

**Renewing the Heritage of Chemistry in the 21st Century:
Conversations on the Preservation, Presentation and Utilization of Sources, Sites and
Artefacts**

**A Symposium of the Commission on the History of Modern Chemistry (CHMC)¹ in
Conjunction with the IUPAC-UNESCO International Year of Chemistry, 2011
Paris, 21-24 June 2011**

FIRST CIRCULAR AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Invitation to participate:

We invite all those interested in the heritage of chemistry in the 20th and 21st centuries, including historians, chemists, archivists, museum curators, librarians, and industrial archaeologists, to join us in Paris on 21-24 June 2011 for a symposium involving conversations among experts from many different perspectives. Our intention is to present not only the views of historians on how best to use the sources, sites and artefacts of chemistry in the contemporary era, but also the views of those concerned with the technical problems related to the preservation and presentation to historians and the general public of those sources, sites, and artefacts. To this end we invite interested colleagues to submit proposals for papers that can be presented at one of several sessions in the symposium. Submissions may pertain to a wide range of topics and may address any of the questions outlined in the following circular.

General questions to be discussed:

The goal of the proposed symposium, to be held in Paris in the centenary year of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry awarded to Marie Curie, is to bring together a wide range of experts to discuss the challenges associated with understanding, preserving, and presenting the heritage of chemistry in the 21st century. We have entered an era in which new scientific ideas and new technologies have changed not only the face of chemistry itself – which has become a highly diversified discipline and profession –, but also the nature of the sources for its future history. Along with the paper documents, oral histories, instruments, and other artefacts that have previously embodied the heritage of chemistry we now need to include sources and artefacts that represent the chemistry of the present and future, including electronic documents, images, videos, databases, software, and the hardware needed to preserve and use these sources. How can the new technologies be best applied to preserve and enhance the use of older sources and artefacts as well as the new ones? How will historians need to adapt their methods of research to utilize these new technologies and sources, and how will the resulting changes affect the process of writing and publishing results, including electronic publications? How can archivists, librarians and museum curators best obtain, preserve, and ensure their future accessibility to interested specialists? Besides the preservation and use of these materials, historians must also be increasingly concerned with the preservation of key sites associated with the heritage of chemistry, including academic and industrial research laboratories as well as centres of technological innovation, because the historical development of scientific and technological innovations may often be most clearly understood by seeing the original apparatus and equipment in their original settings. This raises the further question: how can the specialists and institutions concerned with the heritage of modern chemistry, including industrial archaeologists, best present critical sources, sites and artefacts to the general public, in ways that will highlight

¹ **Note:** the CHMC is one of several commissions of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science Division of History of Science and Technology (IUHPS/DHST), which sponsors quadrennial international congresses. For more information see the websites of the DHST (<http://sites.google.com/a/dhstweb.org/www/>) and CHMC (http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/phil_Fak_I/Philosophie/Wissenschaftsgeschichte/CHMC.htm)

key developments and avoid misconceptions? In view of the rapid development of current technologies and the many challenges that they present, the organizers wish to engage specialists from different national, professional and institutional backgrounds in conversations that may help to produce constructive and ongoing interactions among all concerned. We will therefore welcome the participation of a broad range of experts concerned with the heritage of chemistry. These should include historians of science and technology; curators, industrial archaeologists, and directors of public and private museums and cultural sites as well as directors and staff of libraries and archives of all kinds, including those in industrial settings; experts in electronic media concerned with the heritage of chemistry; and of course chemists in all types of institutions. Ultimately we hope to promote a better understanding of how best to deal with the current and future challenges for shaping the heritage of chemistry in a new era.

The sessions:

Tuesday, 21 June (17.30 to 19.30 at the Hotel Cino del Duca, Paris, under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences): welcoming and introductory plenary lectures, followed by reception

Wednesday, 22 June (9.00 to 17.30, at the Ecole supérieure de physique et de chimie industrielles (ESPCI ParisTech): introductory plenary lecture followed by morning and afternoon expert sessions, including a buffet lunch, and concluding with a plenary lecture. The evening will be free.

Thursday, 23 June (9.00 to 20.30, at the Maison de la Chimie, Paris): introductory plenary lecture by Ronald Brashear of the Chemical Heritage Foundation of Philadelphia, presenting the “American model” of a multifunctional institution (museum, library, archive, and historical research institution), followed by morning and afternoon expert sessions, including a buffet lunch. The concluding session will be a roundtable discussion covering all the general themes of the symposium, followed by a public lecture by the distinguished chemist Gérard Férey (winner of the 2010 Gold Medal of CNRS, member of the Institut de France, Académie des sciences, and vice president of the SCF).

Friday, 24 June (morning, Paris) optional tours of heritage sites in Paris, such as the Musée Curie, will be arranged by the Local Organizing Committee (details will be posted on the symposium website)

Topics of the sessions:

We will organize each session around a broad topic area, but we also encourage interdisciplinary papers that will address more than one area. General discussions of the issues are welcome, as well as appropriate case studies that highlight the general issues we wish to consider. The following are the three main topic areas we expect to consider:

a) **The history of communication and documentation in chemistry.** This may include studies of conferences and commissions (especially for the establishment of standards, nomenclature, etc.), correspondence, journals, patents, textbooks and general reference works, popularizations, etc.

b) **Historians and their sources.** What use can historians make, now or in the future, of sources in the broadest sense of the term, including traditional documentary sources found in libraries and archives, as well as digital sources and databases? How can they use other types of sources, such as artefacts (including instruments, apparatus, and chemicals) as well as laboratory or industrial sites, to enhance understanding of the heritage of chemistry? Here both historical case-studies as well as more general considerations are equally welcome.

c) **Institutions that secure and preserve the heritage of chemistry for historians and the general public.** These institutions include archives, especially industrial archives, libraries, museums, and historical sites significant to the heritage of chemistry in the 20th and 21st

centuries. Here especially we would like case studies that highlight the opportunities as well as the challenges involved in collecting, preserving, and making accessible sources of all kinds, from the traditional documentary sources of historians to oral histories and databases; artefacts including apparatus, instruments, and chemicals; as well as sites such as laboratories and factories. Papers might deal with policies for the collection and management of books, official documents, personal papers, industrial records, etc.; others might address the best approaches to the technical problems of various means of preserving and using documents, from photocopying through microforms to scanning, OCR, and other electronic technologies for converting older forms of storage (microfilm, etc.). Here we would like to encourage dialogue among experts from different perspectives, as we ask: what can the historians who use these institutions learn from the professionals who maintain them? And in what ways can these institutions benefit from the input of historians?

Format for submissions:

All submissions should be in either English or French, in Word format (not PDF), font Times New Roman, 12 pt and double-spaced. Do not put any special formatting in the text. Submitters should include the following information: surname, first name, postal address, institutional address, institutional position, title of the proposed paper, abstract (maximum 300 words or 2,000 characters including spaces) and a list of no more than three relevant publications, as well as an email address to which notifications may be sent.

Papers are to be in English or French; each participant will be allowed 20 minutes to present the paper, followed by 10 minutes for discussion. Digital projection equipment (beamers) will be available for PowerPoint presentations.

Email address for submissions:

Please send submissions by email as an attached Word document to:
chmcproposal2011@gmail.com

Deadlines:

All submissions must be received by 15 January 2011. The programme committee will review all submissions by 15 February 2011. By 20 February submitters will receive notification by email as to the committee's decisions.

Symposium costs:

Registration fees: 200 Euros (including a reception on the evening of 21 June, and lunches on 22 and 23 June). **The conference dinner** on the evening of Thursday, 23 June, will be paid for separately (cost to be determined). **Accommodations** are to be arranged by individual participants (a list of hotels convenient to the conference locations will appear on the conference website). **Historical tours of heritage locations in Paris** on 24 June will be optional for participants and will be paid for separately (details to be posted on the symposium website). Registration fees may be reduced depending upon subsidies obtained for the symposium; grants for students and other participants in significant financial need may be available through the CHMC (send inquiries to Jeffrey.Johnson@villanova.edu).

Co-sponsors and supporters (preliminary list):

Académie des Sciences, Paris; Société Chimique de France (SCF), Paris; Fondation internationale de la Maison de la Chimie, Paris; Ecole supérieure de physique et de chimie industrielles (ESPCI ParisTech); Chemical Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia; Groupe d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences (GHDSO), Université Paris-Sud 11; Comité national français d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences (CNFHPS).

Local organizing committee:

D. Fauque (chair of the committee, French National Committee of History and Philosophy of Science [CNFHPS], Société Chimique de France - Club d'histoire de la chimie (SCF- CHC), Univ. Paris-Sud 11, Orsay), G. Emptoz (CNFHPS, CHC-SCF, Centre F. Viète – Univ. of Nantes), Chr. Demeulenaere-Douyère (Chief Curator, Archives nationales, Paris), Cl. Debru (president of the CNFHPS; corresponding member, Académie des sciences; École normale supérieure, Paris), P. Bret (secretary of the CNFHPS, Centre A. Koyré, CNRS, Paris), Th. Charmasson (Chief Curator, Universciences, La Villette, Paris), C. Kounelis (Curator, Centre de ressources historiques, ESPCI ParisTech Library), G. Gablot (president of Parcours des sciences, excursions)), M.-Cl. Vitorge (Public relations, SCF).

Programme committee:

R. Fox (chair of the committee, Museum of the History of Science, Univ. of Oxford), Chr. Demeulenaere-Douyère (Chief Curator, National Archives, Paris), Th. Charmasson (Chief Curator, Universciences, La Villette, Paris), R. Brashear (Chemical Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia), G. Férey (2010 Gold Medal CNRS; Institut de France, Académie des sciences, vice president of the SCF), S. Mauskopf (Duke Univ.), R. Anderson (Univ. of Cambridge; chair, Society for History of Alchemy and Chemistry; president, Association of Independent Libraries), H. Albrecht (Techn. Univ.-Mining Academy, Freiberg; President of the Scientific Board for Saxon Industrial Culture of the Zweckverband Sächsisches Industriemuseum [Association of the Saxon Museum for Industry]), L. Cerruti (Univ. of Turin), A. Nieto-Galan (Univ. of Barcelona), B. Bensaude-Vincent (Univ. Paris-1 Panthéon-Sorbonne); A. Bieri (Curator of The Roche Historical Collection and Archive, Basle; vice chair, Arbeitskreis Chemiearchivare der VdW [Association of German Business Archivists]), J. A. Johnson (Villanova Univ.; incoming president, CHMC).

Further information and particulars about registration and methods of payment will be available shortly on the symposium website at www.chmc2011.fr

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