

THE CHEMICAL SOCIETY

MACROMOLECULAR GROUP

BULLETIN

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The major item in this issue of the Bulletin is a report of the last Annual General Meeting of the Group. Accounts of the Chairman's address and the Treasurer's address are given in some detail to inform members of the plans for the Group's future developments as discussed by the Committee, and of the present financial position of the Group.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 19 November 1975 at Imperial College, London, and a new format was employed. The morning was devoted to a lecture given by the newly appointed SRC Director of Polymer Engineering, Dr. A. A. Challis, on "The Future of Polymer Engineering in the UK", whilst the afternoon session consisted of six presentations, each of fifteen minutes' duration, which covered a wide range of topics in macromolecular science. The final item of the day was the AGM proper.

Undoubtedly the high spot of the meeting was Dr. Challis' lecture. It would be impossible to summarise this presentation without running into the danger of omission or wrong emphasis. Suffice it to say that Dr. Challis contrasted the performance of the British polymer fabrication industry with its overseas competitors, and highlighted areas in which improvements were most needed. In particular he stressed the need for training people in fields of polymer engineering and technology, and for ensuring that engineers become more aware of the use of polymers as construction materials.

Dr. Challis saw his responsibilities as being divided into three parts (a) Assembling a research programme through discussion with experts from the industrial and academic worlds; this programme should have the number of projects limited so that sufficient funding may be available for each. (b) Ensuring that each of these projects was taken up as a whole by an industrial organisation or an academic body. (c) Persuading industry to take advantage of the developments arising from the successful outcome of these projects. Dr. Challis foresaw that the last task might be his hardest. Nevertheless he felt that his new responsibilities would be challenging and rewarding.

Needless to say Dr. Challis' talk evoked great interest in the audience, as was demonstrated by the number and variety of questions with which he was confronted.

The meeting attracted an attendance of sixty five members, most of whom took an active part in the discussions which followed each presentation. The general feeling was that this type of meeting, consisting of a main lecture followed by a pot pourri of shorter contributions, is attractive and should be retained for future AGM's.

Election of Committee Members

One of the main features of interest in the AGM itself was the election to fill the three vacancies which had arisen on the Committee. Five nominations had been received and therefore a ballot was held from which Professor M. Gordon, Dr. J.R. MacCallum and Dr. J.B. Rose emerged as successful candidates. The new Committee for the year 1975/76 is now as follows :

Chairman : Professor C.H. Bamford, FRS (University of Liverpool)
Hon. Secretary : Dr. D.H. Richards (Explosives Research & Development Establishment, Waltham Abbey)
Hon. Treasurer : Dr. A.F. Johnson (University of Bradford)

Members : Professor G. Allen * (Imperial College, London)
Mr. J.L. Benton (BP Chemicals International Ltd.)
Dr. R. Epton (Wolverhampton Polytechnic)
Dr. D.B. Farmer (Vinyl Products Ltd.)
Professor M. Gordon (University of Essex)
Dr. B.M. Grieveson (Kon-Shell Ltd. Amsterdam)
Mr. P. Hepworth (ICI Petrochemical Division)
Professor K.J. Ivin (Queen's University, Belfast)
Dr. J.H. Jones ** (University of Oxford)
Dr. A. Ledwith (University of Liverpool)
Dr. J.D. Littlehailes (ICI Agricultural Division)
Dr. J.R. MacCallum (University of St. Andrews)
Dr. J.B. Rose (ICI Plastics Division)
Dr. W. Wilson (Ciba-Geigy (UK) Ltd.)

Mr. H.L. Bennister (Chemical Society, Industrial Division) (ex officio)

* Represents also Faraday Division

** Represented Perkin Division, but has recently resigned and has been replaced as Perkin nominee by Dr. J.F. Kennedy (University of Birmingham)

Members are asked to note the names of the Committee members, and to contact any of them in connection with any proposals, suggestions or grievances they may have. The Committee will give them all very serious consideration, since it is anxious to build up a stronger communication between members and their elected representatives.

Chairman's Report

Professor Bamford opened his report by saying that there had been a worrying fall in membership of the Group, which now numbered 850-900 as compared with 1040 the previous year. Although similar decreases had been observed in other Groups, it nevertheless gave cause for concern. He suggested that at least part of the reason could be the general tightening of the money situation, and the increase in the Chemical Society subscription rates.

Turning to the events of the preceding year, the Chairman said that the meetings and symposia organised by the Group had been successful both from popularity and financial standpoints, the one exception being the symposium arranged for the Chemical Society Annual Congress at York. A similar meeting held during the Chemical Society Autumn Meeting at Leicester the previous year had also been poorly attended, and on this basis the participation of the Group in activities organised by the parent body should now be seriously reconsidered.

The meetings being organised for 1976 and 1977 were also numerous and varied. Our closer co-operation with the Plastics & Polymer Group of the SCI to produce a co-ordinated programme was reaping dividends ; this year the two groups intended to issue a common programme card to all members. This idea of ever-closer co-operation and co-ordination with other bodies was to be extended to the Polymer Physics Group with whom it was hoped that discussion would soon take place.

Professor Bamford continued by saying that the Secretary had been present at the AGM of the French Polymer Group (GFP), and that at this meeting they had discussed the idea of forming a European Polymer Division. The intention of the GFP was to check the opinions of their members on this proposal (most of those at the AGM were in favour); if it were approved, the GFP would contact the various national bodies to co-operate in organising annual European conventions.

In conclusion, the Chairman said that it was the intention of the Committee to continue issuing two Bulletins per year, although it was becoming increasingly expensive to do so. He hoped that the membership would take advantage of these issues to make their views more widely known. All relevant letters sent to the Secretary for inclusion in the Bulletin would be accepted whether favourable or critical, as long as they were signed.

Discussion

The Chairman's address had taken the form of a discussion in which a lively exchange of ideas had taken place. The following comments were made which the Secretary noted for consideration by the Committee.

When the decreasing membership of the Group was being discussed, it was suggested that the Group should follow the policy of the Polymer Physics Group, namely, to stimulate early enrolment and continual loyalty to the Group by organising one-day symposia involving experts in specific fields, aimed primarily at post graduates. It was felt that Universities would sponsor their students to participate in such events.

The Chairman's observations on the Committee's drive to effect closer relations with other bodies of similar interests, and possibly even move towards eventual amalgamation, received general approval and stimulated a number of comments from members. No speakers voiced any disapproval of this aim, and many commented adversely on the present fragmentation of macromolecular interests amongst a number of competing groups.

One member deplored the fact that the subject matter of a number of symposia organised by the Group was unrecorded, and suggested that use could be made of scientific journals run by allied groups, in particular British Polymer Journal produced by the Plastics & Polymer Group. The Chairman replied that the publications of the Group's meeting had to be offered initially to the Chemical Society, but that if this were turned down, any journal could approach the organisers or individual speakers for publication rights. Many of the contributions at meetings, especially those of a review nature, had been previously made public, and insistence on publication could deter potential lecturers. Another member pointed out that the Plastics & Rubber Institute insisted on papers being submitted in full before the meeting, and that preprints of these were then available for purchase afterwards.

A further proposal was to set up an Annual Congress of British Polymer Groups at which all aspects of macromolecular science could be discussed during a single jamboree. Although the audience liked this idea in principle, the majority felt that in the present financial climate, the cost to the individual of attending what would have to be a meeting of several days' duration would be prohibitive.

In winding up his remarks the Chairman said that the Committee's objectives were to further the cause of polymer science, and to provide the maximum service it could to the members. He ended by asking the audience what new facilities they would like to see. This evoked the suggestion that a register of members' interests and activities be provided. The Treasurer hurriedly intervened to say that such a register could only be made by circularising

the membership with a form to complete and return, and that postal charges ensured that this could only be done during the Committee's normal mailing. Furthermore, publication of the results of this survey would involve significant expense so that, although he thought the idea to be a good one in principle, the completed register would have to be sold to members rather than issued free. The audience nevertheless felt that the suggestion had substance, and the Chairman agreed that the Committee would consider it.

Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer reported that the Group, in common with many other organisations, had had its financial resources strained by rapid inflation during the past financial year. For example, the Committee's expenses and the production and mailing of two Bulletins alone amounted to nearly £700, representing an increase of 30% over the previous year. For the first time, the cost of these basic items exceeded the Group's per capita income, which decreased by 16% to £420 in 1974-75.

Despite these adverse factors, it is estimated that a balance of about £350 would be carried forward into 1975-76, a small increase on the previous year's balance. This improvement arose from the success of symposia in which the Group had sole financial responsibility or which were organised jointly with other bodies. The surplus from three meetings, including deposit account interest, was approximately £350.

The Treasurer concluded by pointing out that inflationary pressures would continue during the next year and maintenance of the present level of activity would demand an increased financial return on the Group's scientific meetings. Although the Committee must look to economies wherever possible, it was more important than ever that Group members take an active part in the affairs of the Group during the coming year.

Programme 1976

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
* 5-6 January	Flame Resistance & Thermal Stability in Polymers	University of Loughborough	Dr. E.F.T. White UMIST
* 6-7 January	Polymers in Aqueous Solutions	Cranfield Inst. of Technology	Prof. F. Franks Unilever
+ 24-25 March	The Outlook for Polymer Science	UMIST	Dr. A.S. Dunn UMIST
* 29 March - 1 April	Deformation, Yield and Fracture of Polymers	Churchill College Cambridge	Plastics & Rubber Institute
+ 6-8 April	Components of Protein Synthesis	University of Cambridge	Dr. A.R. Ferscht MRC, Cambridge
13 April	Morphology of Orientation Processes	University of Bradford	Prof. I. Goodman University of Bradford
18 May	Polymer-supported Reagents for Organic Synthesis & Catalysis	UMIST	Dr. A. Ledwith University of Liverpool
* 7-9 July	Chromatographic Fractionation of Macromolecules	University of Birmingham	Dr. R. Epton Wolverhampton Polytechnic
* 5-9 July	2nd International Symposium on Polyvinylchloride	Lyon, France	Dr. A. Michel CNRS Villeurbanne, France

3 September	Polymers Today and Tomorrow (British Association Meeting)	University of Lancaster	Prof. C.H. Bamford University of Liverpool
20-21 September	Polymer Stability	University of Glasgow	Dr. J.R. MacCallum University of St. Andrews
+ 21-22 October	Computer Applications in Macromolecular Science	University of Bradford	Dr. A.F. Johnson University of Bradford
November	AGM and Annual Forum	Imperial College, London	Prof. G. Allen Imperial College

* Detailed information concerning these meetings was sent previously to members.

+ Details included in this mailing or given below under 'Late News'.

Members interested in the remaining meetings should contact the organiser cited.

Programme 1977

The programme of meetings for 1977 is currently being formulated, and will be finalised in a joint meeting with the Plastics & Polymer Group later. However, the following have been approved by the Committee.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
22-24 March	Polymer Surfaces	University of Durham	Dr. J. Feast University of Durham
17-21 May	Nmr of Polymers (Euchem Meeting)	Grasmere	Prof. K.J. Ivin Queen's University, Belfast
July	Polymer Engineering Materials	University of Liverpool	Prof. C.H. Bamford University of Liverpool
September	Advances in Emulsion Polymerisation	Venue not decided	Dr. D.B. Farmer Vinyl Products Ltd.

LATE NEWS - 1976 : "Components of Protein Synthesis"

The British Biophysical Society is holding a meeting entitled "Components of Protein Synthesis" in Cambridge from 6 - 8 April 1976. Topics will include the structure and mechanism of action of enzymes and the structure of nucleic acids and ribosomes. The meeting is intended to provide information for the specialist and non-specialist and as such will contain review and current research elements.

For further information contact the local organiser :

Dr. A.R. Fersht, MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, University
Postgraduate Medical School, Hills Road, Cambridge. CB2 2QH

FINAL NOTE : Members are asked to note that all the meetings listed have been arranged in association with, or indeed wholly organised by, the Macromolecular Group Committee, but in all cases participation is welcomed by the organisers.