

Breathe Freely at Burlington House

Burlington House hosted a public performance of the chemistry-inspired opera, *Breathe Freely*, on 13 October. The chamber opera, with three singers and three musicians, was commissioned by the University of Edinburgh Chemistry Department to mark its 300th anniversary.

The opera is a semi-fictional account of the experiences of the Polish chemist Stanislaw Hempel, who was given a place in James Kendall's lab at the university during the second world war. It also features Christine Miller as a character, who composer Dr Julian Wagstaff (pictured right) describes as a 'trailblazer for gender equality'. "It was important to me to come to Burlington House," he says, "As it's the beating heart of chemistry in the UK. I hope to take chemistry to a new audience, and it was through the RSC that my association with chemistry began."

Having previously composed a chamber opera about the Turing test for computers, Wagstaff first became involved with chemistry when he was commissioned by our Edinburgh and southeast Scotland local section to write a piano trio to celebrate the International Year of Chemistry in 2011. A recording of the piano trio is also featured on the *Breathe Freely* CD released in mid-October.



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Successful RSC sponsored symposium on clean energy materials

The RSC Solid State Chemistry Group sponsored the successful 2nd Energy Materials Symposium held at the University of Bath on 17 September. More than 80 delegates attended the event on sustainable materials for green energy applications.

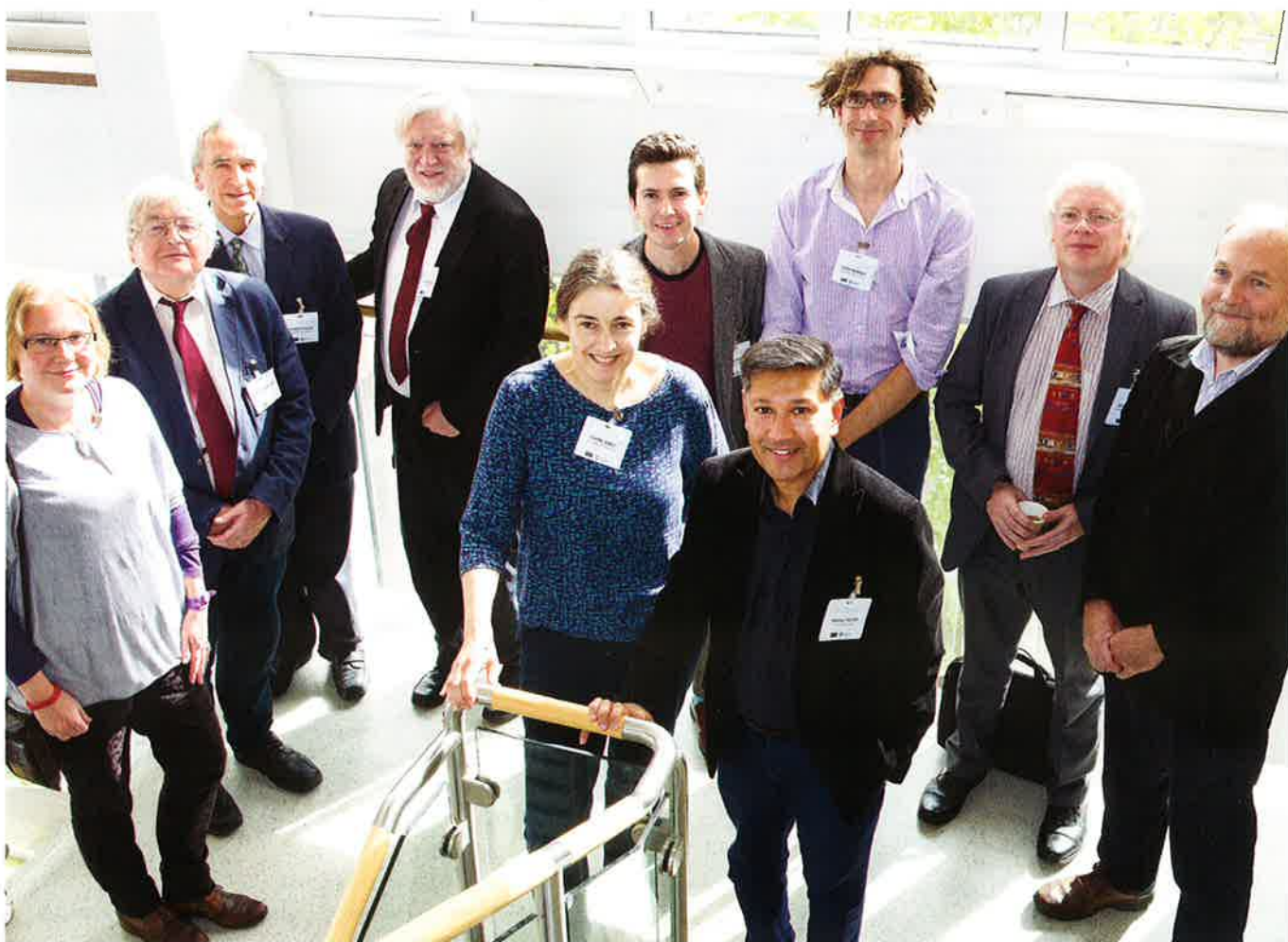
The symposium was part of an EPSRC Programme Grant on Energy Materials: Computational Solutions led by Professor Saiful Islam FRSC that supports a five-year project to develop new materials for the next generation of energy devices, including more efficient solar cells for homes and better batteries for electric cars.

The invited speakers were Professor Clare Grey from Cambridge, Professor John Irvine from St Andrews, Professor Bob Freer from Manchester and Dr Piers Barnes from Imperial College London.

Saiful said: "This conference brought together researchers working on the materials science of green energy technologies such as solar cells, lithium batteries and fuel cells.

"The meeting was designed to showcase research in this important field and to encourage new collaborations, especially between computational and experimental groups."

Consortium team and keynote speakers. Back (left to right): Emma Kendrick, Richard Catlow, Bob Freer, Steve Parker, Aron Walsh; Piers Barnes, John Irvine, Paul Sherwood. Front (left to right): Clare Grey, Saiful Islam.



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