



For more than ten years the AAB Virology Group has been running a series of Advances in Plant Virology conferences that recently have alternated between a UK-based meeting and an overseas conference. Our most recent meeting was held in Dublin from 28th to 30th March where on the first day we joined with the Society for General Microbiology at the Dublin Convention Centre to organize a plant virology workshop. After this we moved to the nearby Pearse Hotel for an additional day and half of AAB-sponsored plant virology talks. We greatly value our association with the SGM, which allows us to spread the word about plant viruses to a wider audience and also to attract additional Internationally-recognised speakers to our meetings.

We invited four speakers to give presentations at the meeting: These were Dr Jozsef Burgyan (Director General, Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, Godollo, Hungary) who spoke about mechanisms of RNA silencing in plant:virus interactions, Dr Veronique Brault (INRA Colmar, France) who discussed the molecular aspects of polerovirus recognition and transmission by aphids, Dr John Carr (Department of Plant Sciences, Cambridge

Sylvaine Boissinot won the Student Competition prize for her platform paper titled 'The minor capsid protein of Cucurbit aphid borne yellows virus: Formation, incorporation into virions and role in virus movement' and Umar Mohammed for his poster 'Developing methods to eliminate Cassava brown streak viruses from infected cassava varieties' (shown below). We would like to thank Roger Hull and Bryan Harrison for presenting these prizes at the conference

University) who discussed the mechanisms behind the manipulation of aphid transmission behaviour by the CMV 2b silencing suppressor protein, and by Professor Christina Wege (Stuttgart University, Germany) who described her experiments to use the TMV particle and its component parts as tools for nanotechnology. We also heard an additional 32 talks, presented by a mixture of PhD students and more experienced researchers, on a range of plant virus-related subjects encompassing fundamental molecular and biological aspects of virus infection, virus resistance, detection methods, epidemiology and transmission by vectors, and uses of viruses for biotechnology.

Nearly half of the participants came from UK laboratories, with the other delegates travelling from nine European countries, Israel, the USA and Australia. Our long term plan is to increase our visibility outside of the UK, to encourage more international delegates to attend our conferences, and to make stronger links with Virological Societies from other countries. Despite the large number of talks the conference atmosphere was very relaxed, and we had ample opportunities between and after the work sessions and during the conference dinner on the Thursday evening to meet and socialise with other participants. All the participants that I spoke with told me that they enjoyed this meeting and were looking forward to our next Advances in Plant Virology conference.

- Stuart MacFarlane, Virology Group

