europhysics news

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Viewpoint

Physics data

The European founder of experimental physics in the thirteenth century, Robert Grosseteste, first set forth a methodology for physics. As A.C. Crombie wrote in *Robert Grosseteste and the origins of experimental science : 1100-1700 :*

'With this methodological revolution, there appeared in the Latin West a clear understanding of the relation between theory and observation on which the modern conception and practice of scientific research and explanation are based, a clear set of procedures for dealing with physical problems.'

In those intervening seven hundred years, the explanatory powers of physical theory have been extended to give its tremendous insight into natural phenomena. However, in order that physics can continue to fulfill its other task of correlating observational data, these data have to be reliable and based upon agreed criteria and procedures of recording, evaluation and compilation. Formulation and co-ordination of the criteria and procedures on an international scale are the tasks of CODATA — featured in this issue. American physicists have responded to the challenge of physics data by co-operating in publication of the *Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data.*

Physicists in Europe, where such a high proportion of physics data is generated, might wish to pay due attention to the real problems of data reliability that CODATA have identified.

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Plans of EPS Divisions

In order to give an accurate impression of the extensive activity within the Specialized Divisions of the European Physical Society, this article has brought together contributions from each Division. Clearly, EPS Divisions are fulfilling their function of providing European focuses for physics and physicists within their specialized fields in a lively and varied fashion.

Atomic Physics

The Atomic Physics Division was established by EPS Council in March 1971. Nearly 250 physicists are members of this new Division. The elected Board comprises H. van Regemorter (Chairman), T. Skalinski, A. Steudel, G. zu Putlitz, K.F. Smith, A.H. Gabriel. The Chairmen and Secretaries of the 3 Sections are *ex officio* members of the Board: Chairman of the Section on Electronic and Atomic Collisions is J. Hasted; Chairman of the Section on Molecular Physics is I. Kovacs ; Chairman of the Section (EGAS) on Atomic Spectroscopy is B. Edlen.

Most of the scientific activities will be organized by the Sections. There will be some large conferences like the 5th Annual Conference on Atomic Spectroscopy which will be held in Lund (Sweden) from 10-13 July 1974, and the 11th European Congress on Molecular Spectroscopy which will be organized in Tallin (USSR) from 28 May to 1 June 1973 (Information from T. Saluvere, Academy of Sciences, Lenini Pulestee 10, 200 001 Tallin, USSR).

Some conferences will concern more specialized topics related to the field of one Section, like the Europhysics Study Conference on 'Atomic and Molecular Physics of Ionized Gases' (Versailles, France, 3-5 April 1973) and the conference on 'Impact Ionization' (Englefield Green, UK, 23-26 July 1973). But the Atomic Physics Division is planning to organize and stimulate conferences on specialized topics which are at the boundaries of neighbouring domains, like the Europhysics Study Conference on 'Spectral Line Broadening and Related Topics' which will take place in Paris, 2-6 July 1973.

Information can be obtained and suggestions can be made by writing to the present Chairman : H. van Regemorter, Observatoire de Meudon, F - 92 Meudon, (France).

H. van Regemorter, Chairman

Condensed Matter

The Condensed Matter Division is now by far the largest Division in EPS. Consequently, Council agreed that the Condensed Matter Division should be conceived as a Confederation of Sections each of which is largely autonomous, although they collaborate closely with the Board of the Division. Such a scheme allowed the previous Low Temperature Division to become a Section of the Condensed Matter Division.

The Sections of the Condensed Matter Division are now :

— Liquids and Amorphous Materials
— Low Temperature Physics
— Magnetism
— Metals
— Macromolecular Physics
— Semi-conductors and Insulators.

The relationship of the European High Pressure Research Group to the Condensed Matter Division is not yet fixed definitely.