

EDITORIAL

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Electrochemists and electroanalysts

Progress in science is inevitably accompanied by specialisation, but this specialisation can easily obstruct progress. How do we cope with this problem in electrochemistry? There are *electrochemists* who would mainly define themselves as studying the very fundamentals of electrochemistry, there are others who regard themselves as *industrial electrochemists*, and, finally, there are *electroanalysts* who devote their efforts to the application of electrochemical methods to analytical applications. Personally, I dislike this subdivision, and I would prefer to call them all chemists or simply scientists. Although this is not fully seriously meant, it cannot be denied that most of us acquire an identity with narrow fields of our own main interests. This is a dreadful thing, and we should make all possible attempts to overcome this tendency towards isolation and setting boundaries.

In Germany, there exists a working party 'Electrochemical Methods of Analysis'. Our biannual meetings (ELACH) are always organised such that we have fundamental contributions from various areas of electrochemistry and also contributions from the most widely different parts of electroanalytical chemistry. This mixture has been welcomed by participants, who appreciate the opportunity to listen to high-quality papers on subjects which they usually do not consider in their daily work. I always regard such contributions as most rewarding when they concern something I am not directly involved in.

Interestingly, electroanalysts frequently demonstrate that electrochemical techniques can work perfectly al-

though the situation at the electrode is far from being well defined. Such 'dirty electrodes' as those consisting of paraffin oil, graphite, enzymes and some other ingredients exhibit high sensitivity and selectivity towards certain analytes, and no 'pure' electrochemist would ever dare to deliberately prepare such materials or to say anything definite about the elementary processes at such inhomogeneous surfaces. But they do work, to our surprise, and this eventually inspires fellow scientists interested in the fundamentals. So, very often, electroanalysts are pacemakers in advancing electrochemistry. Of course, the same holds true in reverse. Fundamental findings often trigger the development of new applications. Ion transfer between immiscible electrolytes may serve as an example.

Great men in electrochemistry, such as J. Heyrovský, have been great electroanalysts as well, although, in their time, they would not have labelled themselves as such. Certainly, it will always be rare that one and the same person has intellectual interests as wide as those of Heyrovský. Therefore, I believe, we all have good reason to learn from each other, to speak to each other and to publish in the same journals. Hence, I would greatly appreciate seeing such exchange of different views in the *Journal of Solid State Electrochemistry*. This is not meant to be only a journal for 'solid state electrochemists' (if anybody wishes to be so called), but it is meant to be a journal for *scientists* who are keen to appreciate the role played by the solid state in electrochemistry.

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