

On Friday the 11th of March 2016, Burlington House was the venue for the final of the 3rd National Retrosynthesis Competition. This event was jointly organised by the Heterocyclic and Synthesis Group of the RSC, and the Fine Chemicals Group and Young Chemists Panel of the SCI, under the lead of Rob Wybrow of Syngenta, UK. From ~40 teams who entered the preliminary round in December 2015, 10 were selected for the final by the judging panel, Professor Chris Willis (Bristol University), Professor Paul Davies (Birmingham University), Dr Robin Attrill (GSK) and Dr Mike Mortimore (Vertex). The finalists were drawn from a broad cross-section of chemistry-based organisations, universities and academic institutions, pharmaceutical companies, CROs and agrochemicals. In the final, teams presented their synthetic strategies for the as yet unsynthesized natural product, Peritoxin B, and answered questions from the audience challenging their reasoning and route selection. The winning team was “Totally Disconnected with Base” from the University of St Andrews, the runners up were “A to Z of Retrosynthesis” from AstraZeneca and the third place was taken by “Oxford SBM 2014” from Oxford University.

The organising committee would like to thank all of the teams who entered for their contributions, the finalists, judges, guests, attendees, sponsors and exhibitors for their significant input into the event. We would particularly like to thank Phil Poyser for donating copies of his book “Eric Bloodaxe? and other verse”, and the SCI for their donation of a year’s subscription to all the members of the winning team. Based upon enthusiastic positive feedback from participants and special guests on the day the competition was hugely successful, underlining the key central importance of synthetic organic chemistry in both fundamental and applied research in the UK. Taking that positive momentum forwards, the organising committee has already begun their planning for the 4th National Retrosynthesis Competition, to be held in early March 2017.

Please find more information on this year’s event at these social media links (Twitter: @UKRetroComp: LinkedIn: Join the “UK Retrosynthesis Competition” group) and the event websites:

<http://www.maggichurchosevents.co.uk/RSC-H&SG/RSC-H&SG-3rd%20National%20Retrosynthesis%20Competition%202016.htm>

<http://www.rsc.org/events/detail/16867/3rd-national-retrosynthesis-competition-2016>

<https://www.soci.org/Events/Display-Event?EventCode=YCP110316>