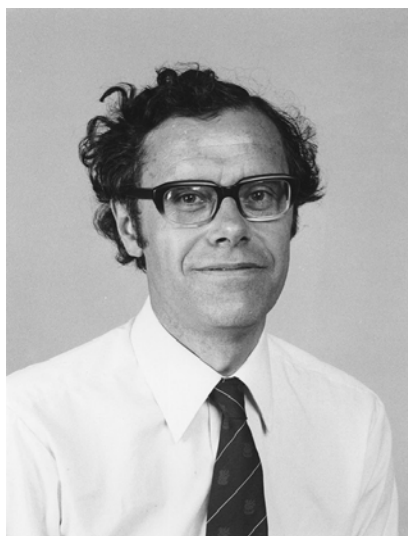


Robin Harris

Chairman NMRDG 1978-1981



I was elected as chairman (while I was at the University of East Anglia) during the International Meeting at the University of York in the summer of 1978, so I carried responsibility for three Christmas meetings in London and three other “normal” meetings. We also participated in the Chemical Society Autumn Meeting in the University of Lancaster in September 1979, organising a joint symposium with the Perkin Division on NMR of biologically-important molecules. The Christmas 1978 Meeting cost £4.50 for “adults” (presumably students were classed as children!). [Prices have changed since then!!!] That same meeting was notable for the fact that Irwin Jones was *not* elected to the NMRDG committee! His prominence in the NMRDG was in the future! When I took over as Chairman, the Committee included Peter Beynon (the treasurer), Derek Shaw, and the two Jims (Feeney & Emsley). I was preceded as Chairman by one Jim (Feeney) and followed by the other!

I was the last Chairman to have a “reign” lasting three years. During my time we negotiated with the EENC (which the NMRDG had in some ways been instrumental in setting up!) because there were clashes arising from their two-year cycle of meetings and our three-year cycle. We agreed to adopt the biennial regime, so the Exeter NMRDG International Meeting in 1981 was followed one at Edinburgh in 1983. It was consequently decided that each Chairman (no use of “chairperson” or the absurd “chair” then!) should have only one International Meeting to cope with, so the period of service of subsequent chairmen was limited to two years. Not all our relations with other bodies went so smoothly – I have a note from a Committee Meeting stating that the Committee had “little enthusiasm for cooperation with the BRSG for the Exeter Conference”, a sentiment which was apparently reciprocated, though with no hard feelings! The Exeter meeting turned out to be an excellent one from all points of view. My collection of abstracts shows there were about 370 participants (including a few “accompanying persons”) and 105 posters were listed (though doubtless the actual number would have been marginally different). There were eight symposia, covering the usual wide range of topics. Of particular interest is the fact that one of them was on Intact Biological Systems, showing that even then

biochemical NMR was becoming important. The session included an invited lecture on High Speed Imaging by Peter Mansfield. Of course, I chaired the Scientific Programme Committee, while Keith Orrell was the local organiser and coordinator. Keith did an excellent job, as did the Chem. Soc. administrators, ably led by John Gibson and Gina Howlett, so everything ran very smoothly. I seem to recall that even the weather was good (including that for the Wednesday afternoon excursions) – but that may be an expression of my nostalgia for the past. My own choice for the excursion was the one to Morwellham Industrial Archaeological Site, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I didn't enjoy having to give a short speech at the dinner so much! As I recall, Rex Richards was invited to give an after-dinner speech, but he was ill at the time and unable to come, so it was given by Bob Shulman (Yale University) instead.

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26 November 2008