



Minutes of meeting of EuCheMS' Working Party on History of Chemistry Sopron, August 4, 2009

Chairman: Ernst Homburg

Participant members: José Ramón Bertomeu Sánchez (bertomeu@uv.es); Gisela Boeck (gisela.boeck@uni-rostock.de); Duncan T. Burns (profburns@chemistry.fsbusiness.co.uk); Luigi Cerruti (luigi.cerruti@unito.it); Danielle Fauque (danielle.fauque@u-psud.fr); Ernst Homburg (e.homburg@history.unimaas.nl); Anders Lundgren (anders.lundgren@idehist.uu.se); Annette Lykknes (Annette.Lykknes@chem.ntnu.no); Peter Morris (peter.morris@nmsi.ac.uk); Birute Railiene (railiene@mab.lt); Carsten Reinhardt (carsten.reinhardt@uni-bielefeld.de); Soňa Strbáňová (sonast@atlas.cz); Pieter Thyssen (Pieterthyssen@gmail.com); Eva Vamos (vamos.eva@chello.hu); Brigitte Van Tiggelen (vantiggelen@memosciences.be); Elena Zaitseva (baumzai@mail.ru).
Associated member: Masanori Kaji (mkaji@bekkoame.ne.jp).

Referee: Annette Lykknes and Ernst Homburg

Agenda (distributed by E-mail prior to the meeting):

- 1. Opening, and Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes of second last General Meeting, Friday 31 August 2007, Leuven, Belgium**
- 3. News and reports**
- 4. Election of New Chairperson of the Working Party**
- 5. 7th International Conference on the History of Chemistry, 2 - 5 August 2009, Sopron, Hungary**
- 6. Venue and organization of the 8th International Conference on the History of Chemistry, 2011**
- 7. Offer to organize a Meeting at Istanbul in 2010**
- 8. Membership of the Working Party**
- 9. Date of the Next General Meeting**
- 10. Any Other Business**

1. Opening, and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Ana Simoes, Roman Mierzecki, Mudis Salkauskas, Bjørn Pedersen, Marco Beretta, Halina Lichočka, Laurence Lestel, Bernard Mahieu and Ana Carneiro

2. Minutes of second last General Meeting, Friday 9 September Estoril and Minutes of last General Meeting, Sunday 3 September 2006, Gödöllő

There were no remarks to the minutes.

3. News and reports

(a) The book on the European Chemical Societies, resulting from our Lisbon-Estoril conference and edited by Anita Kildebæk Nielsen and Soňa Strbáňová, has been published by the Royal Society of Chemistry: *Creating Networks in Chemistry. The Founding and Early History of Chemical Societies in Europe*, RSC Publishing, Cambridge, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-85404-279-1.

(b) The proceedings of our Leuven conference have been published: *The 6th International Conference on the History of Chemistry: "Neighbours and Territories: The Evolving Identity of Chemistry."* *Proceedings*. Edited by José Ramón Bertomeu-Sánchez, Duncan Thorburn Burns, and Brigitte Van Tiggelen. Pp. 752, illus. Louvain-la-Neuve: Mémosciences, 2008. ISBN: 978-2-9600815-0-3. (Chapters of) the Proceedings can be downloaded at <http://www.euchems.org/Divisions/History/EIC.asp>. To obtain a copy, please contact Brigitte Van Tiggelen: vantiggelen@memosciences.be.

(c) On Friday 23 October 2009 the Historical Group of the Royal Society of Chemistry organises a one-day meeting on *Chemistry and the Law*, in London. For information, contact Peter Reed: Peter@peterreed.plus.com. Or: <http://www.rsc.org/Membership/Networking/InterestGroups/Historical/index.asp>

(d) On Wednesday 18 November 2009 the Historical Groups of the French Chemical Society SCF and the Walloon Chemical Society SRdC organize a symposium on *contacts between French and Belgium chemists* during the 19th and 20th centuries. It will be held at the 250 rue Saint-Jacques, Paris 5e. For more information you can contact Danielle Fauque (danielle.fauque@u-psud.fr) for France and Brigitte van Tiggelen (vantiggelen@memosciences.be) for Belgium.

(e) On Thursday 19 November and Friday 20 November our French colleagues organize a symposium at Orsay on: *Réorganiser la chimie au sortir de la Grande Guerre (1918-1927)*. For information, contact Danielle Fauque: danielle.fauque@u-psud.fr.

(f) On the Saturday 21 November 2009 the Historical Groups of the Flemish Chemical Society KVCV and of the Dutch Chemical Society KNVC organise a joint symposium on the *history of brewing* at Leuven, Belgium, under the title 'Leven in de Brouwerij.' For more information, see: <http://www.chemieencultuur.be/r/default.asp?iID=JFFKED&item=KFLMGK#KFLMGK> or <http://www.knvc.nl/leven-in-de-brouwerij!.4.9431.lynkx>.

(g) In March 2010, the Historical Group of the Royal Society of Chemistry organizes a meeting on *The Rise and Fall of ICI*. For information, contact Jack Betteridge: jack@eelpie.org.uk.

(h) On 19 November 2010 the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry will celebrate the 75th anniversary of SHAC, 2010 with a conference. For information, contact Georgette Taylor: g.taylor@ucl.ac.uk. See also: http://www.ambix.org/SHAC_Forthcoming_Events.htm

(i) From 25 to 28 November 2009 the Historical Groups of the Russian Chemical Society and of the Chemical Faculty of Moscow University organize the conference: 'Chemistry and Society: Facets of Cooperation: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.' For information contact Elena Zaitseva, baumzai@mail.ru or himfak80@mail.ru (see also <http://www.chem.msu.su/rus/events/himfak-80/konf2009.html>).

(j) Soňa Strbáňová informed on a new initiative within the history of chemistry community, on the history of the reception of the periodic system in different countries. A symposium dedicated to this topic was organized by Masanori Kaji and held during this conference. Follow-up symposia/workshops will be organized most probably during the STEP (Science and Technology in the European Periphery) meeting in Galway, Ireland, June 2010, and during the ESHS (European Society for the History of Science) meeting in Barcelona in November 2010. The eventual outcome of the project will be a collective volume.

4. Election of New Chairperson of the Working Party

After having served for two terms, 2003-2006 and 2006-2009 as WP-chairman, Ernst Homburg has decided to step down, starting 1 September 2009. Professor Carsten Reinhardt of the University of Bielefeld was proposed as a candidate for the chairpersonship for the 2009-2012 period. Reinhardt has published mainly on the history of chemistry and chemical industry in the 19th and 20th centuries. He has served on the board of the Commission on the History of Modern Chemistry of the International Union for History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS-DHST). In addition, he is chairman of the history of chemistry division of the German Chemical Society (GDCh).

Luigi Cerruti emphasized that Carstein Reinhardt is a specialist in late 20th century chemistry, and welcomed his candidature.

No other candidates were proposed for the position as chair of the Working Party. Carsten Reinhardt was elected by acclamation.

Reinhardt thanked the members of the Working Party for their support and trust in him. He expressed the wish to continue to expand the Working Party/History of Chemistry community along the path already laid by the members, to make it a truly international organization. Furthermore, suggestions for the future work of the Working Party were put forward by the new chairman:

- To set up an abstract service in the history of chemistry in Europe, providing information on new publications in other languages than English. Reinhardt suggested that all members of the

Working Party should announce interesting books and articles in their own language and provide a short abstract in English.

- To plan conferences well in advance. Reinhardt proposed that the Working Party thinks about themes and topics from early on.
- To expand the contacts and activities of the WP to Latin America and Asia.
- To try to get more members from Southern and Eastern Europe in the WP.

Reinhardt urged the members to contribute their suggestions on future work and activities.

Comments by members of the Working Party:

- Duncan Burns: An abstract service or small database on books and articles in foreign languages will be useful.
- Ernst Homburg: Such a service is important to distribute local books that would otherwise remain unknown to us. He emphasized that the French chemical society regularly sends their information.
- Carsten Reinhardt: We do have the HSS database and SciFinder, but these are very expensive databases which many institutions cannot afford. An abstract service within our community, freely accessible on the web, will be very helpful.

5. 7th International Conference on the History of Chemistry, 2 - 5 August 2009, Sopron, Hungary

The Chairman of the Programme Committee, Peter Morris, and the Chairwoman of the Local Committee, Eva Vámos, briefly reported on their experiences from the current conference. After their reports, other members of the Working Party had the chance to add their comments.

Comments by Peter Morris: He was pleased with the work of the committee. Two papers were withdrawn; the rest of the programme was kept as planned. Morris had two recommendations for the next meeting:

- The division of work between the local committee and the programme committee could have been clearer, with a timetable indicating who should do what, and when.
- Proponents of panel sessions should contact the programme chair at an early stage, before they invite people to join the panel.

Comments by Éva Vámos: She was happy that many people participated both in the Budapest and Sopron conferences. Also, she feared that people would not have financial support because of the economic crisis, but as it turned out, fortunately, they did.

- There was a lot of correspondence about logistics before the conference, but eventually everything worked out fine.
- The scientific committee did a wonderful job. Peter Morris worked hard and secured quality.
- Vámos suggested that the new president and the chairman of the programme committee would meet at least once on the spot, in order to discuss all kinds of details with the local committee.

- This time there had been no second circular, in order to avoid printing costs, but for the future sending an electronic second circular was recommended.
- The proceedings of the conference will appear electronically on the WP website, but possibly on paper as well.

Comments by other members of the Working Party:

- Ernst Homburg: Many participants wanted more information on the logistics. As for the proceedings, having three editors worked well previously and we should try to do this again. A possible deadline for contributions to the proceedings could be during October.
- Brigitte Van Tiggelen: The costs of the shipping of the proceedings must be taken into account; this was more expensive than anticipated. Editing the proceedings was an enjoyable experience, the three editors worked well together. The editors were listed in alphabetical order.
- Duncan Burns: We who edited the proceedings accepted two different reference styles. A coherent style is fine, but we preferred to correct the English.
- Brigitte Van Tiggelen: The poster sessions were discussed during our last general meeting, e.g. that we allow time for short presentations during special poster sessions in order to attract attention to them and make the authors visible. This practice is common in other circles. But this was not taken into account in the planning of this meeting.

6. Venue and organization of the 8th International Conference on the History of Chemistry, 2011

After our last meeting, four country groups have been so kind to offer to organize the next International Conference on the History of Chemistry: France (at Orsay), Germany (at Rostock), Greece (at Ioannina) and Lithuania (at Vilnius). During October 2008 the four proposals were circulated among the WP members and a voting took place which made clear that the French and the German offers received the largest support.

Danielle Fauque presented shortly the proposal to organize the next meeting in Orsay and Paris. 2011 marks the centenary of Marie Curie's Nobel prize in chemistry, which created much goodwill for such a conference in France. A grant of €10.000 would be supplied by the French chemical society. There was also support by the Maison de la Chimie and the Ecole Supérieur de Chimie et Physique de Paris. The preferred date was May 2011.

Gisela Boeck presented shortly the proposal to organize the next meeting at Rostock University, Germany. The meeting can be arranged to partly overlap with the annual meeting of the history of chemistry division of the German Chemical Society (GDCh). Preferred dates were 22-26 March 2011, or 27 September – 1 October 2011.

Questions concerning the size of the conference fee, what it includes, location of the venue, transportation, theme and possible dates were posed to both proponents. Fees mentioned were in the order of €140-€170.

In the end the chairman asked the members of the WP to vote for one of the two alternatives. Rostock received 8 votes, Paris/Orsay 6. *Conclusion: The next conference will be organized in Rostock, Germany.*

As for the dates, it is possible to organize the meeting in Rostock in March or September. A tentative vote by show of hands revealed a preference to the September option. The final decision will be made on a later occasion.

Peter Morris volunteered to continue as Chairman of the Programme Committee (PC). He was elected by acclamation. The PC will decide on the topic, but members are invited to send their ideas to the chairman of the PC.

7. Offer to organize a Meeting at Istanbul in 2010.

Mehmet Mahramanlioglu of the Turkish Chemical Society has offered to organize a conference on the history of chemistry in Istanbul in 2010, during which year Istanbul is European Capital of Culture. Mahramanlioglu has been advised to contact our Turkish members. As no further news had arrived by the time of our general meeting, a decision is postponed pending a more detailed proposal.

8. Membership of the Working Party

In January 2009 and June 2009 emails were sent to all member chemical societies of EuCheMS in which they were asked to submit two names of representatives of their societies in the Working Party on History of Chemistry. Official replies have arrived from the Swedish, German, Pancyprian, Flemish, Danish, Dutch, Walloon, French, Hungarian, Spanish, Norwegian and Portuguese chemical societies (EH: undated till 1 September 2009).

Comment from Éva Vámos: In order to include chemical societies from further countries, it is advisable to send a formal letter to the societies instead of an email.

9. Date of the Next General Meeting

There was no time to discuss this issue. Most probably the next General Meeting will take place in Rostock, Germany during the 8th International Conference on the History of Chemistry.

10. Any Other Business

The chairman proposed to award a lifelong, honorary membership of the Working Party to Professor Éva Vámos, in view of all the work she has done for the Working Party during a period of more than twenty years. Everybody agreed and Eva Vámos was elected by acclamation.