

Minutes of meeting of FECS' Working Party of History of Chemistry Budapest, September 6 2003

Chairman: Ernst Homburg
Participants: ??
Referee: Anita Kildebæk Nielsen

Agenda

- 1) Future of the Working Party (WP)
- 2) Future meetings

Ad. 1)

After thanking his predecessor, Hendrik Deelstra, for his excellent work in chairing the WP for more than 10 years, the chairman reminded the participants that the national representatives of WP are appointed by the National Chemical Societies, preferably after consultation of the Historical Groups of these societies (if such exist). In most cases the national representatives are the chairpersons of the national chemical Historical Groups. The functions of these national representatives are:

- a) to act as link between the WP and the national historical groups and thus to disseminate knowledge of historical chemical activities in the European countries,
- b) to send an annual report to WP's chairman of the activities of the national historical groups.

Thus the aims of the WP are to

- stimulate studies of history of chemistry,
- stimulate interest in the history of chemistry, especially among chemists,
- facilitate communication between historians of chemistry, and
- improve the public understanding of chemistry.

The chairman gave four options of how to obtain these aims on a European basis in the future:

- 1) continue the WP within FECS as hitherto,
- 2) form a European Society for History of Chemistry,
- 3) establish formal connections to the new European Society for History of Science (to be established October this year. The preliminary rules of the society were distributed among the participants), or
- 4) make a combination of the first three possibilities.

As a result of the discussion it was agreed to stay within FECS. The chairman should make contact to the European Society for History of Science once formed to investigate how the WP can also link to the European historians of science.

The following countries have national representatives in the WP:

Albania, Austria, Belgium (2 societies) , Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain (2 societies), Sweden, and Turkey.

Please inform the chairman of changes so the mailing list can always be up to date.

The chairman will approach the chemical societies in the rest of the Europe to have them appoint delegates too.

Furthermore it was agreed to have two national representatives from each country as to secure continuity. Preferably one of the delegates should be the chairman of the national historical group.

It was agreed to establish a position as vice-chairman of the WP with the following functions:

- see to all correspondence of the WP,
- with the chairman see to the daily businesses of the WP, and
- act as representative of the WP in the absence of the chairman.

The vice-chairman will be expected to serve in office for 3-4 years.

If anyone is interested in the office he/her should shortly let the chairman know.

Ad. 2)

The chairman sketched three possibilities of future meetings:

- 1) Historical chemical sessions in connection to the 2005 history of science conference in Beijing,
- 2) Separate history of chemistry conferences in Europe 2005 and 2007/8, and/or
- 3) Historical chemical sessions in connection to the 2006 FECS chemistry conference in Budapest.

It was agreed

ad 1) not to take up any activities.

ad 2) to have the 5th international conference on history of chemistry in Portugal (Lisbon) 2005. Elvira Callapez and Maria Burguete will take the initiative to organise a local committee. This autumn this chairman will form a scientific committee. In 2007 (or 2008) the 6th conference will take place in Belgium and the Netherlands (Maastricht, Liege). The 7th conference will probably again take place in Budapest (2009).

It was emphasised that the first circular - with information on the dates, venue and deadlines - on the conference in Portugal should be made public at least one year before the conference. Four themes for the conference were suggested:

- Chemistry & Society,
- Chemistry & Technology,
- Chemistry & Environment, and
- Chemical Education.

The final decision on the themes will be made later.

ad 3) There was great support to organise a number of sessions as part of the First European Chemical Conference (Budapest 2006). There were three specific ideas:

-1- the History of Chemical Education, to be organised in collaboration with the Division of Chemical Education of the FECS (Peter Childs). Gerhard Pohl and Anita Honkala from our WP will join forces with Peter Childs to organise a session.

-2- a session on the History of Analytical Chemistry could be organised in collaboration with FECS' division of analytical chemistry. D. Thorburn Burns will establish contact between the two groups. From the Historical WP, Ernst Homburg and Éva Vámos were interested to take part in the organisation of this session.

-3- a session on Chemical Heritage (as part of a larger project on the topic). A working group was established with Maria Rentetzi (Greece) as contact person (mrentetzi@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de and mrentetz@vt.edu). Each country/national chemical society is kindly asked to send the name of a person with interest in chemical heritage to Maria Rentetzi, with a cc to the chairman of the WP. An interesting series on physical heritage, published in the journal *Physics in Perspective*, could be an inspiring example

The chairman will stress the importance of the topic in a letter to the European chemical societies.

More ideas on sessions within the 2006 Conference are welcome. Please contact the chairman when you have any specific ideas.