

Laudation for Ron Ottewill



The year marking the 75th birthday of Prof. Ron Ottewill also marks the 50th year of his scientific work in the field of colloid science. In 1952 he joined the Department of Colloid Science in Cambridge and 12 years later he moved to the Department of Physical Chemistry at Bristol, where he is still based as an emeritus professor, continuing to contribute to the subject by publishing his ideas and editing journals. He commenced a long-standing commitment to this journal when he became an editor in 1972. A very active research program in solution polymers, polymeric surfactants and polymer colloids has meant that Ron is in an ideal position to act as an editor and reviewer in this field. Without

exception he puts a great deal of effort into the job regardless of the apparent merit of the paper. Indeed, the weaker contributions get even more constructive attention so that the authors can obtain help from his experience.

Ron has always been a prime mover in dissemination of information through conferences of learned societies as well as the scientific literature. He has planned and organized many international meetings as well as contributing to them. Many of these have been under the auspices of the Faraday Division of the Royal Society of Chemistry as the Division's Discussions as well as subject group conferences. The editing of the proceedings of many of these meetings fell to Ron. These were always done quickly and efficiently in addition to his journal duties. In addition to *Colloid and Polymer Science*, Ron has contributed editorially to *Advances in Colloid and Interface Science*, *Langmuir*, the *Journal of Electroanalytical Chemistry*, the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* (physical science) and the *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science*.

One of the great strengths that he brings to this work is the extremely broad diversity of his research over the last 50 years. In addition to model colloidal systems such as polymer lattices in both aqueous and nonaqueous media, the particulate

systems cover carbonates, clays, oxides, such as titanium dioxide, alumina and silica, and such complex particles as tea coacervates. The synthetic aspects of many of the systems that he has worked with have frequently been a precursor to studying the physical behaviour on as fundamental a level as possible. His work on polymer colloids exemplifies this aspect of his research where he has a strong track record in developing synthetic routes to produce high-quality model systems. This was required prior to studying the colloidal forces acting between the particles by osmotic pressure and scattering studies. Much of his work over the last quarter century has been centred around scattering and concentrated systems. Neutron scattering has been a major part of his effort here, although this has been paralleled by his light scattering studies.

Of course the editorial, learned society administration and research have been carried out simultaneously with his teaching and administrative duties at Cambridge and then Bristol. At Bristol he set up the 1-year master's programme in colloids. About 250 students went through this course and about 50% went onto further academic research. That most of the students are still working with colloidal systems, many in senior positions, is a testimony to the enthusiasm that Ron instilled in those who listened

to his lectures. These he continued to give even when he carried high administrative loads as Head of the School of Chemistry or Dean of the Faculty. In 1981 he took the prestigious Leverhulme Chair of Physical Chemistry, which has always had incumbents who have made strong contributions to colloid and surface chemistry.

Many societies from various countries have recognized Ron's contributions over during the second half of his career. In 1974 he

was presented with the Surface and Colloid Medal of the Royal Society of Chemistry; in 1979 came the award of the Wolfgang Ostwald Medal from the Kolloid Gesellschaft; in 1981 the College de France made an award and this was followed in 1982 by one from Helsinki University as well as the Alexander Medal of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute. Also in 1982 he was elected to the Royal Society in London. Next came the Liversidge Medal of the Royal

Society of Chemistry in 1985 and then the Colloid and Interface Science Group Medal in 1993. However his greatest accolade came in June 1990 when the Queen made Ron an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

Although this issue marks Ron's 75th birthday we all expect to see and hear him at conferences as well as to read his contributions in the literature.

Jim Goodwin, March 2002