

EAOG Newsletter V
The European Association of Organic Geochemists

From the Newsletter Secretary

Hello, this is your Newsletter Secretary speaking to you. For those of you who do not subscribe to the org-geochem database and have not read vol. 23 no. 11/ 12 of the journal from cover to cover, my name is Richard Patience and I live permanently buried in the snow in Norway. Those of you who came to Stavanger for the 16th International Meeting know that the latter isn't true - rather, people in western Norway live in wooden houses with the rain beating incessantly on the roof. I work for the Norwegian State Oil Company, Statoil, but am not a native of this beautiful, albeit wet and cool, part of the world, having been born and raised just north of London (th is is London, England).

As a result of considerable research, I have established that the previous Newsletter came out in the Second Circular for the 17th International Meeting in San Sebastian. As that was described as Newsletter IV, I have decided to call this one Newsletter V. A "call for copy" for the Newsletter was sent to the org-geochem database earlier this year, and the same call was subsequently printed in the recently issued, but misleadingly labelled, volume 23, nos. 11/12 (1995) of the journal of Organic Geochemistry.

These two calls for copy have resulted, not entirely surprisingly, in my being underwhelmed by the response. So this Newsletter will consist mainly of a brief introduction to our new Chairman, (a sort of "Life of Brian"), a Message from our Chairman himself, a mystery surrounding the chairmanship of Geoff Eglinton, and a summary of all the wondrous events which took place at the Board Meeting of the EAOG in Maastricht on 18/19 January 1996. Of course, the most exciting of all was the selection of the new Chairman as a result of Geoff Eglinton's departure. In the end, Brian Horsfield was elected by a large majority, with Jürgen Rullkötter being unanimously elected as the new Secretary to replace Brian. This is clearly a result which the Board, and I hope the Membership at large, are very happy with. There now follows a short biography of Chairman Brian himself.

A Life of Brian

Brian Horsfield, Chairman of EAOG 1996 -2002

Born in Halifax, UK, Brian graduated as a geologist from the University of Durham in 1973 before moving up the road to Newcastle where he undertook Ph.D. research with Archie Douglas on the geochemistry of Jurassic-Cretaceous sediments from the UK and Canada, completing his thesis in 1977. Brian joined Conoco's research and development labs in Ponca City, Oklahoma in 1978, where he and his family soon adapted to the pace of life in the Mid West. Among many activities, Brian was involved with Roger McLimans in the earliest developments of methods for the analysis of fluids trapped in fluid inclusions in diagenetic cements. Leaving Conoco in 1982 for Dallas, Texas, Brian joined Arco's R&D centre at Plano, where he eventually ran the geochemistry group and performed research into the generation of petroleum from non-marine organic matter. In addition he carried out some of the first significant quantitative studies of the relationships between the detailed compositions of kerogen pyrolysates and kerogen structure. In 1986 Brian left the oil industry and moved to KFA in Germany, where he built up a research programme initially focusing on kerogen characterisation protocols and the development of the now standard MSSV pyrolysis system.

Since then, Brian has been involved in fundamental and applied research in a wide variety of areas. These have included studies on the origin of gas/condensates and oil cracking in the subsurface, reservoir geochemical studies of biodegraded oil fields, organic geochemistry within sequence stratigraphic frameworks and more recently basic studies of the geochemistry of non-hydrocarbons in sedimentary organic matter. Throughout his career in Germany, Brian has reinforced strong links with industry through joint research projects.

As Chairman of EAOG, Brian needs skills well beyond those indicated by his scientific accomplishments. Having moved from Yorkshire to Geordieland (N.E. England) and then on to Oklahoma, Texas and finally Germany - each with its own cultural eccentricities - a long list of friends and successes both technical and managerial, testifies to Brian's ability to deal with the cultural and other challenges of life in the United States of Europe today. Dealing with the inner workings of the EAOG should be no problem. One of his greatest strengths is his sense of humour which I have enjoyed now for over 20 years, and which will stand him in good stead in his new role as the Chairman of the EAOG. We wish Brian well with this new challenge.

Steve Larter.

Chairman's Remarks

It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this the fifth EAOG Newsletter. On this occasion I write as Chairman, rather than as Secretary and Newsletter Editor, having been elected to the office at the January EAOG Board Meeting in Maastricht. Without wishing to pre-empt the minutes of the meeting appearing elsewhere in this Newsletter, Jürgen Rullkötter was elected Secretary and Richard Patience has taken over responsibility for the Newsletter. Geoff Eglinton stepped down after approximately 6 years in the Chair (see the remarks below by our new Secretary pertaining to the duration of Geoff's reign). Our grateful thanks go out to him for his energetic and stalwart service to EAOG in his capacities as Chairman and Board Member over the years.

I want to say a few words about the EAOG because there are probably quite a few readers that don't know us. The association was founded in 1983, and its articles are written in Dutch, undoubtedly because its founding Chairman, Pieter Schenck, was also Dutch. EAOG's primary goal is to promote organic geochemistry in its broadest sense, by encouraging scientific interactions and promoting co-operations with other organisations. This is why we stage our biannual International Meetings in Organic Geochemistry. Our name denotes that the association is European. It is important to remember the context in which it is formulated - we are the European Association of Organic Geochemists, not the Association of European Organic Geochemists. Hence, we have a healthy and growing membership from countries all across the globe. Only about half are actually classed as Europeans. The fact that the 1999 International Meeting will be held in Istanbul, where the continents of Europe and Asia meet, attests to EAOG's desire to broaden its activities beyond the traditional bounds of western Europe. This is an important element of our future. If you are not a member, why not contact our Membership Officer, Steve Rowland, to find out more about EAOG?

Finally, let me remind you that the 18th International Meeting on Organic Geochemistry will take place September 22-26, 1997. It will be co-ordinated by Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH (KFA), yet convened in The Netherlands at the Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Centre (rather than in Germany where KFA is located). It is the first meeting "sans frontières" in the history of EAOG and, as far as we know, within the whole of the geosciences. I know that the organisers are working hard to guarantee excellent scientific and social programs. I look forward to seeing you there!

Brian Horsfield.

The mystery of Geoff Eglinton's chairmanship

The simple answer to the question when did Geoff Eglinton start as EAOG Chairman is: sometime in 1989. The mysterious part (1) is that there is no record of an election for a new Chairman in the minutes. The minutes of the board meeting in Paris (September 16, 1989; note the date!) say that Eglinton was

nominated to serve on the board. The minutes of the general assembly (September 19, 1989) say that this was approved. Full stop!

Now I would like to quote Philippe Garrigues from his letter dated September 5 (!), 1989: "I have learned that you have been elected as Chairman for the Board of the European Association of Organic Geochemists and that you will be responsible ..." (mystery part 2).

Later letters appear to confirm Eglinton's chairmanship:

"Congratulations upon being elected Chairman of EAOG Council." (Charles Curtis, Oct 1, 1989),
"First of all, many congratulations on your election as Chairman of EAOG." (Robert Kinghorn, Oct 2, 1989).

Although the agenda of the EAOG board meeting in Bristol on November 12, 1989 had "Chairman's Introduction" as first topic, the minutes do not mention a chairman by name. The same is true for the minutes of the September 1991 board meeting in Manchester. Only from the minutes of the general meeting at the conference in Manchester ("Geoff Eglinton opened the meeting and welcomed all") it can be concluded (!) that Eglinton was Chairman of EAOG at that time.

So what really happened is unclear to me. I seem to have a lack of memory of the last couple of hours in the "Paradis Latin" at the Paris meeting, maybe it all happened then?? Witnesses needed!

Juergen Rullkoetter.

Highlights from the EAOG Board Meeting, Maastricht, 18 -19 January 1996

Many would feel that the words "Highlights" and "Board Meeting" make uneasy bedfellows, the latter expression creating mental pictures of grey suits and stuffy atmospheres, whilst the former conjures up an image of sunshine, parties and a good time. Well, there wasn't much sunshine in Maastricht in January, and if there were parties then we didn't get invited to them. However, the atmosphere wasn't too stuffy once we'd opened the windows, and the suits were only *mostly* grey. Apart from the election of the new Chairman and Secretary (Highlight No. 1), the main event was that Archie Douglas made it at all, having been convinced by his daughter and a Bartholomews atlas that Maastricht is in Belgium (OK, it's close to Belgium) (Highlight No. 2).

Competition - which country is Maastricht in?

The formal board meeting was held on the 18th with a quiet dinner in the evening (Highlight No. 3). On the 19th we were given a tour of the conference facilities (Highlight No. 4).

The Board Meeting

1. Elections - see above.

2. Minutes of previous Board Meeting - no what you would call real highlights here.

3. EAOG Board Membership - a couple of key points:

i) Elections for Board Membership will in future be by postal ballot of ALL members, not just those attending the General Assembly at the International Meeting. This will be preceded by a call for candidates early enough to allow the process to be completed before the Board Meeting at the International Meeting. Non -Europeans can become Board Members.

ii) The Board will propose to the members that the size of the Board be reduced from 11 to 9. This is considered suitable for achieving a balance of nationalities as well as industry/university/research institute

representation. The reduction will be achieved by not replacing two of the members whose terms end in 1997.

4. EAOG Membership Report (Steve Rowland)

- i) There are currently 353 members, including 27 student members, although there is some uncertainty in this number due to lack of an up-to-date record from Elsevier.
- ii) Due to the fact that a) there is little advantage to being a student member (no journal, for example), b) it is not particularly popular (only 27 members) and c) it is time consuming to administer, the Board voted to discontinue this category. Reduced registration fees for students at the International Meeting will be retained, however. This move is meant to integrate students into the EAOG by firstly providing them with lower fees for the meeting, in recognition of their often constrained financial position, and secondly encouraging them to become full and active members of the EAOG on a level footing with their elders (but not necessarily betters).
- iii) There is a potential of about 200 new members based on attendees at the San Sebastian meeting. Other areas worth pursuing are members of ACS and ALAGO. The board proposes setting registration fees for non-members attending the International Meeting at a level which will include one year's membership of EAOG (AAPG are currently running a similar scheme).

5. Treasurer's report (Peter Nederlof)

Rosy. There is no need to increase the membership fee at present.

6. Journal report (Archie Douglas)

- i) Recent late issues are due to internal reorganisation, according to Elsevier. Strong complaints have been sent by the Co-Editors.
- ii) The number of manuscripts submitted has declined recently. Support your Association! Send your MS to Organic Geochemistry!

7. Awards report (Alain Huc)

- i) Stunningly, there appears to be little interest in travel awards! Every student is eligible to apply and an advertisement will now appear in each issue of the journal stating that a number of awards are available.
- ii) The Travel and Schenk Award Committees are to be combined. The new committee will consist of Huc (Chairman), Hayes, Lijmbach, de Leeuw and Michaelis (this is not a firm of solicitors).

8. 18th Meeting in Maastricht

A separate announcement about this has been sent out by Brian Horsfield, who is the Meeting Chairman.

9. 19th Meeting in 1999

The Board voted unanimously to accept the (very well put together) offer from our Turkish colleagues to hold the International Meeting in Istanbul.

Tour of Maastricht and the Conference facilities

On Friday 19th we were provided with a tour of the excellent conference facilities followed by a sightseeing trip around Maastricht. The conference facilities are bang up to date whilst the town is a pleasant mixture of the very old, the old and the new. There appears to be plenty in the way of hotels, bars, restaurants and other Dutch treats to satisfy students, ex-students, ageing hippies and serious food and wine connoisseurs in grey suits.

The conference facilities are purpose built, modern and for our Meeting will consist of an excellent main hall, a smaller second room for the parallel sessions and plenty of space for posters. The second lecture room was the only real bone of contention, and will require that the organisers plan the parallel sessions carefully in order to avoid congestion, overheating and general irritation. In addition, there are facilities for on-site lunches.

See you all there!

Richard Patience/Juergen Rullkoetter.

On the move

Dear Biogeofriends,

I am pleased to announce my move to Nancy, in the Lorraine county, eastern France, near the Vosges mountains. Our laboratory is currently undertaking investigations on soil pollution and phytoremediation. You are mostly welcome to come and see us, and taste our delicious Lorraine food, "tarte aux mirabelles" and "quiche Lorraine".

Best regards,
Eric Lichtfouse.

Some more words from the Newsletter Secretary

If the Newsletter is to continue on a regular basis, I need input from *you*. Please read the Call for Copy in volume 23, no. 11/12 (1995) of the journal and send in your contributions. There are no deadlines or restrictions on content (although I reserve the right to edit anything). Short pieces can be sent by email, longer and fancier articles preferably on a PC disk (with information on the format). I look forward to hearing from you!

Richard Patience.