

## Annual Congress of the British Toxicology Society

*(This article has also been submitted for publication in the IUTOX Newsletter)*

The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of the British Toxicology Society (BTS) took place in Newcastle, 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 with a rich and varied scientific programme and outstanding speakers. The spacious and well-appointed conference facility in the Gateshead Hilton Hotel proved popular with the 260 delegates in attendance.

The full programme of the Congress can be seen here <http://www.thebts.org/bts-annual-congress-2018/>.

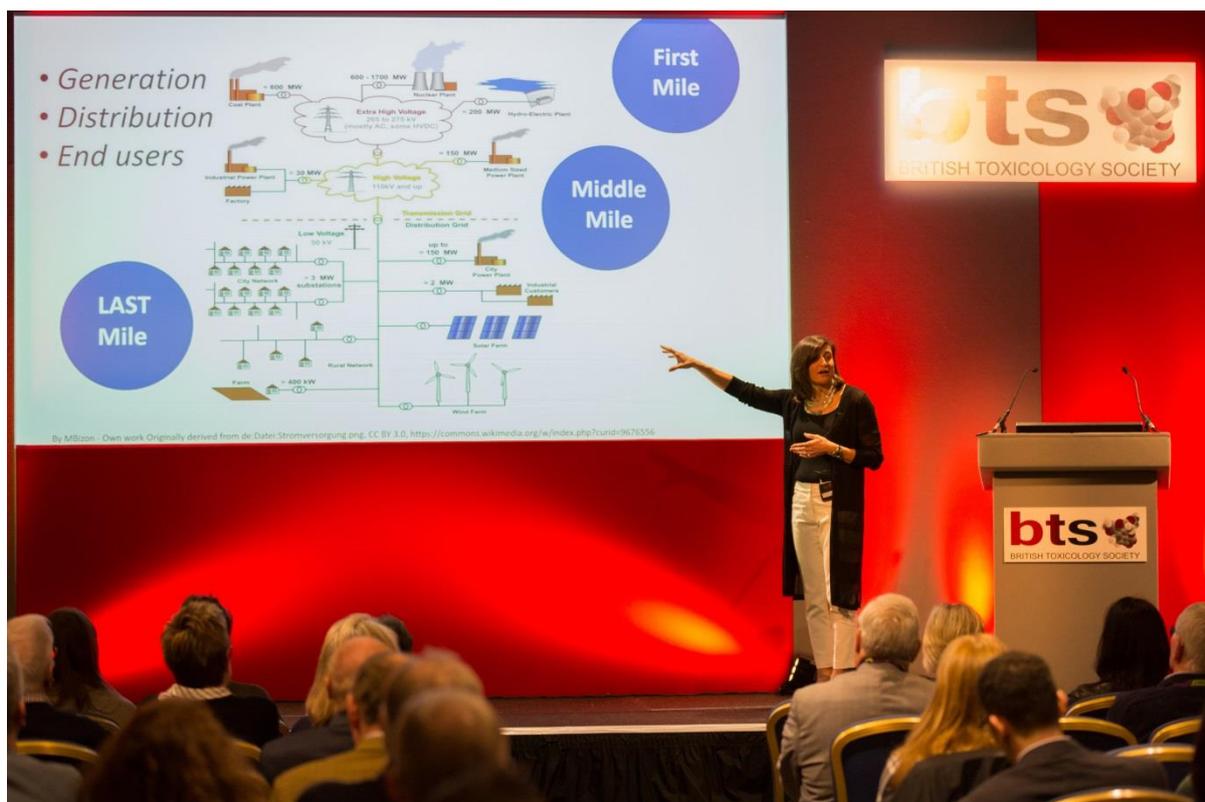
At the Annual General Meeting held during the congress the following leadership positions were confirmed;

Dr Chris Powell (GSK) as the next President of the BTS,  
Prof Shirley Price (University of Surrey) as Vice President,  
Dr Elizabeth Martin (Astra Zeneca), re-elected as Treasurer,  
Dr Jason Gill (Newcastle University) as Chair of the Scientific Subcommittee,  
Prof Paul Baldrick (Covance) re-appointed as Chair of the Communication Subcommittee,  
Dr Emma Marczylo (Public Health England) and Dr David Mason (Unilever) as members of Executive Committee.

Biographies of the Officers and Members of Executive Committee are available here <http://www.thebts.org/information/bts-committee/executive-committee/> .

The Congress was preceded by a Continuing Education Programme “Immuno-oncology – safety assessment strategies”

The Congress was opened by the President, Dr Ernie Harpur, who then introduced Ms Syril Pettit, the Executive Director of the Health and Environmental Sciences Institute based in Washington DC, who delivered a thought provoking plenary lecture “The science and art of implementation: Collaboration, Communication and caution”.



Syril Pettit delivers her plenary lecture at the BTS congress

Attendees were able to choose from a number of symposia which were paired to run in parallel: *“Liver disease and environmental causes of liver disease”*, *“Respiratory toxicity and lung pathology”*, *“Advanced in vitro models for inhalation toxicity testing”*, *“Ageing, Frailty and Multi-morbidity: medical challenges, current interventions, future solutions”*, *“Redox and oxidative stress”* and *“Stem cells and toxicology testing”*.

Two BTS Prize Lectures were also included in the programme.

The Early Career Investigator Prize was awarded to Dr Ian Copple, an outstanding young scientist from Liverpool University who delivered an impressive, broad-ranging lecture on the *“Role of Nrf2 in protection against drug-induced disease”*.



### Dr Ian Cople receives his Early Career Investigator Prize from Prof Tim Gant

This year's Paton Prize, awarded biennially to encourage scholarship in the historical aspects of toxicology, was awarded to a former President of the BTS and someone with an international reputation for his scientific contributions and leadership in toxicology and risk assessment, Professor Lewis Smith. Professor Smith delivered a wonderfully insightful and entertaining lecture "*The Importance of Balance in Toxicological Decision Making*". The challenging ideas Prof Smith advanced were illustrated with detail from high profile scientific case studies. Young and old alike gave rapt attention to the wise counsel imparted by Prof Smith.



Prof Lewis Smith, winner of the Paton prize, is presented with a commemorative certificate by the BTS president, Dr Ernie Harpur

Opportunity for active participation and presentation of science came in a number of forms: The Study Director/Study Monitor workshop which continues to provide a great forum to exchange ideas between scientists. There were also oral communication sessions encompassing talks on a range of organ systems, animal and *in vitro* models and investigative techniques. Posters were on display throughout the congress, with a lively discussion session.



Twelve student members of the BTS were awarded bursaries to enable them to attend and present their work

The calibre of science presented in Oral Communications and Posters was very high across the board. Research excellence was once again celebrated through award of several highly competitive awards for presentations made at the Congress. The BTS student poster prize and student oral communication prizes were awarded to Louis Bibby and Arathi Kizedath from Newcastle University for work on '*Predicting adverse immune reactions to biologics*' and work on '*Hepatotoxic and dermal toxicity effects of Parabens*', respectively. An award from the *In Vitro* Toxicology Society for the best poster developing or using *in vitro* methods was awarded to Dr Chichagova from Newcastle University and Newcells Biotech for her work on '*Use of statistical models to identify key variables for retinal organoid generation for toxicological studies*', and the Royal Society of Chemistry poster prize for chemical toxicology was awarded to Nathan Goldsmith for his work '*The presence of tobacco specific nitrosamines in the urine and saliva of cigarette users transitioning to electronic cigarettes*'.

On the final afternoon of the Congress attendees enjoyed a wonderfully crafted and highly informative Hot Topic lecture on "*Challenges in the Assessment of Nonclinical Pharmacology and Safety of mAb-based Immuno-Oncology Products*" presented by Dr Lolke de Hann, Senior Director R&D, MedImmune, Cambridge UK.

The congress closed with an interactive Workshop on Public Communication which provided an opportunity for members to offer opinions to help shape and influence the way in which the Society responds to matters of public interest.

As always at BTS Congresses, the convivial atmosphere of the Congress was enhanced by a number of opportunities to socialise; coffee and meal breaks among the Exhibitor stands, the Early Career Networking Quiz, BTS Speciality Section gatherings, BTS Ambassadors breakfast, a couple of drinks receptions and, of course, the conference gala dinner.

### Some future BTS events for your calendars

- **Practical Application of Toxicology in Drug Development. Registration for this course co-organised by the BTS with ACT, now in its fifth year, is open.** For more information, or to register, please visit <https://mailchi.mp/de39e84b266e/patdd-2018-registration-now-open>
- **RSC/BTS/BSAC meeting - Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance, 17 September 2018 09:30-16:30, London, United Kingdom** Registration and meeting details can be accessed here <http://www.rsc.org/events/detail/31808/tackling-antimicrobial-resistance>
- **The 40th anniversary BTS Congress (joint meeting with UK Environmental Mutagen Society) 15th to 17th April 2019, Robinson College, Cambridge UK.** Further details will be announced on the BTS website.