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## E C L C '91, Courmayeur, Valle d'Aosta, Italy, 10-17 March 91

Claudio Zannoni<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Università di Bologna, Italy

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# MEETING REPORTS

**E C L C '91, Courmayeur, Valle d'Aosta, Italy, 10-17 March 91**  
*from Claudio Zannoni, Universita di Bologna, Italy*

The European Conference on Liquid Crystals, ECLC 91, was organised by the Italian Liquid Crystal Group (GNCL), under the auspices of the Italian Chemical Society (SCI), Italian Physical Society (SIF), Physics of Matter Consortium (INFM) and was made possible by generous grants from the regional governments of Valle d'Aosta and Piemonte, CNR and various other sponsors as well as help from TECDIS, a large locally based liquid crystal display company.

The subtitle of the conference was "Crossroads of Science and Technology" to underline that ECLC '91 was the first European Conference to be held after the great changes with new possibilities for freedom and movement that have taken place in Eastern Europe. One of the aims of the organisers was to try to bring together a large number of active researchers from all over Europe and this was certainly achieved. The conference was attended by 175 participants from 20 countries, with the largest groups coming from Italy (59), USSR (31), France (19), Germany (11), Poland (11), UK (7), Yugoslavia(6).

The scientific activity was structured round four main topics: Films and Interfaces (including biosystems), Organometallic Liquid Crystals, Molecular Dynamics, New Developments in LCDs. The first three themes were introduced by plenary lectures: L D Blinov (Institute of Crystallography, Moscow) talked on "Langmuir-Blodgett films and liquid crystals: properties and Stark spectroscopy", A M Levelut (Lab. de Physique des Solides, Orsay) on "Molecular organisation in metallo-organic mesophases" and F Livolant (CENG, Grenoble) discussed "On the modelisation of flexible molecules in a liquid phase".

There were sixteen invited lectures, with

contributions from F Livolant, B Jerome, S A Pikin, F Noack, J K Moscicki, V S Rachevich, D W Bruce, A M Giroud-Godquin, M Ghedini, T Sluckin, C C Huang, R Dabrowski, N V Usoltceva, P Maltese, E P Raynes, P Lagner, 23 oral communications and 120 poster contributions. The problem of technological applications, relations between University and Industry and more generally of "Technology in Western Europe" was debated in a round table by speakers from various western and eastern centres: S Lagerwall (Chalmers University, Goteborg), M Schadt (Hoffman-La Roche, Basel), R B Leslie (Unilever), A Roggero (Eniricerche, Milano), A Smirnov (Minsk Radio-engineering Inst., Minsk).

All the lectures were given at the Centro Congressi in the centre of Courmayeur with a great view of the Alps. The atmosphere was quite informal and a good deal of lively discussion and even arguing went on, as one could rightly expect from such an event. Attendance at the conference was good, even though a strong attraction was represented by the nearby mountains and ski facilities. Even then the right balance between "inspiration and perspiration" was probably achieved and everyone had the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Monte Bianco and maybe get some hints on liquid crystals too (see figure!).

During the conference the Annual Meeting of the Italian Liquid Crystal Group was also held, where it was decided to join the International Liquid Crystal Society. The organisation of the next International Liquid Crystal Conference, which will take place in Pisa, 21-26 June 1992, was also discussed. The papers presented at the meeting and accepted after normal refereeing will be published in a special issue of *Mol. Cryst, Liq. Cryst.* □

**British Liquid Crystal  
Society Annual Conference,  
1991**

**Reading, UK,**

*from Geoffrey Mitchell,  
J J Thompson Physical Laboratory,  
University of Reading, UK*

Good weather and the attractive campus of Reading University provided a successful backdrop for the 1991 Annual Conference, attended by 147 delegates.

Bill Doane (Liquid Crystal Institute, Kent State University, USA) gave a sparkling lead lecture on "Polymer Dispersed Liquid Crystal Systems". These offer intriguing physics and significant technological developments in optical display systems. Other lectures highlighted future developments involving liquid crystal polymers.

A well-constructed overview of the potential of photo-induced orientation processes in liquid crystal polymers for holography and other applications was provided by Joachim Wendorff (Deutsches Kunststoff Institut, Darmstadt). In these systems polarised laser light initiates a selective optical pumping process which, through excitation and relaxation leads effectively to rotation of the local liquid crystal director through  $90^\circ$ . These effects are produced in the glassy state of the material. Examples were given of the particular potential of polarisation sensitive holograms.

Mike Allen (H H Wills Lab, Bristol University), gave the third invited lecture on the current activity and potential of liquid crystal simulation. Stirring but unresolved discussion from the audience considered the present status of "quality" prediction of liquid crystal behaviour through modelling. The linkage between theory and reality through specific chemical synthesis and study was well illustrated by the presentation of S Fan from Southampton on orientational order in liquid crystal dimers and trimers.

The final conference session saw a variety of contributed lectures on phase behaviour in both thermotropic and lyotropic systems and metallomesogens. Of particular note here was the presentation of Sarah Hudson (Dept of Chemistry, Sheffield University) who gave a magnificent overview of the work at Sheffield on metal containing liquid crystal compounds. This talk attracted the award for the best oral presentation by a young scientist.

In addition to 29 oral presentations there were 34 posters, of which that by Eli Bedford and others (Cambridge University), on the numerical simulation of the director pattern in liquid crystal polymers was adjudged the best. Dr Steve Elston (Exeter) was presented with the BLCS Young Scientist award for 1991. □

