

Aggarwal Group Newsletter

WELCOME TO THE 4TH EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER

Introduction

Welcome to the 4th Edition of our newsletter and first of all please accept my apologies for its *extremely* late production. A change of assistants and then other priorities that got in the way all contributed to the lateness and any newsletter that welcomes people at the start of their PhDs in one paragraph and congratulates them on graduating in the next one is really late! We will aim for a 2 – year cycle in the future.

Firstly, a big thank you to our super-efficient new assistant Sarah Hallworth (see photo) who has assembled this mammoth newsletter and thank you all for your contributions. It is wonderful to hear your news, of growing families and new additions but this is against the back-drop of closures of departments and even whole chemical companies in the UK. As a result some of you have experienced a great deal of stress and uncertainty. At the same time it is reassuring to see that you have been resourceful and that out of the ashes, new opportunities have emerged. Long may it continue.



Sarah Jan 2011

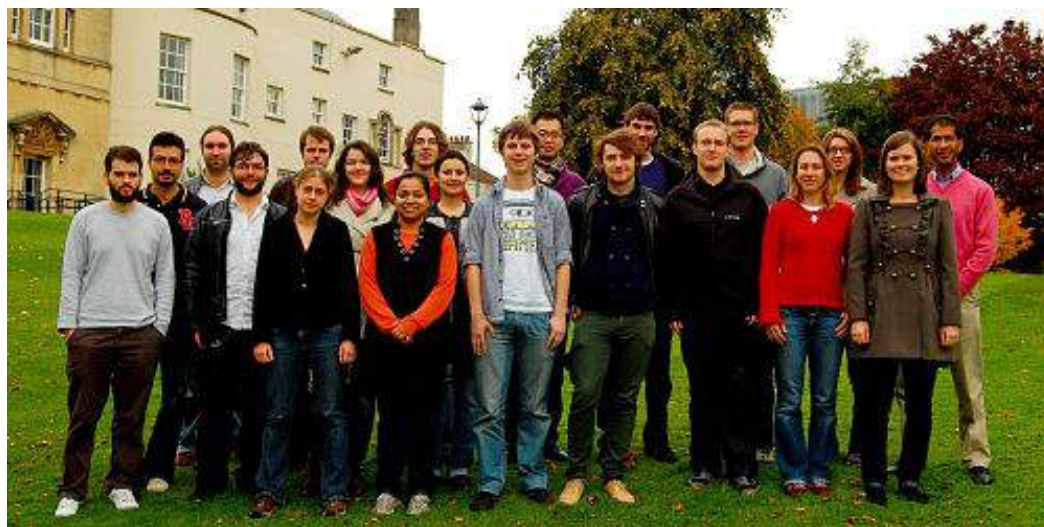
Current Group Activities

In October 2007 we welcomed **Anna Robinson** from Cambridge and **Ben Partridge** from Bristol (MSci Chemistry with Industrial Experience) onto our PhD programme.

In October 2008 we welcomed 5 new PhD students: **Graeme Coulthard** from Sheffield, **Catherine Fletcher** from Bristol (MSci Chemistry), **Gayle Hallett** from Rutgers, **Alex Pulis** from Bristol (MSci

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Varinder and current group members autumn 2010

Chemistry with Industrial Experience) and **Chandreyee Saha** from Delhi.

In 2009 **Sven Peter Fritz** (Regensburg/Kansas), **Helen Scott** (Southampton) and **Chia-Chun Chen** (Tamkang University) started their PhDs. Chia-Chun Chen had completed a 9 month research project at the UCLA. He beat stiff competition to win a prestigious University of Bristol Overseas Centenary Research Scholarship.

In 2010 we welcomed new PhD students **Charlotte Watson** (York) and **Stefan Roesner** (Marburg) to the group.

Also starting PhD studies with the group in 2010 were two Bristol students from the first cohort of the Bristol Chemical Synthesis DTC **Matthew Hesse** and **Matthew Burns**.

The current post-doc members of the group are **Robin Larouche-Gauthier** (Sherbrooke, Canada, Prof. Bélanger), **Tim Elford** (Alberta, Prof. Hall), **Konstantinos Rampalagos** (Max Planck, Mulheim, Prof. List), **William Erb** (CNRS, Paris, Prof. J. Zhu) and **Laetitia Chausset-Boissarie** (Geneva, Prof. Kündig).

Awards

Since the last newsletter, Varinder received the following awards . .

- 12th Thieme Lecturer on Organic and Bioorganic Chemistry **2008**
- RSC Stereochemistry Award **2009**
- SCI Award for Process Research (GSK-AZ-Pfizer) **2009**
- H. C. Brown Lectureship, Purdue University **2010**

Congratulations to **Michael Shaw** who won prizes from both the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science in **2008** for his poster presentation at a symposium at the University of Bath (see picture opposite). More recently Michael won a prize at the **2009** Syngenta Scholarship workshop. Only fifteen doctoral students from the UK were selected for the event so to win a prize on top is a real achievement.

Matt Webster received one of the UoB Pfizer Poster Competition prizes in **2008**.

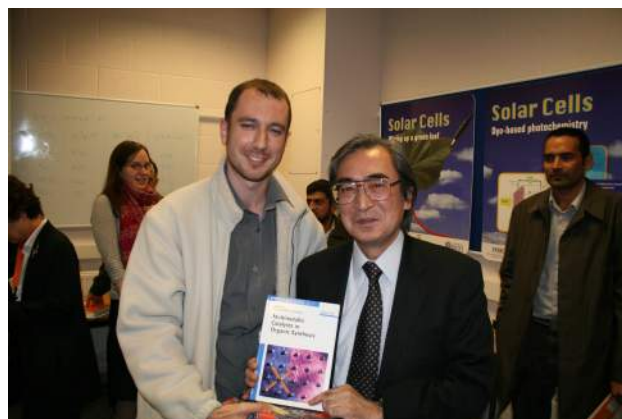
Mariam Namutebi won a **2009** Bristol ChemLabS Postgraduate Teaching Prize in recognition of her outstanding work in tutoring and demonstrating.

Ros French won a poster prize at the 2009 Bristol Pfizer Poster Competition

Anna Robinson received the 2nd prize in the 3rd year departmental post-graduate research talks in May **2010**.

Muhammad Arshad won the Best Poster Award at the RSC South West Regional Meeting in Bath **2010**.

Helen Scott won the best 2nd year poster prize in the **2010** Pfizer Poster Competition and **Graeme Coulthard** won the participants prize (voted for by his peers).



Mike Shaw receives the RSC prize from Professor Shibusaki, of the University of Tokyo; a signed copy of his new book.

Matt Webster and Eoghan McGarrigle were awarded bursaries to attend the European Winter School on Physical Organic Chemistry in Feb **2009** where Eoghan won a Poster Prize.

Recent Leavers

Muhammad Arshad, PhD (2006 –2011). Has returned to Pakistan and is seeking an academic job.

Michael Binanzer, PhD (2007 - 2010). Post-doc with Jeffrey W. Bode, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zürich, Switzerland.

Ros French, PhD (2006 - 2010). Will be starting as a patent attorney at Mewburn Ellis in 2011.

Jonathan Killen, PhD (2006 - 2010). Post-doc with Professor Chris Willis.

James Kitulagoda PhD, (2006 - 2010). Working as a synthetic chemist for Summit plc in Oxford.

Adeem Mahmood, PhD (2006 - 2010). Post-doc Jan 2011 with Rob Stockman, University of Nottingham.

Mariam Namutebi, PhD (2005 - 2010). Working for Merck, Chilworth, Southampton.

Samantha Riches, PhD (2004 - 2008). Now working at EPSRC.

Michael Shaw, PhD (2005 - 2009). Won a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar Fellowship to join Prof. Nicolaou at the Scripps Research Institute. He has since returned to the UK and is now working at UCB-Celltech in Slough. He has joined Martin Lowe at the same institution.

Matt Webster, PhD (2005- 2010). Post-doc with Prof. Fürstner at the Max-Planck-Institut für Kohlenforschung in Germany. In July 2011 he will take up a post-doc position with Prof. Denmark at the University of Illinois USA.

Muhammad Yar, PhD (2005- 2010). Asst. Prof. of Organic Chemistry at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Martin Althaus, PDRA (2008 - 2009). Team leader for Bachem AG in Bubendorf, Switzerland.

Viktor Bagutski, PDRA (2006 - 2010). Started a post-doc with Dr. Ingleson in Manchester in 2011.

Guillaume Dutheil, PDRA (2007 - 2008). In charge of a medicinal chemistry lab at Euroscreen (Drug discovery biotech) in Belgium.

Guangyu Fang, [PhD 1999-2003 then] PDRA (2004-2008). Post-doc with Prof. David Jane, School of Medical Sciences, Bristol.

Serena Ferrini, PDRA (2006 - 2008). Post-doc at the University of Siena. Has a fellowship from a pharmaceutical company.

Francesco Fontana, PDRA (2009-2010). Senior Researcher at F.I.S Fabbrica Italiana Sintetici S.P.A,

Italy.

Ona Illa, PDRA (2006-2008). Temporary Lecturer at the Chemistry Department in the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain).

Vishal Jheengut, PDRA (2007 - 2008). Research Associate at National Research Council, Plant Biotechnology Institute, Saskatoon, Canada.

Florian Keller, PDRA (2008 - 2009). Production chemist at F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG in Basel, Switzerland.

Eoghan McGarrigle, PDRA (2005 - 2009). Left the group in mid-2009 to take up the position of course manager for the new Bristol Chemical Synthesis Doctoral Training Centre (<http://synthesisdtc.chm.bris.ac.uk/>). Eoghan is still collaborating with the group on several projects.

Stefan Nave, PDRA (2007-2009). Post-doc at the Technical University of Dortmund.

Mehrnoosh Ostovar, PDRA (2009 - 2010). Left in December 2010 to have a baby.

Anders Palmelund, PDRA (2005 - 2007). Logistics coordinator and bookkeeper, NTI CADcenter A/S.

Abel Ros Lao, PDRA (2008 - 2010). Associate Researcher in the "Chemical Research Institute" (CSIC-US) in Seville and temporary lecturer at the University of Huelva, in Spain.

Frank Schmidt, PDRA (2007 - 2008). Started as Technical Regulatory Affairs Manager for drug substances at Boehringer Ingelheim in Ingelheim, Germany. Since February 2011 he became Drug Regulatory Affairs Manager in the same company.

Ravi Sonawane, PDRA (2008 - 2010). Research Scientist with Syngenta in Goa, India.

Jake Stymiest, PDRA (2005 - 2007). Senior Research Chemist at Purdue Pharma LLP, USA.

José Ramón Suárez, PDRA (2006 - 2008). Research Assistant, Departamento de Química Bioorganica, IQOG-CSIC, Madrid, Spain.

Emeline Vedrenne, PDRA (2007-2008). Started a new position in 2010 as assistant professor at the INP/ENSIACET (Toulouse, France) emeline.vedrenne@ensiacet.fr.

Olov Wallner, PDRA (2006 - 2007). Research Scientist at Novadex Pharmaceuticals AB, Sweden.

VISITORS

We have welcomed a number of visitors to the group since 2007 for short periods:

Javier Mansilla-Casatejada (Sep-Nov 2010)

Maddalena Gallanti (Apr-Sept 2010)

Letitia Otero de Castro (July-Sept 2010)

Sophie Nocquet-Thibault (Jun-Aug 2010)

Muhammad Ibrahim (Jan-July 2010)

Philippe Roth (March-August 2010)

Carolina de Ceglie (May-Dec 2009)

Ana Vazquez Romero (July-Sept 2009)

Ludovic Favereau (Jun-Aug 2009)

Antonio Bermejo Gomez (Jun-Aug 2009)

Svenia-Concetta Schild (May-Aug 2009)

Ben Glasspoole (April-June 2009)

Amara Mumtaz (Oct 2008 -Mar 2009)

Ahmad Mushtaq (Jun-Dec 2008)

Raquel Navas (Sep-Nov 2008).
Her second visit to the School.

Christian Tortzen (April-Oct 2008)

Noelia Fontan Filgueira (July-Sept 2008)

Maria Tomas (July-Sept 2008)

Nekane Barbero (June-August 2008)

Personal News

Congratulations to Bruce and **Julia Adam (nee Worrall)** on the birth of their little boy Thomas on the 18th April 2008 (see photo).

Emma Anderson and Ian are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Alice Mary Atkinson. She was born on 17th July 2008 weighing 2.81kg (6lb 3oz) (see photo).

Emma writes: Mother and baby doing well and we are all getting used to family life together. We've started to test our capabilities for outings, first as a family and now with just mother and Alice.



Thomas James Adam with proud mum Julia Adam (nee Worrall)



Alice Atkinson born 17th July 2008

Emma has since decided not to return to work in order to stay at home with Alice. She is now a full time mum and is still enjoying being at home and watching Alice pick up lots of new skills!

Muhammad Arshad. During a holiday back to Pakistan in December 2007 Muhammad got married to Saima on 28th December. He came back to Bristol in March 2008, but his wife could only join him a year later due to visa problems. This couple has now become a small family by the addition of a very cute baby boy Muhammad Shawaiz Arshad (see photo), who was born on 23rd June

2010. Muhammad describes his stay in Bristol as 'very enjoyable and memorable' and says that 'visiting around the countryside and beaches and playing cricket will last in his memories forever'.



Muhammad Shawaiz Arshad born 23rd June 2010



Chris Astle and wife Helen on their wedding day

Chris Astle sent an update in July 09: I left the group in 2004 and became a chartered accountant at PwC. After a few years of audit and consulting I have now moved on to Gilead Sciences and am enjoying the challenge of helping them grow around the globe.

Last year Helen and I were married in Richmond Park and we enjoyed a fantastic honeymoon in the Maldives and Italy (see photo). With luck and good fortune our family is now due to grow to 3 in January next year....I'll keep you posted!

Ji Bie wrote in January 2011: Time really flies by I cannot believe that it has been over 3 years since my life back to China in 2007. The two and half years working as a management consultant was quite challenging and rewarding. After a nice wedding break subsequently at my hometown and in Australia, I came back to Shanghai around the end of May 2010, very



Jie and Anthony

much refreshed and reenergized. My new job at Midas Pharma GmbH (a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany) is very exciting. I am now responsible for their new business development in China, the in-licensing of new drug products to the Chinese market. Life in Shanghai has been fantastic, and we (me and my husband Anthony) have recently bought our apartment here.

Paul Blackburn married Rachael Simms on 8th August 2009. He is currently living just outside of Newcastle and working for EDS / HP.

Adrian Daly wrote in March 2011: I am still living in Cork, Ireland working for Pfizer. I am involved in technical support and continuous improvement of manufacturing processes for small and large molecule APIs. This means I still get to do some chemistry! Outside of that I am kept busy by Hannah (4) and Mark (2) but I'm still managing to squeeze some soccer matches in too (see photo).



Adrian Daly and family



Elena Ferrara

Marco Ferrara wrote in February 2011: This is our little girl, she is now 9 months old (see photo). Elena is lovely but she can be very demanding when she wants to, she takes after her mum;-) Oops... I hear her crying, have to go. All the best to the old members of the VKA group, it would be great to meet again! Hope to see you sometimes soon, all the best Marco+Marina+Elena. Marco is now Head of laboratory for Boehringer-Ingelheim in Milan.

Daniel Fuentes is still working for Novartis in Basel, Switzerland. He has moved out of the chemical production business unit and he is now working within the Strategic Sourcing Department as an Outsourcing Manager.

Sarah Fulford is now working as a Principal Policy Manager for the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and is responsible for the Research Methods investments. On the 25th August 2010 she and her husband James welcomed their baby girl Ella Molly into the world (see photo).



Sarah Fulford and daughter Ella Molly

Zeynep Gültekyin is currently working at the University of Çankırý, Turkey, as an Assistant Professor in Organic Chemistry.

Our warmest wishes to **Gayle Hallett** who gave birth to Jessi



Gayle and family

Ena Hallett on 16th July 2009.
 Gayle writes: Jessi is 18 months old now, and full of energy! She loves puzzles and 'reading' books, swings and exploring the outdoors. We recently celebrated her Christian dedication with family and friends, and several members of the group were able to attend (see photos).



Varinder and Jessi Hallett at her dedication

Jonathan Killen sent this message in January 2010:

Jonathan and Helen Killen were married at St Matthew's Church in Cotham on 10th April 2010 (see photo). Thanks to all who came, and all who contributed to our wedding gift from the group. We went on honeymoon to the French Pyrenees.



Jonathan and Helen Killen on their wedding day, April 2010

Christoforos Kokotos did his PhD in the Aggarwal group (Sep. 2003-Jan. 2007). After postdoctoral appointments in the Department of Chemistry, University of Athens, Greece and in the Department of Chemistry, Princeton University, USA with David MacMillan, he did his obligatory military service in the Greek Navy. He was recently elected Lecturer in the Department of Chemistry, University of Athens, Greece. He says that weather and life is beautiful in Greece and everyone is welcome here!!!!!!!

Helen Laughton (nee Smith) told us in January 2010 that there has been a big change in the Laughton household with the arrival of Ethan, born in December 2009, a little brother for Amelia (who started school in September) (see photo).



Ethan and Amelia Laughton

Helen has been on extended maternity leave and due to return to work in

March 2011. She returns to her role as team manager at AstraZeneca but in the newly formed Analytical Sciences department, having managed to be on leave during the recent re-organisation. Her work will still be in Macclesfield and she says 'it will interesting juggling the commute, two children and life! Any helpful hints gratefully received :)'.
Martin Lowe proposed to his girlfriend, Jennifer Kitchen, last year while they were on holiday on the Scottish island of Mull (and she said yes!) (see photo). They will be getting married this May in her



Martin and fiancée Jennifer



Adeem and wife on their wedding day

home county of Buckinghamshire. Martin is now Senior Research Scientist (medicinal chemistry) at UCB in Slough.

Adeem Mahmood married Dr. Saima on 17th May, 2010 (see photo).

Eoghan McGarrigle celebrated his marriage to Anne-Louise in August 2010 (see photo).

Andrea Mereu and **Alessia Nicotra** have been happily married since 2001. Andrea is currently R&D Director for Cerbios-Pharma S.A. Switzerland and Alessia is a Senior Chemist with NicOx Research, Milano, Italy. On October the 27th 2010 Andrea and Alessia welcomed their second child Edoardo. Edoardo joins big sister Magheria now aged 5 (see picture).



Andrea and Alessia's children Margherita and Edoardo



Eoghan and Anne-Louise on their wedding day

Berit Olofsson finished her post doc in the VKA group in the summer of 2004, and moved back to Sweden to continue her career at Stockholm University. Her research is focused on hypervalent iodine chemistry, more info can be found at her website <http://www.organ.su.se/bo/>.

The summer of 2010 was quite special, as she got a permanent position as Associate Professor, moved to a house with a big garden for Emmy (the GSD) to play in, and gave birth to a daughter (Isa), all within a few months! In the last years, she has become a dedicated inline and ice skater, and successfully competes in both sports (see photo).

Mamta Patel wrote in January 2010 to say that she is now working for Quintiles Medical Communications as an Account Manager.



The Olofsson Family

Amaury Patin sent news from Lyon in Jan 2009: For few years now, I have lunch every Friday with Willy Picoul, Franck Sandrinelli and Didier Pez (Beatrice Pellotier's boyfriend, they will get married this year and have their 3rd child, a boy this time). What a team !!! We often talk together about the good time we had in England.

He sent through a photo taken one or two years ago in Franck's garden during a barbecue (see photo). 'You may recognize on the top Beatrice,



The French contingent in Lyon

Didier, their daughter Fanny, me, Marie (Willy's girlfriend), Willy and Sabrina. Underneath, on the left, Marie (Didier & Beatrice's daughter), Franck and his son Nathan and Chloe (Willy's daughter)'.

Leni Ritmaleni won the Henk Timmerman Award in Indonesia on 7 October 2009. She is the 3rd winner of this award for young medicinal chemists in Indonesia.

Abel Ros wrote in Jan 2011: 2011 will be a great year because Inma and me are waiting for a boy. He will be born on May-June. The marriage can wait ...hahahahah

Chris Sheldon wrote in Sept 2008: Ana and Thomas are fine (Thomas is 2 now!). Ana is pregnant again (16 weeks) and due in February - we are going to be busy!



Thomas Sheldon aged 2

Our congratulations to **Dr Carmen Simal Fernandez** on passing her PhD viva (Universidad de Oviedo). Carmen visited the group in the summer of 2006. Carmen is now working as a post-doctoral researcher in Oxford in Professor Stephen G. Davies' Research Group.

Knut Sommer has been happily married to Karin since August 2008. The wedding took place at "Craheim Castle" in Bavaria which was a wonderful background (see photo).



On March 6, 2010, the family grew bigger with little Julian being born. Isn't he cute? (see photo).

As for business life, Knut is still working with Bayer Material Science, but has changed his field of activity from process research to intellectual property: In July 2009, Knut changed from the Bayer site in Krefeld-Uerdingen to the site in Leverkusen to work in the patent department. Besides the daily work, he is being trained to become a European Patent Attorney.



Julian Sommer, born March 6, 2010

Since January 2010 **Anne Staubitz** (PhD 2007) has been working as an assistant professor at the University of Kiel, Germany. <http://www.otto-diels-institut.de/staubitz/index.html>

Rachel Stenson is still working with Syngenta and recently moved from a position in supply chain integration to a new role as Head of Seeds Processing Technology.

Gary Tarver left Newhouse after thirteen years on the closure of the site at the end of 2010. He has recently started a new job as Lead chemist at Cyclofluidic Ltd in Welwyn Garden City.



James Arthur William Jakeman

Bahareh Tavassoli sent this update in Jan 2010: After 4.5 years working in development at GSK in Tonbridge I have finally managed to get rid of my Chemistry anchor and get myself out of the lab! In September 2008, I moved into the exciting world of CMC Post Approval regulatory affairs. I have been very much enjoying working in this fast paced interface between Law and Science. With Pharmaceutical regulatory very much under my belt, I will be moving into cosmetics, which I am sure will bring a set of new exciting challenges and hopefully much better freebies!

Alison Thompson (PhD 1996) and **David Jakeman** (PhD 1995 with professor Mike Blackburn in Sheffield)



had a baby boy, James Arthur William Jakeman. James has just finished his first week of ski-school! (see photo).

Varinder visited Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada in November 2009 to give the Sepracor lecture (see photo). Alison was promoted to full professor at Dalhousie in 2009.

Varinder with Alison Thompson, Dalhousie University Canada 2009

Caroline Winn (PDRA, 2002 -2005) married **David Ebdon** on 30th



Caroline and David on their wedding day, August 2009

August 2009 in Guisborough, North Yorkshire. Caroline is now working at Jealott's Hill in Berkshire for Syngenta Agrochemicals as a senior research chemist.

Update from Mar Ruiz Molina

You may recall that the big news of the last newsletter back in 2007 was that Mar was on maternity leave after giving birth to her daughter Sofia Maria Ruiz-Cook in July 2007. Sofia is now 3 years old and enjoying her time at the UoB Nursery while mum is at work. Mar is now working as Centre Administrator for the Bristol Chemical Synthesis Doctoral Training Centre launched in April 2009 .

<http://synthesisdtdc.chm.bris.ac.uk/synthesisdtdc/>



Mar and Sofia on Sofia's 3rd birthday

News from Varinder

The last four years have continued to be challenging for us. As many of you know Meena has been very unwell for almost 6 years with an ME-type illness. Although she made some progress a few years ago, her recovery was not sustained. Nevertheless, she continues to explore new avenues and we are hopeful and confident that her current course of treatment will ultimately prove rewarding.

Lukha (12) and Romi (10) are continuing to progress. They still both enjoy and play sports – football, tennis, table tennis, and cricket, which means an enhanced taxi-service from Dad! Lukha started at the local secondary school last September and settled in well although was rather shocked at



Varinder and family at his 50th Birthday celebrations

the amount of swearing he encountered in the play-ground! Romi is in his last year at primary school and will be joining Lukha at the same school next year. Letting go of the primary school really feels as if the apron strings have been loosened, and now we are heading for the uncharted waters of the teenage years. Let's hope they are not too stormy!



Varinder with Marina and Marco in Rome, 2009

the same year, and the French group of Amaury, Beatrice and Willy in Lyon in 2010. I look forward to more encounters in the years to come.



Varinder with his sons Lukha and Romi

This year I marked my 50th Birthday with a big party at the Avon Gorge Hotel with family, friends and colleagues. It was a great event and I was very touched by the atmosphere and the warmth of the occasion and by the presents! The venue wasn't large enough to accommodate the research group and their partners so the plan is to take the whole group out for dinner sometime soon too. I attended my first ever 6 Nations Rugby Match on March 13 – England–Scotland courtesy of friends from Lukha's old school. It was a scrappy affair, but at least we got a result and the atmosphere was great.

In the last few years I have taken up running and may even have a go at the Bristol Half Marathon this year, if my knees allow. Last year I did the Great Weston bike



Varinder doing the Great Weston Bike Ride 2010

ride (56 miles, 4h 10 min), which seemed fine at the time, but I struggled to walk in the evening and the next day. I thought my running fitness would get me through, but my knees said otherwise, so next time I might do a bit of training.

In the last few years, I was really pleased to meet up with former group members at various meetings and events. I saw Marina and Marco in Rome (2009), Alison at Dalhousie University the

Publications

See the following link for our most up to date list of publications:

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/chemistry/research/organic/aggarwal-group/publications/>

Bristol Synthesis Meeting, April 28th 2011

The Bristol Synthesis Meeting has established itself as a major meeting in the UK for organic chemistry and regularly brings in over 600 participants.

This year the meeting will held on **Thursday, 28th April 2011** (yes, the day before the Royal Wedding!) in the Victoria Rooms, Bristol University. More details and a registration form can be found on the website. Hope to see some of you there.

<http://www.chm.bris.ac.uk/synthesismeting>

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Group Website

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/chemistry/research/organic/aggarwal-group/>

LinkedIn

LinkedIn (A sort of professional facebook) now has a group for 'Aggarwal Group Alumni' which I would encourage you to join (past and present group members). It should be a good way of maintaining and

extending your professional network. This might be especially useful when you are looking for your next career move or when you are looking to recruit somebody, or just another way to help you keep in touch. As it evolves we may use it as a means of communicating to the growing Aggarwal Group Research Family.