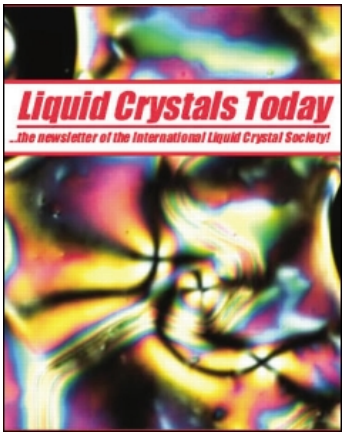

Liquid Crystals Today
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713681230

BLCS 98 13th British Liquid Crystal Society Annual Meeting Bodington Hall, Leeds, UK, 6-8 April, 1998

Alastair Smith[a]
[a] Department of Physics, University of Leeds, UK

To cite this Article Smith, Alastair(1998) 'BLCS 98 13th British Liquid Crystal Society Annual Meeting Bodington Hall, Leeds, UK, 6-8 April, 1998', Liquid Crystals Today, 8: 2, 12
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/13583149808047707
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13583149808047707

MEETING REPORT

BLCS 98 13th British Liquid Crystal Society Annual Meeting Bodington Hall, Leeds, UK, 6–8 April, 1998

Report by

Dr Alastair Smith, Department of Physics, University of Leeds, UK

The 13th Annual British Liquid Crystal Society meeting was hosted by Professor Neville Boden at Leeds University. The conference was held at Bodington Hall, a single site conference venue three miles to the north of the University and city centre. BLCS 98 was attended by 123 delegates from academe and industry, and was kindly sponsored by Linkam Scientific, Taylor & Francis and Novocontrol International.

The conference opened with a plenary lecture given by Professor Tim Swager of MIT who discussed his group's recent work on the synthesis and properties of novel metallomesogens. This was followed by another contribution in the field of metal-containing liquid crystals from Dr Koen Binnemans of K. U. Leuven, Belgium. No other synthetic chemistry contributions were received by the organizing committee, but the breach in this first design and synthesis session was filled by Duncan Bruce and several contributions from Leeds at the last minute. Notably, John Lydon gave a fascinating introduction to the application of liquid crystal physics in biology and discussed the specific example of the shape of the sickle cell and how it could be explained as arising from a compromise between the zeppelin shape of a non-chiral nematic tactoid and the coiled spring structure adopted by elongated dispersions of cholesteric phases.

In a slight change to the normal format, the Monday afternoon session was rounded off with a wine reception in the poster area giving people a first opportunity to peruse the poster contributions.

Tuesday was given over to the physical properties of liquid crystals and there was a wide range of high quality contributions from students and established scientists from industry and academe. This year's Sturgeon Lecturer, Professor George Durand from the Solid State Physics Laboratory at Orsay, got the day of to a flying start with a detailed discussion of surface anchoring of nematics. The BLCS Young Scientist's Prize was this year awarded to Dr Richard Miller of Merck for his work in characterizing order parameters in blue phases performed mainly during his PhD with Helen Gleeson in Manchester. After lunch Professor Dimitra Markovitsi of CEA Saclay, introduced the conference to the concept of energy transport in columnar discotic liquid crystals and described her group's experimental measurements and simulations of the phenomenon which could have exciting applications in molecular electronics. The afternoon was filled with contributions of the highest quality covering subjects as varied as X-ray scattering in lyotropic phases to the calculation of polarizabilities in liquid crystals and orientation in stretched polymer films. As Professor Luckhurst remarked, the wide range of topics always makes the BLCS conference a challenging meeting for delegates.

The conference dinner was attended by almost all the delegates and was enjoyed by everyone. The evening was rounded off by a marvellous presentation of scientific cartoons given by Professor Jim Matthews, a physicist (and accomplished after dinner speaker!) from the Physics Department at the University of York.

Professor Roy Sambles opened the final session on Wednesday morning and gave a detailed description of his group's work using the optical waveguide technique to probe the physical properties of liquid crystals. It was for this work and Professor Sambles enormous contribution to the field during over the last 10 years that he was awarded the 1998 Gray Medal.

A full list of delegates may be found at:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/physics.blcs98/