

1969 – 1972 Les Sutcliffe



1978



2007

My period in office was one of enormous change. NMR was expanding in both techniques and applications and we seemed to be living in times when something special and short-lived was happening. However how wrong we were! The evolution of NMR has continued to be driven right up to the present time by the great advances being made in electronics, computing power and magnet technology, which in turn have led to NMR techniques being used to great effect in biology, medicine, geophysics, engineering etc. Between 1969 and 1972 there were held short meetings at UEA, Newcastle, London (2) and Sheffield: the topics presented at these meetings reflected the rapid advances being made at the time. Thus, 'other' nuclei were being studied along with isotopic substitution, and pulse methods were being used to measure relaxation times. In 1969, the NMRDG was growing from a fairly informal group into a highly professional body having administrative assistance from the then Chemical Society in providing logistical aid with the newly-established international meetings: many of the changes took place during my Chairmanship. The first international meeting was the highly-successful conference in Birmingham in 1969: this had a large attendance with a large proportion of overseas delegates and the meeting was blessed with Mediterranean weather. The second international meeting was held under my Chairmanship at the University of Surrey in 1972. The science presented at this meeting was quite ground-breaking, there being

papers on Fourier Transform spectroscopy, CIDNP, spectral simulation, shift reagents and there was a great deal of interest in carbon-13 spectroscopy. The popularity of this type of meeting had increased so much that Ed Randall and I had to limit the number of posters that could be accepted. Ed also made his mark at this meeting by greeting delegates arriving at Guildford station, dressed in a creamed-coloured suit and wearing a straw boater with a red ribbon. Apart from the excellent science, it is worth noting that the meeting probably saw the birth of the generous hospitality suites funded and organised by instrument manufacturers. At Surrey, the delegates were housed in small units and it was possible to find out from outside which of these had the best hospitality from the noise being generated within! The conference dinner was a medieval banquet held off site and I was made king, my consort being one of the Chemical Society secretaries. On the way back to the University a tradition, of having a sing song in the coach and in the bar afterwards, was fostered. Jim Feeney was a prominent “choirmaster” leading us in songs such “Maggie May” and other classics well known on Merseyside.