

News, views, and announcements from MACRO group UK

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The Pure and Applied
Macromolecular
Chemistry Group
(Macro Group UK) is a
joint group of the Royal
Society of Chemistry
and the Society of
Chemical Industry.



2023 Macro Group UK Symposium

Cover image: Delegates of the Macro Group UK Symposium at the University of Loughborough.
Photo credit: Helen Willcock

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 edition of the Macro Group UK Bulletin.

We have recently held the **Annual Macro Group UK Symposium**. This meeting took place at the University of Loughborough on the 11th and 12th of September 2023. The meeting was a great success, with many delegates particularly pleased with the diversity of science on offer. This new format featured award winners and invited speakers spread across two days. Big congratulations to Prof Sergey Piletsky, Dr Nick Warren, and Dr Csilla György for their awards. We had the pleasure of interviewing Csilla to learn more about her and her journey (inside). The new format seems to have been a big hit, featuring amazing talks from our prize winners, as well as speakers from across the UK, poster presentations, and exhibitors.

Being at Loughborough, Helen and Dr Ryan Larder (organisers) made sure there were sports activities including disk golf, badminton, and volleyball. I have also heard rumours that the academics vs PhD/PDRA football match was a thrashing by the academics, spearheaded by a formidable front line including Dr Lee Fielding (Manchester), Dr Sam Jones (Manchester), and Dr Matt Derry (Aston).

Did you know that MACRO Group UK will tweet for you? Our new-look website includes a twitter form to help disseminate polymer news via twitter. Job opportunities will be tweeted if appropriate. Check it out: <https://www.macrogroupp.org.uk/>

We are currently taking nominations for:

Macro Group UK Early Career Researchers Medal

Awarded to a UK-based scientist, with up to 12 years of experience (excluding career breaks) since completion of PhD on December 31st of the preceding year, whose contributions to polymer science show outstanding promise for the future. The recipient will be awarded a bronze medal and will be expected to deliver a medal award lecture at an appropriate Macro Group UK meeting.

Nominations for this award are invited annually. The current nomination deadline is **31st December 2023**.

DH Richards Memorial Bursaries

If you are a PhD student interested in attending a conference, but don't have sufficient budget consider applying for our bursaries. The criteria have been reviewed to help make the process more transparent and objective.

If you have any suggested content for future issues please get in touch. Contact Michael Cook (UCL) using the e-mail: Michael.T.Cook@ucl.ac.uk.



Image: Dr Nick Warren from the University of Leeds receiving the Macro Group UK Early Career Researchers Medal from Remzi (co-chair) after a mind-blowing talk on automation of flow chemistry.

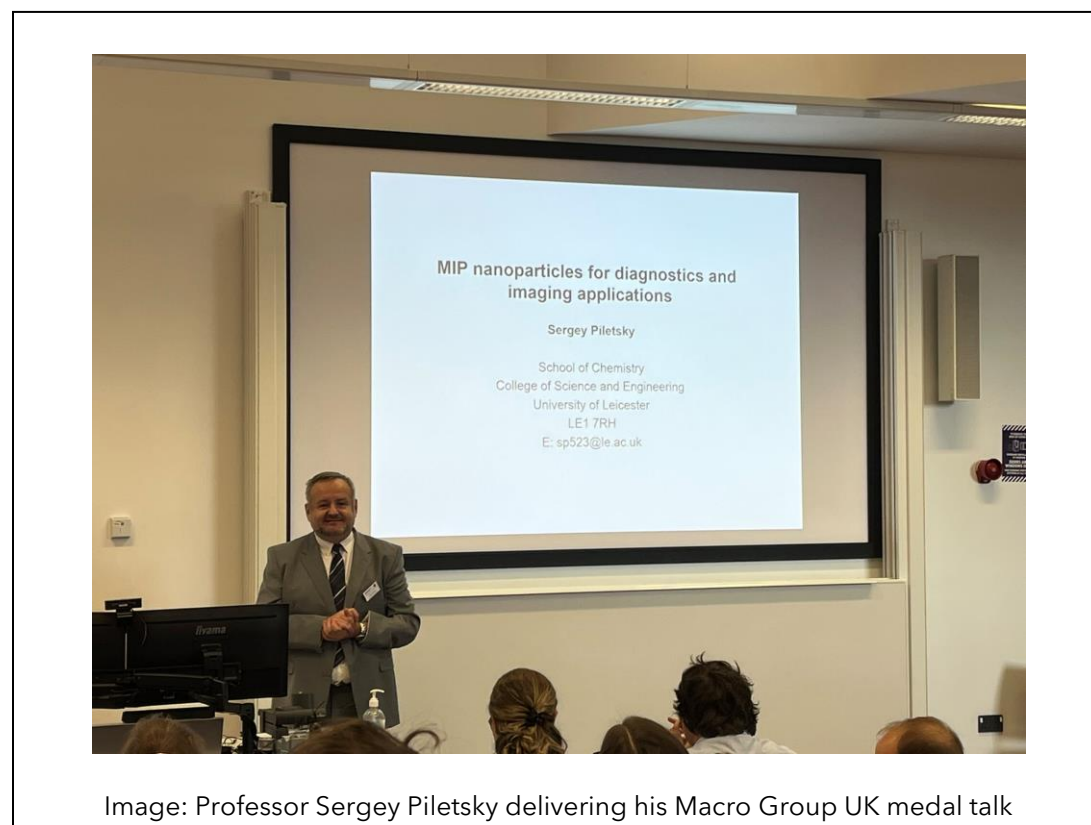


Image: Professor Sergey Piletsky delivering his Macro Group UK medal talk

Foreword and committee membership



From the Chairs of MGUK

Remzi Becer (University of Warwick) and
Helen Willcock (Loughborough University)

Hi Everyone, We hope you had a nice summer and the new semester has started with exciting new projects! We have been busy organizing networking events for Macro Group members as well as discussing how we can expand our activities and memberships.

First of all, the Young Researcher's Meeting (YRM) was organized at the University of Warwick on 14th and 15th of June 2023. There were 36 oral presentations and a busy poster session that was followed by a pub crawl as a tradition. To allow free registration for everyone, the event was generously sponsored by Anton Paar, Synthomer, Midlands Innovation, Agilent Technologies, ACS Publications, RSC Publications, Warwick Polymer RTP, and Warwick Analytical Science Centre. For the first time YRM has also offered a free training day to anyone who has registered. There were talks on NMR, XPS, XRF, SAXS, and materials testing, thermal analysis, GC and electron microscopy in general. YRM2023 organization has been led by Dr. Daniel Lester and Dr. Rachel Hand with several volunteers from Warwick, which we would like to thank and congratulate for their efforts.

A few months later we have organized the first Annual Macro Group UK Symposium, which took place at Loughborough University on 11th-12th of September. There were over 100 attendees, several speakers, poster presenters, and most importantly 3 MGUK medal winners to deliver their award talks and receive their medals.

The next big event we are looking forward is the 50th IUPAC MACRO conference that will take place at the University of Warwick on 1st-4th of July 2024. IUPAC MACRO conferences usually attract over 1000 attendees from all around the World. The last one (49th) was held in Winnipeg, Canada in July 2022 and the last one (43rd) in the UK was in Glasgow in 2010. Warwick has a World wide known reputation for high scientific level with a friendly atmosphere. As the conference is taking place on campus and the registration includes all meals and social activities, there will be plenty of opportunities to meet up with old friends and make new connections. We have invited over 200 plenary, keynote and invited speakers and the registration will be capped at 1200 attendees. You can visit www.macro2024.org for more information and registration is open now. Please also note that the 2023 MGUK medal winners will have a special session to deliver their award talks and receive their medals with a great audience. Looking forward to see you there!

All the best,
Helen and Remzi

Other members of the Macro Group Committee

Honorary Secretary

Prof Dr Nick Turner
(University of Sheffield,
2017-2023)

Honorary Treasurer

Dr Tara Schiller (Warwick,
2017-2023)

Ordinary Members

Dr Michael Cook (UCL,
2021-2024)

Dr Simon Basset
(Synthomer, 2023 – 2026)

Dr Jennifer Garden
(Edinburgh, 2021-2024)

Dr Peter Wright (Infineum
UK Ltd, 2017 – 2023)

Dr Emma Chapman (2018
– 2024)

Professor Vitaliy
Khutoryanskiy (Reading,
2019 – 2022)

Dr Samuel Jones
(Manchester, 2020 –
2023)

Dr Daniel Keddie
(Nottingham, 2021 –
2024)

Interview with Csilla György



Csilla György won the 2023 Jon Weaver PhD Prize for her work on polymerization-induced self-assembly (PISA) for the design of new diblock copolymer nanoparticles in non-polar media (Supervisor: Prof Steve Armes, University of Sheffield). She was interviewed by Antonia Gucic, who is currently studying for a PhD at UCL, to understand her journey and to give advice to other PhD researchers.

Antonia: Would you please tell us about the path that led you into choosing your PhD project?

Csilla: I originally did my BSc and Master's degree in Hungary. During my Master's degree I applied for a scholarship so I could go to study in the UK. I went to University of Leeds and enjoyed that experience. After this I wanted to return to the UK and I applied for another Erasmus scholarship to do an internship with Professor Armes. I spent five months in his research group and I fell in love instantaneously. I asked about PhD opportunities and then he talked to me about this project with Lubrizol.

Antonia: Would you tell us a little bit about your PhD? Any highlights?

Csilla: I have so many highlights. My favourite project was when I was working on making epoxy functional nanoparticles in nonpolar media. I found that by introducing these epoxy functionalities into the steric stabiliser block of the nanoparticle structure I could see enhanced nanoparticle absorption onto stainless steel which resulted in higher friction reduction than when I compared that to the nonfunctional nanoparticles. I had the chance to visit Lubrizol, and I learned a new technique there using a quartz crystal microbalance.

Antonia: What is it like to have to do a PhD that is sponsored by industry? I think it might be interesting for our readers because it's not everyone's experience.

Csilla: I think it's a fantastic privilege, especially during a PhD when you are trying to decide whether you want to go towards academia or industry. You can see the difference between the academic approach and the industrial approach and how those researchers think about questions because it's always slightly different. They consider different factors and you can learn from both of them.

Antonia: What was your biggest personal challenge in your PhD and how did you overcome it?

Csilla: Trying to keep up your motivation. Especially when things are not working. It can happen for weeks or months and when you are look at others, they are all successful and you compare yourself to them. I think that that was the most challenging. I'm going to add that even when no one sees you, you have to keep up the hard work because it will pay off eventually. I had some really good support in the Armes group. As an Erasmus scholar, I already interacted with two postdocs from the group and they were always very supportive. They tried to encourage me, saying that I have the talent and skills to do this. They also appreciated my enthusiasm about my work.

Antonia: What's it like to win the John Weaver Award?

Csilla: This award was a nice prize because I was very passionate about my work. I think that's what helped me to keep my enthusiasm. I think this prize was a beautiful crown on that passion, a prize that helps you to motivate to be motivated again because you get some success. So then you know that you are on the right path.

Antonia: What is exciting in your life right now?

Csilla: So right now I'm in the United States. Currently I'm doing a postdoc with Professor Brent Summerlin at the University of Florida. In terms of environment, I would say this is also a fantastic group. So the people are extremely friendly and very supportive. In terms of science, it's a great place to grow and this is also a massive research group working in varied fields so you have many opportunities to learn.

Antonia: To conclude, what do you like to do in your free time? We always talk about work-life balance. How has that been for you throughout your PhD and how is it for you now?

Csilla: That's a good question. So I would say that I always loved working, which means sometimes I had to find boundaries during the PhD. I was always thinking about my research. I could switch off when I went out with friends, but otherwise when I was alone and having a shower or something, I was always thinking, and my best ideas came during that time. I think as a researcher it's hard to turn off your mind, especially when you are having a problem. But when you are with people, I could easily turn off. In my free time, I like reading books and poems, and I sometimes write poems as a creative outlet.

Interested to read more? Look at Csilla's select publications below:

György et al, *Synthesis and derivatization of epoxy-functional sterically-stabilized diblock copolymer spheres in non-polar media: does the spatial location of the epoxy groups matter?*, *Polymer Chemistry*, 2022, **13**, 3619-3630. <https://doi.org/10.1039/D2PY00559J>

György et al, *Tuning the Glass Transition Temperature of a Core-Forming Block during Polymerization-Induced Self-Assembly: Statistical Copolymerization of Lauryl Methacrylate with Methyl Methacrylate Provides Access to Spheres, Worms, and Vesicles*. *Macromolecules*, 2022, **55**, 4091-4101 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/acs.macromol.2c00475>

György et al, *RAFT Dispersion Polymerization of Methyl Methacrylate in Mineral Oil: High Glass Transition Temperature of the Core-Forming Block Constrains the Evolution of Copolymer Morphology*. *Macromolecules*, **54**, 9496–9509. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.macromol.1c01528>

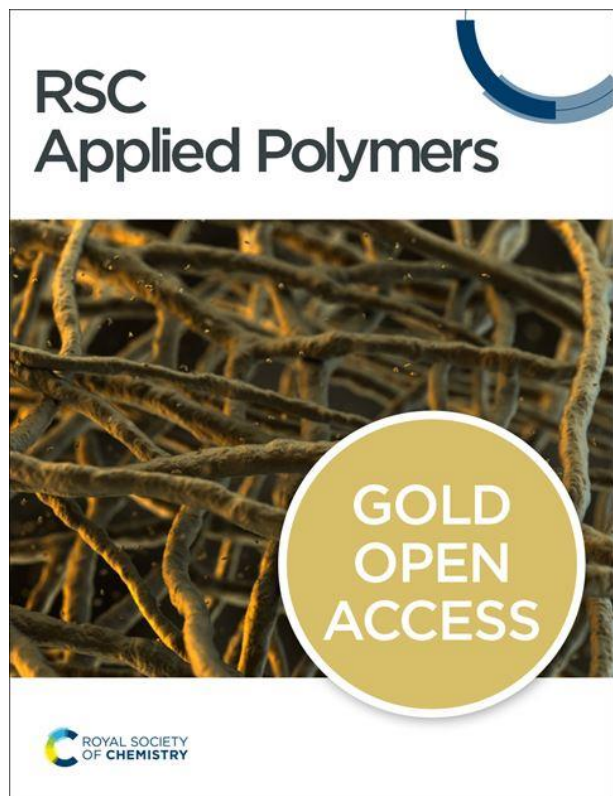
Editor's Note – Csilla has now returned to the UK at the University of Sheffield. Say hello if you see her around!



Image: Csilla receiving her award from MACRO co-chair Helen Willcock.

RSC Journals – which one is right for you?

We spoke to Natalie Cotterell, Development Editor at Royal Society of Chemistry, for guidance on where Macro Group UK members might consider publishing their research. The RSC publishes a large number of journals spanning the chemical sciences. Check out just some of these RSC journals which may be relevant for your research:



RSC Applied Polymers

Recently launched journal *RSC Applied Polymers* is one of the first RSC journals to focus on applied research. This journal complements existing journal, *Polymer Chemistry*, which publishes innovative polymer research, by focusing more on interdisciplinary and application-based work.

RSC Applied Polymers is Gold Open Access and all Article Processing Charges are currently waived until 2025 so you can publish your applied research open access for free!

[Check out our first published articles in the journal here](#)

[Find out more about RSC Applied Polymers here](#)

Polymer Chemistry

Polymer Chemistry welcomes submissions in all areas of polymer science that have a strong focus on macromolecular chemistry. Research with a strong application focus may be more suitable for *RSC Applied Polymers*.

[Find out more about *Polymer Chemistry* here](#)

Check out our [2023 Pioneering Investigators collection](#), highlighting the great work done by mid-career researchers who have firmly established themselves as pioneers in the field of polymer chemistry





Chemical Science

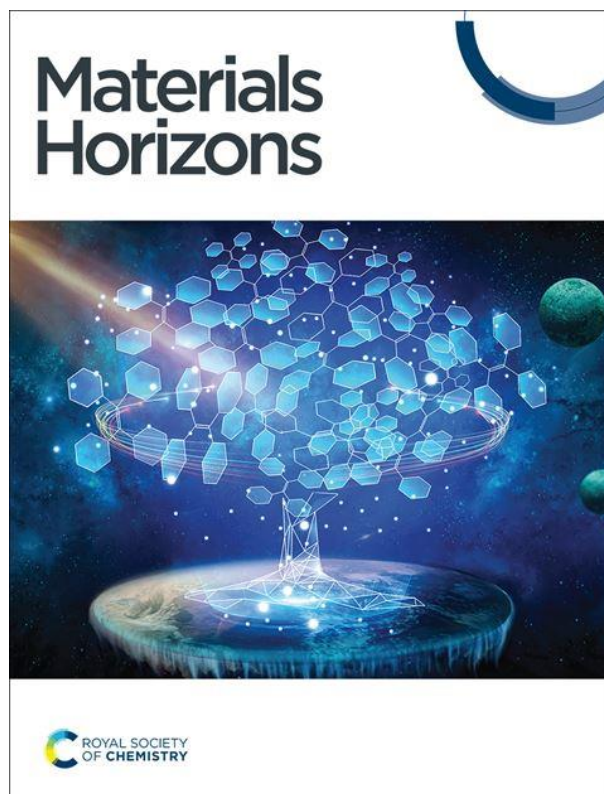
Chemical Science is the Royal Society of Chemistry's flagship journal with a wide-ranging scope covering the full breadth of the chemical sciences. It is **Diamond Open Access** which means it is free to read and free to publish in, helping scientists at every stage of their career to make an impact with their work

[Find out more about Chemical Science](#)

Materials Horizons

Materials Horizons is our leading materials journal, publishing urgent short reports of exceptionally high quality and innovative materials science. The journal places an emphasis on original research that demonstrates a novel concept or way of thinking and research that features a truly breakthrough advance.

[Find out more about Materials Horizons](#)



We look forward to receiving your submissions!
Natalie Cotterell, Development Editor at Royal Society of Chemistry

Upcoming conferences

- RSC Biomaterials Chemistry Group 18th Annual Conference 17 January 2024; London, UK.
Organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry
 - 2024 RSC Chemical Biology and Bio-Organic Group (CBBG) Forum, 26 January 2024; London, UK.
Organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry
 - Future of Chemical Recycling 2024, 31 January 2024; Rotterdam, Netherlands. Organised by: ACI
 - ACS Spring 2024 Many Flavors of Chemistry, 17 - 21 March 2024; New Orleans, LA, USA
Organised by: ACS*
 - 7th Annual UK Porous Materials Conference, 4-5 June 2024; Liverpool, UK. Organised by the
Royal Society of Chemistry
 - Polymers for sustainable future 2024. 24-28 June 2024; Prague, Czech Republic. Organised by the
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry
 - **50th World Polymer Congress - MACRO2024, 1 - 4 July 2024; University of Warwick,
Coventry, UK; Organized by: IUPAC, University of Warwick <https://www.macro2024.org/>**
 - Polymers Polymer Physics (GRC), 20 - 21 July, 2023; Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA,
USA; Organized by: Gordon Research Seminar [https://www.grc.org/polymer-physics-
conference/2022/](https://www.grc.org/polymer-physics-conference/2022/)
 - ACS Fall 2024, 18 - 22 August; Denver, CO, USA; Organised by: ACS*
 - ACS Spring 2025, 23 - 27 March, San Diego, CA, USA; Organised by: ACS*
 - EPF European Polymer Congress, 22- 26 June 2025; Martiniplaza, Groningen, the Netherlands;
Organised by: EPF <https://www.epf2025.org/>
-



[home](#) [overview](#) [plenary speakers](#) [keynote/invited](#)
[accomodation](#) [faq](#) [sponsors](#) [organising committee](#)

REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!!

IUPAC MACRO 2024

THE 50TH WORLD POLYMER CONGRESS

1-4 JULY 2024 / WARWICK UNIVERSITY / UNITED KINGDOM

REGISTRATION FOR MACRO2024

**FOLLOW THE LINK ABOVE TO REGISTER FOR
THE IUPAC MACRO2024 CONFERENCE**

PLEASE SUBMIT THE TITLE/ABSTRACT OF YOUR POSTER/ORAL PRESENTATION DURING THE REGISTRATION. WE WILL EMAIL YOU AN INVOICE FOR THE REGISTRATION FEE TO THE CONFERENCE.

100TH, 200TH, 300TH AND 500TH PERSON REGISTERED WILL GET HALF PRICE REGISTRATION.

Congratulations Julia Rho University of Birmingham, UK on being the 100th registration and having half price registration.

FOR ANY QUESTIONS FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US USING THE LINK BELOW.

CONTACT US



Dr. Marie Grypioti

We are deeply saddened to hear that Dr. Marie Grypioti passed away at the age of 32. Our thoughts are with her family and friends who have to suffer this tragedy. Marie spent time at the University of Warwick and we know many in our community will be affected by this terrible loss.

We ask that you read about the tragic events surrounding her death and the struggles of her family:

<https://www.mayonews.ie/news/home/1307423/funeral-of-bordeaux-botulism-victim-to-take-place-in-her-native-greece.html>

<https://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/irish-man-whose-wife-died-31416689>