

europphysics news



BULLETIN OF THE EUROPEAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

J.A.

Volume 15

Number 5

May 1984



From the President

G.H. Stafford

(Oxford)

The European Physical Society formally came into existence on the 26 September 1968. The discussions which led to its establishment, however, began 2½ years before that when Professor Gilberto Bernardini arranged a meeting in Pisa at the Scuola Normale Superiore on 16 - 17 April 1966 "to discuss some of the problems of common interest to the European community of physicists". The President of the Italian Republic sent a message to the meeting expressing deep satisfaction at a gathering of physicists which was to examine the possibility of forming a "single and free association of European physicists".

I was privileged to be present at that Pisa meeting together with some 80 other physicists and was associated with Bernardini in the discussions and negotiations during the following 2½ years which led up to the creation of our Society. The events of those years are still very clear in my mind and one of my strongest memories is of the tremendous goodwill which existed in Europe and the strong desire to overcome the problems that arose in creating the EPS through a federation of the existing national societies. If the goodwill had not been there, and if the national societies had not been prepared to sacrifice some of their own legitimate interests for the vision of the greater benefit to physics in Europe, it is hard to see how EPS would ever have come into existence.

At the time of the inaugural confe-

rence in Florence in September 1968 the Society had 445 Individual Ordinary Members, with 22 participating national societies, academies and groups. There are now over 3500 Individual Ordinary Members, over 60 Associate Members and 29 group Members. The growth of the Society has therefore been substantial, but membership is still smaller than it should be and during the next two years I hope that we can put a lot of effort into increasing our Individual Membership and continue with the efforts initiated by our immediate past President, Professor Jacques Friedel to increase the number of Associate Members.

The EPS is a learned Society which provides a forum for discussion of subjects of common interest to all physicists. It is certainly our responsibility to cover not only purely academic physics but also those aspects of physics which relate to its applications in industry. This is particularly important at the present time with physics providing the seed corn for so many new industries. The more we can do as a Society to help industrial development, the better it must be for all of physics. Research in most aspects of advanced physics is now a costly business and we cannot expect governments to find the necessary financial resources unless industry creates the necessary wealth.

The Society has gone through many sticky patches, financially speaking, in

the years since it was founded, but happy to say, I take over as President at a time when the finances of the Society are somewhat rosier than they have been for a number of years. It would, nevertheless, be an exaggeration to say that the Society is yet in a stable financial state, yet the position would be dramatically transformed if each Individual Ordinary Member were to recruit just one new member. I am conscious that I am at risk in taking this mercenary line, but the scale of the Society's activities and the scope of what we can do to help the advancement of physics is necessarily limited by the financial resources that we have at our disposal.

Space does not permit me to go into detail here about the role of the EPS. All areas of physics are, however, covered through its eight specialised Divisions aided by various Advisory Committees and Interdivisional Groups. Physics research is at present going through a very productive phase. A dynamic society can do much to stimulate and maintain the necessary level of excellence. The success that physics has experienced, has, however, led to it becoming an increasing influence on all our lives. It is therefore important that our Society is vigorous and has the highest possible number of European physicists belonging to it.

Contents

From the President	1
Tracking Particles by Lasers	2
Deterministic Diffusion: a Chaotic Phenomenon	5
Farewell to P.L. Kapitza	8
New Members of EPS	8
Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Tomography	10
Novel Spectroscopy at Winterthur	14
Opening of JET	16