

50 Years of Synchrotron Radiation Grenoble November 1997

The 50th anniversary of the discovery of SR was celebrated in a conference hosted by the most recent SR machine in Europe. The meeting was organised by the ESRF and reflected their agenda. The subject of the main conference was condensed matter and there was an auxiliary symposium on structural biology, these of course being the subjects which have benefitted most from the development of the ESRF. The main meeting was organised around a series of plenary lectures and contributed posters.

Day one started with some historical lectures which were interesting in their perspective. Daresbury did not feature in any landmark discoveries according to Bob Barterman from CHESS at Cornell, we should invite him to the next user meeting! The rest of the day, and part of the following morning, was given over to studies of magnetic phenomena. Malcolm Cooper gave a good review of Compton scattering and flew the flag for the UK.

Soft condensed matter was the subject of the second day. Sunil Sinha gave an excellent exposition of the power of coherent and incoherent X-rays in studying fluctuations. This was followed by an excellent talk on X-ray photon correlation spectroscopy by Günther Gruebel. Polymers were covered by a general review by Manfred Stamm and a talk by Tony Ryan on fluctuation induced crystallisation in polymers. These were followed by talks on inelastic scattering and another poster session where there was

some interesting work on SAXS/WAXS from polymers, surfactants and lipids from Hamburg and excellent microfocus studies (including microfocus SAXS) on keratin (human hair and nails). The first results from RAPID were also presented in this poster session and aroused considerable interest from a wide variety of users.

The third day was a mixture of structural biology (MAD) and geophysics, with interesting work on the structure of the earth's core. The conference dinner, that night, was held in a delightful chateau about 30km out of Grenoble. With the participants suitably refreshed the final day was given over to biology and imaging. Sebastian Doniach gave a great talk on using flow kinetics to study protein folding and there were a number of illuminating talks on diffraction imaging. This session was also followed by a poster session but the highlight of the day was the presentation of the ESRS prize to Malcom McMahon who gave what was one of the best talks of the meeting on high pressure phase transitions.

There was a party that night, being the 3rd Thursday in November also the day that Beaujolais Nouveau was released, which meant there were a number of sore heads the following day at the ESRF Users meeting.

Tony Ryan

Alpbach Workshop 1997 Coiled-Coils, Collagen and Co-Proteins

The second Alpbach Fibrous Protein Workshop was held from September 7th to 13th, 1997 at the Boglerhof Hotel, Alpbach, Austria. Alpbach is a beautiful Tyrolean town in a high valley surrounded by mountains and it provides a splendid venue for scientific meetings. The first of these fibrous protein meetings, in honour of Bruce Fraser and Tom MacRae, was held in the same place exactly four years before. Its tremendous success prompted the organisation of the 1997 meeting, this time honouring the achievements of Professor Carolyn

Cohen from The Rosenstiel Center for Basic Medical Sciences, Brandeis University, Massachusetts. The Workshop, organised jointly by Professor John Squire, from Imperial College, London, and Professor David Parry, from Massey University, New Zealand, was sponsored by Glaxo-Wellcome, by the Journal of Structural Biology, by CCP13 and by Imperial College. It involved about 100 participants, with a good mix of very eminent scientists together with young post-docs and some PhD students. The Workshop, launched by a splendid reception put on