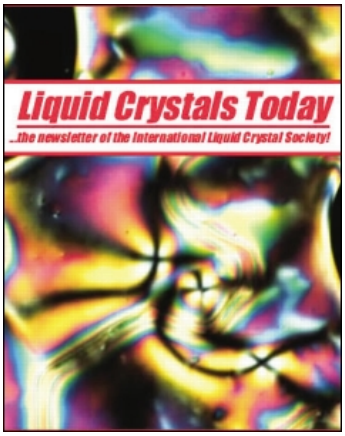

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Freederiksz Medals awarded to Professor Shibaev and Professor Saupe

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Freederiksz Medals awarded to Professor Shibaev and Professor Saupe

Report from Professor Anatoly Sonin, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

The Freederiksz Medal was set up in 1997 as an award for outstanding contributions in the fields of physics, chemistry and applications of liquid crystals. The first laureates in 1997 were Professor Viktor Tsvetkov (Russia) and Professor George Gray (UK). The awards for 1998 were announced at a ceremony on November 25 1998 during a session of the Liquid Crystal Society 'Commonwealth' held at the Institute of Crystallography, Moscow. The Freederiksz Medal for outstanding contributions in the field of the chemistry of liquid crystals was awarded to Professor Valery Shibaev (Russia), while the Freederiksz Medal for outstanding contributions in the field of the physics of liquid crystals was awarded to Professor Alfred Saupe (Germany). The award was presented at the meeting to Professor Shibaev, but, unfortunately, Professor Saupe was unable to be present at the award ceremony. Brief accounts of the contributions of the 1998 Freedericksz Medal laureates are given below.

Valerii Petrovich Shibaev (Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia)

Professor V. P. Shibaev is an outstanding scientist in the area of polymer science and a distinguished pioneer in the area of chemistry and physical chemistry of liquid crystal polymers. He was the first to formulate, and prove experimentally, theoretical speculations concerning conditions for the development of the liquid crystal state in polymers containing mesogenic side chains. The scientific team headed by Professor Shibaev have synthesized several hundred new liquid crystal polymers, and have also worked out principles for controlled modification of the structure and properties of liquid crystal polymers under the action of electric and magnetic fields. The group also obtained new polymeric materials based on liquid crystal polymers with unique optical properties, including selective thin-film filters, polarizers and reflectors for IR, UV and visible regions of the spectrum, and optical elements with space-variable refractivity.

At the present time, the attention of Professor Shibaev and his team is focused on the synthesis of liquid crystalline photochromic and chiral photochromic polymers and on the study of their non-linear optical and photo-optical properties. This work has revealed new

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1. Contributions should be submitted on disk (1 ASCI file and 1 word processing file as used by author), along with 1 paper hard copy using double-line spacing, single sided on A4 paper, with margins top and bottom, and left-hand side of at least 4 cm.
2. Articles must contain suitable headings and sub-headings.
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possibilities for thermooptical and photooptical image recording on thin polymer films under the action of laser radiation. This approach offers new opportunities for the local modification of the optical properties of polymeric materials, and for the development of reverse photooptical media for optical data recording, reproduction and storage.

The scientific activities of Professor Shibaev and coworkers are acknowledged world-wide. For his scientific and pedagogical activities, Professor Shibaev was awarded the State Prize of the USSR (1985), and he has been granted the Soros Professorship on four occasions (1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999). This new winner of the Freederiksz Medal is a progressive modern scientist, and an open, kind and amiable person, a creative organizer and a talented teacher for a new scientific generation.

Professor Shibaev with his Freederiksz Medal and Diploma.

Alfred Saupe (Max-Planck Institute, Halle, Germany)

For all scientists involved in the study of liquid crystals, the name of Alfred Saupe is a legend. This well-known scientist is closely associated with the development of the modern physics of liquid crystals. Alfred Saupe started his research as a specialist in NMR spectroscopy. In his efforts to improve the technique and to enhance the characteristics of NMR spectra, he suggested that nematic liquid crystals could be used as ordered solvents for the solute molecules under investigation. This research then led him to study the physics of the liquid crystals themselves. Together with Professor W. Maier, Alfred Saupe advanced the first microscopic theory of the ordering of nematics and, since that time, this theory has taken the names of Maier and Saupe. Even though the theory, based as it is on a mean field model, is rather crude, it has played an important role in the development of the theory of liquid crystals. It has allowed one to understand the nature of the nematic to isotropic phase transition and to characterize the effect of the order parameter on the properties of nematics. A detailed description of the Freederiksz phenomenon, the determination of elastic constants and rotational viscosities were also great contributions of Alfred Saupe to modern liquid crystal science.

Professor Saupe is the author of many distinguished works in various areas of liquid crystals. Even in the 1980s, he advanced a correct phenomenological theory of biaxial nematics and proposed the fundamentals for their experimental investigation. In recent years, Alfred Saupe and his coworkers have performed interesting work in the field of lyotropic nematics. The team headed by Professor Saupe at the Liquid Crystal Institute, Kent State University, USA, have found biaxial nematic phases in lyotropic liquid crystals. They have also worked out methods for the estimation of order parameters from data on electrical properties, and this team was the first to measure the temperature dependence of elastic constants.

In the area of the physics of liquid crystals, there are few, if any, that can match the achievements of Professor Saupe.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

The George Gray Laboratories, University of Hull

A Report by John Lydon, University of Leeds

February 11th dawned clear and bitterly cold. The Pennines were white with Christmas card icing. The sky was blue. The sun was shining. God was clearly in his heaven and Blondie were back at number one, as representatives of the UK liquid crystal scene gathered at the University of Hull for a ceremony to mark the naming of the new organic chemistry laboratories after George W. Gray. The ceremony involved the unveiling of a plaque by the Vice Chancellor (Professor D. N. Dilks), followed by an afternoon of three lectures. The first, a tour of reminiscence by George Gray, outlined his early scientific life—how he narrowly escaped a career in the oil industry in the Middle East, and the events leading up to the synthesis of pentylcyanobiphenyl. The point he made about his gratitude to the University for giving him space and freedom to develop his liquid crystal work was well taken. The second talk, by Steven Ley of Cambridge University, described the

Professor George Gray (right) and the Vice Chancellor of Hull University (Professor D. N. Dilks) at the naming of the George Gray Laboratories.