

5th Heron Island Conference on Reactive Intermediates and Unusual Molecules

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The 5th Heron Island Conference on Reactive Intermediates and Unusual Molecules: Synthesis and Mechanism (Heron5), organized by the authors, took place on Heron Island (Fig. 1), the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, Australia, July 10–16, 2010.^[1] Heron Island is a small coral cay on the Tropic of Capricorn, 72 km north-east of Gladstone and 600 km north of Brisbane. It is a place of great tranquillity and natural beauty. These Heron Island Conferences have been taking place since 1991 and enjoy an excellent reputation as a vibrant forum for presentation and discussion of frontline research covering a wide area from organic synthesis to reaction mechanism to computational chemistry and materials science. The Heron5 conference followed the tradition of the previous, highly acclaimed events, hosting ~80 outstanding scientists from Europe, North America, the Asia–Pacific region and Australasia. Scientific sessions in the mornings and evenings with afternoons free for social and reef activities are a tradition for these conferences. This arrangement has fostered extensive discussion and several new international collaborations across chemistry disciplines.

This issue of *Aust. J. Chem.* captures the flavour of the meeting by publishing 15 papers covering gold catalysis in organic synthesis,^[2] corannulene-based curved π -radicals,^[3] formation of 1,3-diradicals from bicyclic azo compounds,^[4] electron spin resonance spectroscopy of α ,n-didehydrotoluene diradicals,^[5] allene-carbene conversion in the thioxanthene series,^[6] nitrene and free radical intermediates from

azidomethylacetophenones,^[7] σ -hole binding,^[8] synthesis and reactions of cyclobutenimines,^[9] development of methodology for natural product synthesis,^[10] organic-inorganic composite nanoscale materials,^[11] matrix isolation of nitrile sulfides,^[12] unusual thioketenes and extended cumulenes,^[13] mixed cyclophanes,^[14] photoelectron spectroscopy of short-lived molecules containing Ge and As,^[15] and the HERON reaction (*H*eteroatom *r*earrangements *o*n *n*itrogen) of *N*-acyloxy-*N*-alkoxyamides.^[16] We are pleased to acknowledge Dr Brett Schwartz for designing the cover art.

The next Heron Island Conference in this series is being planned for July 2013.^[1]

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Fig. 1. Heron Island. Photo: Curt Wentrup.