

## Working Party on the History of Chemistry

The Working Party on the History of Chemistry (WPHC) organises an international conference on the history of chemistry every other year. The 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on History of Chemistry (11ICHC) of the Working Party on the History of Chemistry (EuCheMS) was held in Trondheim, Norway, 29 August-2 September 2017. The local host of the conference was the Department of Teacher Education, NTNU – Norwegian University of Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Norwegian Chemical Society. The 11<sup>th</sup> ICHC was attended by 111 participants, making it one of the highest attended conferences in the history of the ICHC. Participants came from Australia, Taiwan, Japan, China, Mexico, Canada, USA and most European countries. Historians and philosophers of science, professional chemists, current and prospective science teachers, came together to present and discuss ongoing research in the history of chemistry.

The programme consisted of three plenary lectures, 17 parallel sessions with 73 oral presentations, one film screening, and a concluding discussion panel, in addition to a social programme with excursions. In contrast to previous ICHC conferences there was no call for contributions on a specific theme. Instead, the three key note lectures were meant to inspire panel and individual submissions from a range of areas within the history of chemistry. Hasok Chang from the University of Cambridge spoke about "What history tells us about the nature of chemistry", Maria Rentetzi from the National Technical University of Athens gave a lecture on "Living with radiation: What historians of chemistry have to

do with science diplomacy and international organisations", while Anders Lundgren from the University of Uppsala presented on "Science in chemical industry – what did it do?".

The 17 parallel sessions covered the following topics: Chemists and the IUPAC: Taking responsibility and taking actions, Chemical innovation systems in the Third Reich, Elements and the structure of matter, Alchemy and early chemistry, Women in chemistry, Dyes and pigments in history, Recent chemistry: new methodological approaches, Toxic products: communicating toxicity, Toxic products: toxic risks, Science teaching: historical approaches, Chemistry teaching: new approaches, Boundary work: chemistry and economy, Relating chemistry: translating chemistry across linguistics, disciplinary, and physical boundaries, Biographical approaches, and Polymers and plastics. Finally, a round table titled "What future for the history of recent chemistry and molecular sciences? New challenges in the history of chemistry and the molecular sciences", concluded the conference.

The social programme included a demonstration of a 15<sup>th</sup> Century distillation furnace at the University Museum, and a full-day excursion to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Røros, a 17<sup>th</sup> century mining town, amongst others.

The case studies and research discussed during the conference show the vitality of history of chemistry broadly construed and the existence of a vibrant community of scholars interested in the discipline. Of course, there is still room for

new studies, opened to wider geographic and chronological frameworks, to enrich the area offering a richer view of the historical connections between chemistry and society. This is why we look forward to the next conference: the 12<sup>th</sup> ICHC that will take place in Maastricht, The Netherlands, 6-9 August 2019.

The Working Party on the History of Chemistry published a report on the teaching of the discipline in 2007 (on the webpage). By updating the 2007 report and preparing an overview on the history of chemistry in Europe, the WP wanted to evaluate the current situation and help to identify how best to support and reinforce local, national and international initiatives. The preliminary results have been discussed during the WPHC business meeting in 10ICHC, and an interpretative presentation was published this year:

"The Mapping of the Teaching of History of Chemistry in Europe", by Ignacio Suay-Matallana and José Ramón Bertomeu Sánchez, *J. Chem. Educ.*, 2017, 94 (2), pp 133–136 (access through the website).

The WPHC has started conversations with other Divisions and WP's, as well as the UK group of historians of chemistry, the Historical Group of the RSC, to plan activities for Liverpool. The WPHC will propose a lecture on the heritage of chemistry, fitting with the European Year of Cultural Heritage, celebrated in 2018. A Symposium dedicated to the History of the Periodic Table is planned in St Petersburg, in the frame of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mendeleev's publication of his Periodic System.

<b>Chair:</b>	Brigitte Van Tiggelen (Walloon Royal Chemical Society, Belgium), 2013
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	Annette Lykknes (Norwegian Chemical Society), 2011
<b>Secretary:</b>	Ignacio Suay-Matallana (Royal Spanish Society), 2015
<b>Members:</b>	50
<b>Countries:</b>	21 countries represented by 23 member societies and 35 delegates (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) and 20 observers