A molecule's eye view of water at interfaces

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Water is not easy to freeze! The homogeneous freezing point of pure water is some 30-40 degrees below zero. Invariably then when water freezes it does so heterogeneously on the surface of some foreign particle. In this talk I will discuss our recent first principles simulations of such heterogeneous ice nucleation events on a variety of solid surfaces. I will show how the subtle interplay of bonding within the overlayers and to the substrate conspires to yield a rich variety of structures, including even ice structures built from pentagons. I will also show how surprisingly strong quantum nuclear effects can lead to hydrogen bond symmetrisation in certain ice overlayers on metal surfaces [1-5].

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- 3. H. Gawronski et al. Phys. Rev. Lett. 101, 136102 (2008)
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- 5. X.-Z. Li et al. Phys. Rev. Lett. 104, 066102 (2010)