

## Outreach Newsletter: October 2026

Welcome to the October edition of our Outreach newsletter!

Please do pass this on to anyone who may be interested in receiving this bulletin. They are very welcome to subscribe using this [link](#). If you wish to be removed, please email [outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk).

Thank you for reading!

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We are now on  
**LinkedIn!**



Follow us here:  
**Outreach and Public  
Engagement with Research**



[https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/  
outreach-and-public-engagement/](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/outreach-and-public-engagement/)

or scan the  
QR code:



## Upcoming Events

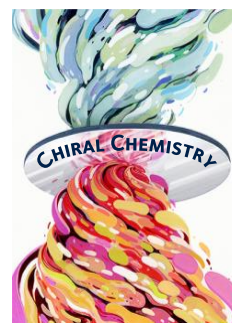
### Autumn Chemistry Conference **[UPDATE]**



Thank you to all those who attended our seventh Autumn Chemistry Conference on Thursday 24th September. We had a great turn out accompanied by excellent talks by Professors Yimon Aye and Grant Ritchie. If you missed the event or would like to watch the talks again, the recording will soon be made available on our website.

### KS5 Chiral Chemistry Workshops **[NEW]**

We would like to announce the 2026–2027 academic year dates for our Chiral Chemistry workshop. This is our online workshop for UK state school KS5 Chemistry students and teachers, which is delivered by our Department Ambassadors. Dates and times have been designed to avoid interruption of lessons. The session focuses on 3D shapes, chirality, the role of chirality in biological systems and the resources available to research chemists looking at proteins, such as the main protease in SARS-CoV-2, the latter being an active area of research in our department. There is also an opportunity to ask our ambassadors questions about their research and their academic careers to date. Students may attend without a teacher, provided we have a teacher contact.



|                                         |             |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|
| Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2026 | 15:45–17:00 |
| Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2026 | 15:45–17:00 |
| Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2027   | 16:45–18:00 |
| Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> February 2027   | 16:45–18:00 |
| Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2027    | 15:45–17:00 |

[REQUEST A SPACE](#)

### Compounds of Interest: The Lit Lab series **[NEW]**

UK state school A level (or equivalent) Chemistry students and teachers are invited to engage with adapted research papers as well as join researchers to discuss the research via an interactive online webinar. For 2026–27, monthly live sessions will be held on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 17:00–17:45 in order to minimise disruption to the school day. For our first live session on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October**, Prof. Ed Anderson will discuss published research on bicyclo[1.1.1]pentanes (BCPs) and answer questions about the research and related work.

[SIGN UP TO THE SERIES](#)

Please note that for Chiral Chemistry and Compounds of Interest: The Lit Lab places are limited to students from state schools in the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands, and where we are oversubscribed, we will prioritise places for students who meet our widening participation and access criteria. Further information about this can be found at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/increasing-access>

## Oxford College Workshops **[REPEAT]**

You are warmly invited to request a **College Workshop** when arranging a group visit with a College. Find out about your link colleges [here](#). Please note, the inclusion of one of our workshops is subject to the college's capacity to host your visit. Please do copy us ([outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@chem.ox.ac.uk)) into any correspondence with the College team regarding the inclusion of one of our workshops. *If you do not hear back from your link college within 14 days, do get in touch directly with us.*



### Unlock the OXbox – Graffiti Game

A puzzle box workshop for Year 9 (13–14 yrs), featuring a series of practical and theoretical problems. Minimum of 12 students from UK state schools.

### Unlock the OXbox – Poison Puzzle

This is for KS4 (14–16 yrs) and is a series of practical and theoretical chemistry problems. Minimum of 12 students from UK state schools.

*"It is fantastic for the students to have this opportunity to apply their knowledge to a problem-solving activity and so enjoyable for them."* – Teacher

### Unlock the OXbox – Lab Lurker

A series of practical and theoretical chemistry problems for KS5 (16–19 yrs) students. Would suit a class where at least half of the students are studying A level (or equivalent) in Chemistry. Minimum 12 students (at least six studying Chemistry A level, or equivalent), from UK state schools.

*You can mix and match Graffiti Game, Poison Puzzle and Lab Lurker puzzle boxes for groups including Year 9, KS4 and KS5 students, as long as there is a minimum of 12 students in total (a minimum of three from a Key Stage is required).*

## Effective delivery of practical work – In-person course [REPEAT]

**What:** Want to feel more confident when delivering practical work and managing your classroom during experiments? This **one-day, in-person** course aims to increase teachers' confidence in delivering practical work as well as developing strategies for managing their classroom during practical work. The course is designed to be delivered **on a date agreed with your school**.



**When:** Monday 8th September 2025 – Friday 18th December 2026 (flexible dates).

**How:** Find out more and sign up [here](#).

## Other Opportunities: Application Support for Oxford

### Oxford University Islamic Society [REPEAT]

The Oxford University Islamic Society (OUISoc) is expanding its outreach efforts to support prospective Muslim students applying to Oxford. Their dedicated Access Team runs a range of initiatives designed to ease the transition to higher education, address common misconceptions, and involve parents in the process. To stay up to date with upcoming opportunities, events, and resources, join the OUISoc Access Mailing List.



**Who it's for:** Muslim students in sixth form, regardless of background or level of spirituality, as well as teachers and school staff supporting them. Stay connected: Join the OUISoc Access [Mailing List](#). For more information, visit [OUISoc's website](#) or email the Access Team directly at: [ouisoc.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:ouisoc.outreach@gmail.com).

### Oxford Online Maths Club [REPEAT]

**What:** The Oxford Online Maths Club is a weekly livestream that is free, interactive, casual, and relaxed, and the livestreams are recorded so that you can watch back afterwards if you can't make it to the live broadcast on Thursday afternoons. The regular host is Dr James Munro, and they often have current Oxford students answering questions in chat and appearing on the livestream to talk about maths.

**Who:** The club is mostly aimed at people about to apply to university or about to start a Maths course, but everyone's welcome and there's no registration needed.

**When:** Live each Thursday at 17:00–18:00 (UK time).

**How:** Find out more [here](#).

## Preparing for Oxford Physics [REPEAT]

**What:** The Department of Physics' new online course 'Preparing for Oxford Physics' is designed to help students build their problem-solving skills and looks ahead to all parts of the admissions process, including the ESAT, interviews and beyond. While the course is physics focused, they welcome students interested in studying other related subjects at university, such as engineering. The course consists of a series of live, online webinars in June / July and September/ October along with summer assignments, videos and an additional interview focused session in December. It's open to everyone, and is free to take part in.

**Where:** Microsoft Teams.

**When:** June to December 2026.

**Who:** Young people who are in Year 12, or equivalent, in June 2026 and in Year 13, or equivalent in October 2026, and are considering applying to Oxford or other competitive universities.

**How:** For more information and booking details please see [here](#).

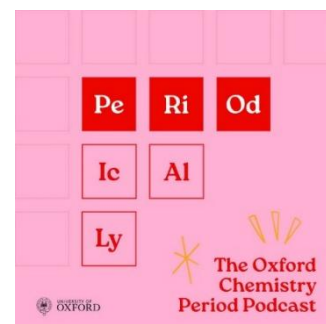
## Other Opportunities: Enrichment and CPD

### RSC Women in Chemistry [REPEAT]

A reminder that there are resources for practical challenges, information about research and profiles of team members available via their [website](#). These are particularly suitable for Science Clubs in schools, community groups, such as Scouts and Guides, as well as for enjoyable holiday challenges.

### PERIODically Podcast [REPEAT]

PERIODically is a podcast created by undergraduate and postgraduate Chemistry students at the University of Oxford to discuss their experiences of how having a period has affected their time studying Chemistry. The podcast aims to discuss how the physicality and intensive nature of studying Chemistry can be affected by symptoms of periods (such as cramps, mental health and medical issues) and seeks to shed light on these problems, tackle stereotypes and misconceptions, and start a conversation on how study can be improved for those with periods. You can find further information and links to listen [here](#).



## Centre for Personalised Medicine Art Competition [REPEAT]

The Oxford Centre for Personalised Medicine is asking young people in Years 7–9 to create art about talking to family about health and genetics. Sometimes, personalised medicine involves tests that find strong genetic risk factors that might run in families. For example, a person with a heart problem might have tests to explore why this happened, and this might show they have a genetic risk factor that made them much more likely to have heart problems.



Entrants can make a drawing, a painting, a collage, a sculpture – anything goes as long as it's something you can take a photo of. Every entrant gets a certificate, and there are cash prizes for the best artworks. Group entries as well as individual entries are welcomed. [More details here](#), including a short video about the competition, and downloadable information for teachers.

## It All Adds Up 2027 Maths Conference [NEW]

**What:** The Mathematical Institute and Department of Statistics are pleased to welcome **female-identifying and non-binary students in Years 9–12** to their annual [It All Adds Up](#) conference. The event will include:

- inspirational talks by Mathematicians
- hands-on workshops
- a chance to meet some of their undergraduate students

**When:** The dates for 2027 are:

- **Monday 11 January:** Year 9 (limit 12 students per school)
- **Tuesday 12 January:** Years 10–11 (limit 12 students per school)
- **Wednesday 13 January:** Year 12

**How:** Teachers need to complete a preliminary application form for the Year 9 and Years 10–11 events. Year 12 students should complete their applications themselves. **Applications are now open and will close on 23<sup>rd</sup> October for Years 9–11 and on 30<sup>th</sup> October for Year 12.** Please see their [website](#) for more information and for the relevant booking forms.

## Masterclasses in Computer Science 2027 [NEW]

**What:** Teachers are invited to nominate up to two Y9 pupils for the 2027 Computer Science Masterclasses: in-person workshops at the Department of Computer Science, designed to inspire enthusiastic young people to explore Computer Science outside of the classroom.

**Who:** To nominate your pupils, eligible students must:

- Attend a **state-funded school** in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Swindon, Gloucestershire or Buckinghamshire.
- Be enthusiastic about **mathematics and computer science**.
- Be academically strong (**top 20% of their year group**).
- Be able to attend all six sessions.
- Where schools accept female students, at least one nominee should be female

**When:** This year's sessions will run 9:30am–12:00pm on: 6th, 13th and 20th March and 8th, 15th, and 22nd May 2027.

**How:** Please see their website for more information about the programme and access to the EOI form (deadline for nominations: **Friday 23rd October 2026**): <https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/Masterclasses/>

## Discover Computer Science 2027 [NEW]

**What:** The Department of Computer Science are inviting teachers to nominate eligible **Year 11 pupils** for their 2027 Discover Computer Science programme: four online sessions and an in-person graduation day at the University of Oxford, designed to explore Computer Science beyond the school curriculum.

**Who:** To be eligible, students must:

- Be **Black African or Caribbean**, or of mixed race with Black African or Caribbean heritage.
- Identify as female.
- Attend a **UK state-funded school**.
- Be **academically strong**, including an achieved or predicted grade 8–9 in GCSE Maths.
- Plan to take **A Level Maths and Further Maths**, or equivalent.
- Be enthusiastic about **mathematics and computer science**.

Sessions will combine academic exploration with university guidance, a careers panel and opportunities to meet current students.

**When:** Online sessions will run 4:30–5:30pm on: 20th and 27th January and 3rd and 10th February 2027. An in-person graduation day will take place in Oxford on Saturday 27th February.

**How:** Please see their website for more information and the nomination form (deadline: **Friday 23rd October 2026**): [www.cs.ox.ac.uk/discovercomputerscience](http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/discovercomputerscience).

## Engineering Study Day **[NEW]**

**What:** The University of Oxford's Department of Engineering Science and St Hilda's College are collaborating in running an Engineering Study Day for Year 12s in January. Students will get the opportunity to learn about Oxford's Engineering course, receive application advice, have a tutorial with Engineering tutors, explore the city, and stay overnight in an Oxford college. Overnight accommodation, including breakfast, will be provided for free in St Hilda's College on Thursday 7th January to allow for an early start on the Friday.

**Who:** Year 12 students from UK state schools who are studying Maths and Physics A Level and who are on track to receive A\*A\*A.

**When:** 7th–8th January 2027.

**Where:** St Hilda's College and the Department of Engineering Science.

**How:** The deadline to sign up is Friday 27th November, sign up here: <https://www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduate-outreach/year-12-engineering-study-day>

## Disrupt It! Reimagining Industries through Technology and Innovation: Poster Competition **[NEW]**

**What:** Oxford Edge, Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Christ Church Access are delighted to announce a poster competition on the theme of 'Disrupt It! Reimagining Industries through Technology and Innovation'.

**Who:** The competition is for UK pupils from state-maintained schools in Year 11 or 12.

**When:** Shortlisted finalists and one supporter will be invited to attend a celebration day at the Oxford Edge and Christ Church on **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March**.

**How:** Submissions are now open (till **5<sup>th</sup> January 2027**). Find out more about the competition here: [Disrupt It! Reimagining Industries through Technology and Innovation Poster Competition | Christ Ch...](#)

## Lincoln College Teacher CPD Conference 2026 [NEW]

**What:** Lincoln College is pleased to open applications for their free one-night, one-day CPD conference event with an exciting programme which aims to provide up-to-date practical information and guidance relating to every stage of the Oxford application process, from reference writing and supporting personal statements, to admissions tests and interviews. The event is entirely free, including accommodation on the night of 15th December, lunch and dinner in their fifteenth-century hall, and a networking drinks reception. We are also pleased to be able to offer travel reimbursements of up to £65 per person for those travelling from outside Oxford.



**When:** 16:00 on Tuesday 15th December, to 17:00 on Wednesday 16th December 2026

**Who:** Teachers, or leaders with responsibility for progression, working in UK state schools.

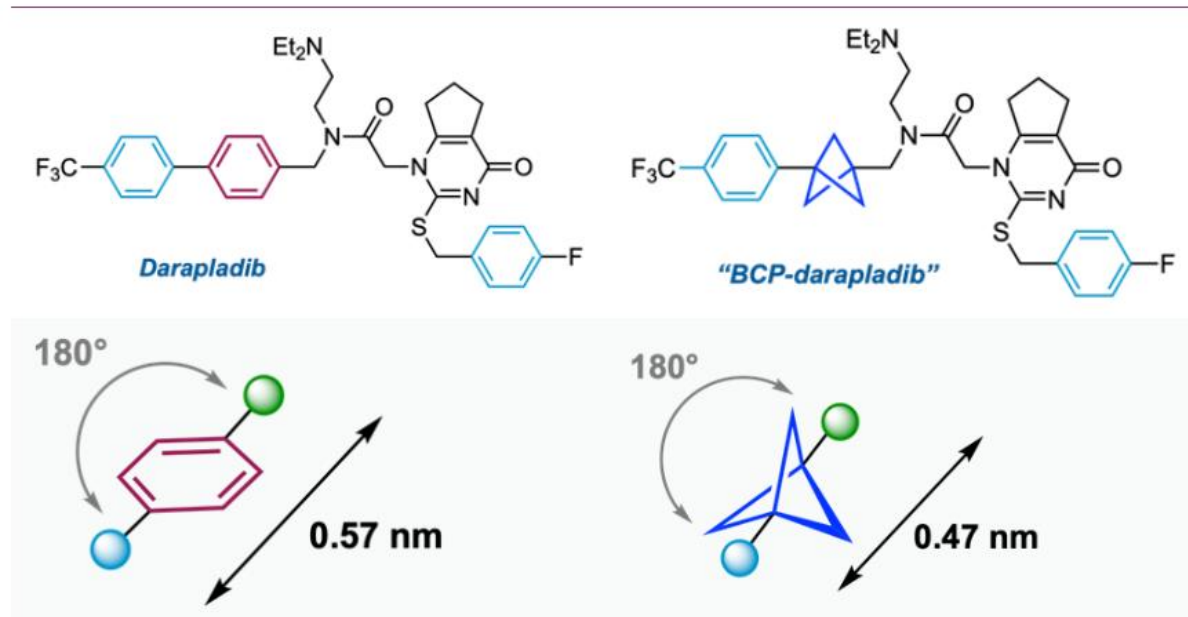
**How:** Please register your interest in attending the conference [here](#). Someone from their team will follow up with you directly in October.

## Learning Resource:

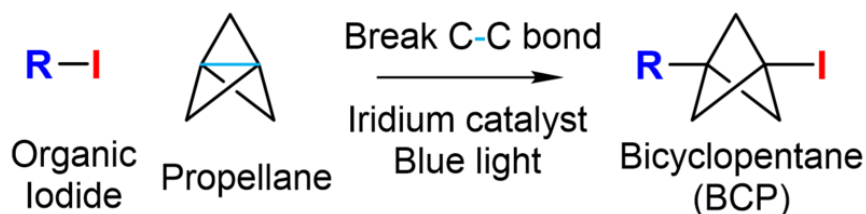
### Constructing chemistry's missing pieces with light [NEW]

Chemists sometimes need to find a very specific molecular "piece" to build medicines and other useful chemicals, much like searching for a missing part when assembling flatpack furniture. Bicyclopentanes (BCPs) are one example of a useful but difficult-to-make building block. Their rigid, three-dimensional shape can improve the properties of medicines by replacing flat benzene rings. For example, replacing the benzene unit with a BCP, making the new version a better drug candidate. However, BCPs are difficult to make because their fused rings of carbon atoms that make up BCPs create a very congested structure.

## BCPs in the real-world



Researchers at the University of Oxford developed a light-powered strategy to assemble these knotty molecules, creating a new and shorter route to reach valuable drug compounds such as darapladib. Beginning from the super-strained starting material propellane and an organic iodide partner, the new reaction relies on a technique called photoredox catalysis.



Read more [here](https://doi.org/10.1021/acscatal.9b03190). This is Research Companion 001, part of *Compounds of Interest*, an Oxford Chemistry series exploring our research. Read the research paper behind this article: <https://doi.org/10.1021/acscatal.9b03190>