

Electrochem09 was held in the University of Manchester on the 16th and 17th of September 2009. The campus is conveniently situated in the heart of the city centre, a short walking distance from the main train station. This year, the conference was held in conjunction with the 50th Corrosion Science Symposium and attendance was very good, with almost 250 delegates attending from all around the world. Professor Reginald Penner of the University of California began the proceedings when he delivered his plenary lecture on electrodeposited palladium nanowires for hydrogen gas sensing. This was a fascinating overview of the technology and the technological challenges that must be overcome in order to meet the U.S. DOE benchmark. His delivery of the subject matter was highly accessible and insightful to the audience with a lot of interesting STM images of hydrogen fracturing palladium nanowires.

The Clean Energy, Organic Materials in Electrochemistry, Electrodeposition and Electroanalysis symposia began immediately after Prof. Penner's lecture, so delegates were spoiled for choice. The lecture rooms in which they were held were situated above each other which facilitated easy transfers between lectures for the delegates. I chose to attend the Clean Energy Symposium which was a very good decision on my part. Professor Tim Jones of University of Warwick presented a fascinating lecture on the performance and efficiency of small organic molecule solar cells. The main advantage of these cells is that they are inexpensive to fabricate. He is of the opinion that although organic solar cells exhibit low power output in comparison to first generation solar cells, these cells could be used in tandem to increase the power output. Professor Nigel Brandon of Imperial College, who heads the EPSRC funded SUPERGEN fuel cell consortium, delivered the next keynote lecture outlining phase II of the programme. The focus of Phase II is to study the degradation mechanism of fuel cells components with the aim of increasing the operational lifetime of fuel cells. The poster session was held in the evening in which a wide range of posters were presented covering topics such as materials for fuel cell catalysis, corrosion modelling studies, new electrochemical characterisation techniques and enzyme biosensors. The poster session was well attended by most of the delegates as evident from the packed exhibition room. The wide range of topics presented reflected the multidisciplinary nature of electrochemistry. I even found myself having a discussion on energy conversion by enzymes with a biologist!

The second day of the conference saw the presentation of the Evans Medal to Professor Christofer Leygraf of the Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. His plenary lecture on atmospheric corrosion showed that it is possible to develop a molecular understanding of atmospheric corrosion. However, there is still much more groundwork that needs to be done. Professor Tony Wragg of the University of Exeter, who is this year's recipient the Castner Medal, delivered the second plenary lecture in the afternoon session. He chose to deliver the lecture using a reliable, rather old-school overhead projector which impressed the audience immensely! His lecture showed the importance of understanding fluid mechanics when studying electrochemical systems. The symposia on the second day had themes of Clean Energy, Electrochemistry under Non-Conventional Conditions, Materials Degradation, Organic Materials in Electrochemistry and Environmental Electrochemistry. Again, I stuck with my earlier choice of Clean Energy although I did wish I could have attended some of the other themes.

The second day of the Clean Energy symposium focused on fuel cells, in which I had the privilege of presenting my own work in one of the slots. As a graduate student, I found Electrochem 09 was a great way to meet other students and academics working the electrochemistry. The symposia held had a good range of electrochemistry topics. However, in some of the lectures, the presenters went over their given time slot which disrupted the timing of the schedule and made it slightly difficult to move from one talk to another. Perhaps in future, symposia chairs should be stricter with speakers who run over time. On the behalf on all the delegates, I would like to thank the organisers and the RSC for a very well organised and informative conference and I look forward to next year's meeting.

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