

'POLYMER' 1959–1984

Having been given the privilege of writing the foreword to the 25th Anniversary volume of POLYMER highlighting 'Speciality Polymers', it is appropriate to recall the events which led up to the foundation of the journal.

The study of high polymers is a relatively new branch of science, since it was not until the 1930's that the true nature of the polymer molecule was firmly established. In Europe the expected development of the subject was greatly impeded by World War II, but as soon as conditions in the Universities returned to normal, work in the field of polymers vigorously accelerated. In the United Kingdom research expanded rapidly in both the Universities and Industry, and the new branch of science which emerged was not readily accepted or recognized by the learned societies which had a virtual monopoly of publication. The subject was so important and its growth potential so immense that a suitable medium was necessary to cope with the growing volume of somewhat specialized publications. It was for this reason that a small group of leading scientists in the Universities and in Industry got together with Butterworths, a leading publishing house of legal and medical books and journals, which had recently entered the scientific publishing business – to found a new scientific journal devoted to all aspects of polymer science.

The name POLYMER was chosen for the new publication, and starting from small beginnings, today the journal has become one of the world's leading publications on the subject, and with an internationally respected reputation. As conceived by its founders the journal has maintained the highest of standards as regards quality and originality of the papers it publishes. The journal has continued to expand both in size and field of coverage and recently it has been found necessary to publish POLYMER COMMUNICATIONS as a supplementary journal to POLYMER and at no extra cost to the subscriber.

It is therefore appropriate that in celebration of POLYMER's 25th year, that an anniversary conference of international character should be held in the University of Birmingham. This is the first conference sponsored by POLYMER, and the large numbers of papers presented by distinguished scientists from all parts of the world, is both a tribute and a recognition of the standing and achievement of POLYMER.

The theme of the present meeting, SPECIALITY POLYMERS, is indeed very timely, and highlights many of the subjects – the chemistry, physics, biological and engineering aspects of polymers – with which the journal is concerned.

C. E. H. Bawn