Who's a pretty boy, then?
How parrots produce such brilliant colours.

Parrots, which evolved some 30 million years ago, have always been big on bright colour. One theory is that their brilliant plumage, which ranges from ultraviolet to red, indicates the birds' healthiness, as well as helping to attract mates.

Kevin McGraw from Arizona State University has now discovered what causes the fiery red colours by analysing their feathers using liquid chromatography. In addition, he took blood samples at the point when the 44 different species of parrot in his experiment were forming their plumage. The pigment comes from five different types of psittacofulvins, a fatty organic compound. As none were present in the blood, Dr McGraw concluded in his paper published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B Online Biology Letters: (10.1098/rsbl.2004.0269) that the parrots manufactured the pigments as opposed to injecting them.

As even the earliest-known parrot species produced psittacofulvins, it must be an evolutionary ancient way of looking good. Most parrots exhibit much less variation in colour between sexes than other birds whose plumage is used in sexual selection, so it's likely that parrots use red colours more for locating individuals and species recognition. Sanjida O'Connell