Third *Biochemical Journal* Symposium

London calling

Pauline Starley (Head of the Editorial Department)

Michael Murphy, an Editorial Board member, giving his talk

On 21 March, we held a one-day symposium on 'Human Therapeutics: Where Biology Meets Chemistry' in London. This meeting on the use of chemical biology to foster drug discovery in academia was the third in a series of *Biochemical Journal*-sponsored symposia focusing on key cellular and molecular topics aligned with the expertise of the Journal's Editorial Board members, the previous two having been held in San Diego and Beijing.

The programme was chaired by Peter Parker (London) and Dame Janet Thornton (Hinxton) and featured speakers from the Journal's internationally renowned Editorial Board and eminent guest speakers from institutes in the UK. The morning session had a distinct signalling theme: Peter Shepherd (Auckland) reported work on novel catalytic-site inhibitors of PI3Ks (phosphoinositide 3-kinases), Dario Alessi (Dundee) discussed how chemical probes are being used to disrupt signalling pathways, Julian Downward (London) outlined developments in targeting the Ras oncogene, Bart Vanhaesebroeck (London) looked at the therapeutic potential of PI3K inhibitors in chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, Nicholas Tonks (Cold Spring Harbor) illustrated how the structure and function of PTP1β (protein tyrosine phosphatase 1β) has led to new approaches in the development of small-molecule drug candidates targeting this enzyme, and Richard Marais (Manchester) highlighted the latest research on BRAF and RAS signalling in melanoma. In the afternoon, a varied programme, which was oriented more towards applications of chemistry in therapeutic interventions, saw Jon Sayers (Sheffield) report on

Dame Janet Thornton introduces the afternoon session

engineered cytokines with superior pharmacokinetic properties, Rod Hubbard (York) discuss developments in fragment-based lead discovery, Barry Potter (Bath) speak on steroid sulfatase/aromatase inhibition as a strategy for treating hormone-dependent tumours, Paul Workman (London) discuss the molecular chaperone HSP90 (heat-shock protein 90) as a drug target, Ming-Wei Wang (Shanghai) discuss his work on class B family G-protein-coupled receptor drug discovery and his ongoing search for a truly 'druggable' small-molecule GLP-1R (glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor) agonist by means of structural biology, and Michael Murphy (Cambridge) describe his work on the use of mitochondrially targeted antioxidants to treat mitochondrial diseases.

The symposium was followed by a drinks reception where, as reported in the CEO Viewpoint in the April issue, the Society's position statement on "Biochemistry Skills Needed for Drug Discovery" was introduced.

The following day, the *Biochemical Journal* Editorial Board held their annual Editorial Board meeting. ■

Read more about our position statement on pp. 48–49.
See more photos at http://bit.ly/1eYW3GQ

Ming-Wei Wang, one of the Editorial Board speakers, expands on a point during the reception following the Symposium

Staff news: farewells

Alison McWhinnie has left the Biochemical Society after 21 years of service. Alison played an instrumental role in setting up Charles Darwin House and the conference centre and more recently has been involved in the work of the Implementation Working Group, which managed the transition of Portland Customer Services from Colchester to London.

Amy Cox, our Communications Manager, has also left the Society to take up a new role as Communications Marketing Project Manager (Policy and Education) at the Wellcome Trust. Amy joined us straight after graduating as Administrator to the Executive Team before moving on to support Chris Kirk as his PA.

We thank Alison and Amy for their hard work over the years and wish them well for the future. ■