

Conference Report

Basel Chemistry Symposium 2013

In Memory of Prof. C. F. Schönbein

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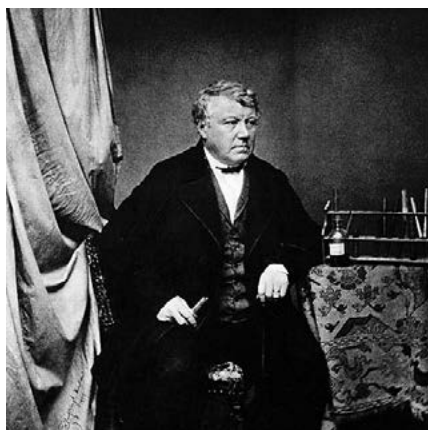
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Graduate students from the newly founded PhD Chemistry Community organized the first Basel Chemistry Symposium on Friday, 31st May 2013. This event was dedicated to the memory of Prof. Christian Friedrich Schönbein.

Prof. Dr. C. F. Schönbein (1799–1868)

Christian Friedrich Schönbein was born in Metzingen and studied chemistry in Erlangen and Tübingen. After stays in London and Paris he was offered a position at the University of Basel by Peter Merian where he became full Professor in 1835. His publication ‘*On the Voltaic Polarization of Certain Solid and Fluid Substances*’ provided the fundamentals upon which William Grove built the first fuel cell. In 1840 Schönbein discovered ozone and six years later he patented guncotton.



«Science is my bride,
whom I'll always be in
love with, [...] and I do
not fear, that this bond
will ever be broken.»

C. F. Schönbein

The Basel Chemistry Symposium

Prof. Dr. **John Paul Maier** opened the symposium and warmly welcomed the audience. The laudation of Dr. **Michael Kessler**, head of the Pharmacy Museum Basel, on Prof. Schönbein



Keynote lectures given by Dr. Michael Kessler, Prof. Dr. Thomas M. Klapötke and Prof. Dr. Clare P. Grey.

provided an interesting insight into his academic and political life at Basel. Prof. Dr. **Thomas M. Klapötke** from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich demonstrated his research focused on high-energy materials. He presented the state of the art in explosives research and the extensive improvements in efficiency and stability that have been made since the invention of guncotton.

Prof. Dr. **Clare P. Grey**, University of Cambridge, explained how her group is improving different energy storage devices using solid-state NMR spectroscopy. One of her research focuses is on the better understanding of electrolytes for fuel cell membranes, underlining the continued influence of Prof. Schönbein's research work to the current day.



Post doctoral presentations were given by: Dr. Lindsay N. Zack, Dr. Valentin Köhler, Dr. Hideki Miyatake-Andozabal.

Short talks were made by Dr. **Valentin Köhler** (T. R. Ward group) on Streptavidin-based hybrid catalysts, Dr. **Lindsay N. Zack** (J. P. Maier group) on astrophysical spectroscopy and Dr. **Hideki Miyatake-Andozabal** (K. Gademann group) on the total synthesis of virosaine A. With the poster session the organizing committee aimed to improve the mutual appreciation of the very diverse sections of chemistry that are investigated within the department here in Basel. Before Prof. Dr. **Thomas R. Ward** closed the symposium, **Anamitra Chatterjee** (Ward group, AC), **Christophe Dauppen** (Gademann group, OC), and **Martin Nussbaumer** (Meier group, PC) were awarded poster prizes.

Jonas Schönle (Constable-Housecroft group) received the best teaching assistant award from the Basel chemistry students association (VBC).

The annual department BBQ followed the symposium with several hundred participants. The graduate organizers **Markus**



Award winners: Anamitra Chatterjee, Christophe Daepfen, Jonas Schönle, Martin Nussbaumer (from left).

Gantenbein, Lukas Jundt and *Michel Rickhaus* with their team ensured all maintained the celebratory mood. Due to digitalization many older books have become redundant and in place of disposal they were used to build a bar of books. These



The bar: Replete with printed scientific media.



Organizing committee: Johannes Hoecker, Thomas Eaton and Patrick Burch (from left).

pages then provided a very solid scientific fundament to prop up the rest of the evening.

A perfect tribute to the heritage of Prof. Schönbein and the Basel academic tradition being celebrated.

The PhD Chemistry Community (PCC)

The PCC is the forum for graduate students and post-doctoral researchers and alumni at the Department of Chemistry, University of Basel. The PCC aims to enhance collaboration between the individual research groups, promoting community spirit and personal development, by arranging monthly seminars across disciplines, improving the practicum organization and career planning through industrial excursions.

We would encourage graduates at other Swiss universities to maintain a similar graduate community as a platform for developing soft skills and deepening collaboration across our chemistry community.

The organizing committee would like to thank the Chemistry Department of the University of Basel for financial support, as well as of course all helping hands and speakers for their enlightening presentations.

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