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Chemistry was the subject of the 63rd Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting this summer, and there was no doubting the human chemistry on the tiny German island of Lindau. Participants were absorbed by the lectures and engaged in effervescent conversation in the atrium, with interactions catalysed by ancillary events.

Many of the 34 Nobel laureates were making their second, third or umpteenth visit to the annual gathering, eager to be challenged by the young minds in attendance and inspired by the beautiful emerald-green waters of Lake Constance that surround Lindau. This year there was a non-scientific laureate in their number: José Ramos-Horta, joint recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize. Although peace prizewinners have attended the meeting before, this was the first time for the former Prime Minister of East Timor. This was also the first visit for Brian Kobilka, one of the newest laureates. Kobilka gave the opening lecture on G-protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs), which are the target of around a third of all pharmaceuticals. His work in determining the first GPCR structures should have big implications for future drug development (S50).

For the 625 young researchers at Lindau, this was a rare chance to rub shoulders with the scientific elite: to learn from, debate with and be inspired by their stories. The Nature Video team set up four debates between laureates and students, one of which — on the topic of biofuels — is continued in this Outlook (S60).

Finally, we have Q&As with five of the chemistry Nobel laureates (beginning on S53). This year the interviews were conducted and written by young researchers.

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Michelle Grayson

Senior Editor, Supplements

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