinary areas of the field.

Some learning that will be invaluable for the Host YMN(s) for the next Younger Members Symposium are:

- Agree with central RSC the level of support they can provide ahead of time. (e.g. website support, printing, administration, provision of promotional material). A number of the services which the YMN's took for granted that the RSC would be able to provide were not available. This resulted in additional, unexpected work for the YMN's unpaid volunteers.
- Increase the length of the event to cover two days. The brevity of the afternoon format meant that over 30 abstracts had to be rejected.
- Ensure timings are suitable for movement between sessions at your chosen venue.
- Start looking for sponsorship early. Most company marketing budgets are set/reviewed annually or bi-annually. If you are in contact with potential sponsors well in advance, they can put your request into the next budget/review, making it much easier for you to secure the funding. We

started sourcing funding a year before the event and had most of our funding secured by January-February 2010.

## 9. Outcomes from the RSC General Assembly

The report to this point was presented at the 2010 RSC General Assembly, in Birmingham on the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> of November. In addition to forming the centrepiece of the Manchester Local Section exhibition stand, and oral presentation based on the report was made to the members of the Younger Member's Forum. The GA was a chance to advertise our efforts to other relevant branches of the RSC, such as the Divisions and Interest Groups, as well as to gain insight from other younger members not directly involved in the organising of the symposium. The key outcomes and suggestions from the weekend meeting were:

1. The YMS should and will be repeated, with an anticipated date of early 2012. We were keen to host the symposium during the International Year of Chemistry in 2011, but the timeframes for proper organisation were too tight.
2. Collaboration with the interest groups and divisions should be improved, especially in the subject areas where we failed to attract sufficient numbers of abstracts and delegates. Interest groups and divisions may also be able to provide travel grants for delegates.
3. Emphasising the training aspect of the event should encourage attendance, as all PhD students are now required to 70 hours of training per year, and many industries have similar requirements.
4. Instead of inviting past winners of RSC awards as speakers, we should try to host some of the current awards as part of the symposium. This will help us attract delegates and provide a revenue stream to cover speaker expenses.
5. The RSC should set up an award recognising the contribution of a young chemist to the promotion of the chemical sciences, in a similar vein to the service awards. This presentation of such an award would be ideally suited to an event such as the YMS.

## **10. Acknowledgements**

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And our sponsors:

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