

Preface

Progress in thermal analysis techniques and applications.

A selection of papers presented at TAC 97, Oxford, UK, 14–15 April 1997

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TAC 97 combined *The Second UK National Thermal Analysis and Calorimetry Symposium* (Thermal Methods Group, Royal Society of Chemistry), and *Thermal Analysis of Advanced Materials II* (Oxford Centre for Advanced Materials and Composites). This joint Symposium was held at the University of Oxford, in the Department of Engineering Science and in St. Anne's College.

With such a large and complementary body of thermal analysts present at one meeting, it is not surprising that the extensive nature of the subject's horizons emerged as a principal theme. This was not a conference about merely filling in gaps between existing knowledge! Fertile research was confirmed in the contexts of technique development, data analysis, and applications of thermal analysis methods to compositionally and/or structurally complex materials. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a well-defined family of characterisation techniques that can compete with thermal analysis in its ability to provide such a wide range of useful information, relating to such a diversity of length scales, from so many different kinds of sample, while requiring such small amounts of sample for testing.

The selection of papers in this special issue of *Thermochimica Acta* represents the multidisciplinary flavour of the joint Symposium. Papers with a focus on theory and/or method development are presented first, followed by papers in which thermal analysis is applied to a variety of synthetic and natural systems.

Organisation of the Symposium was shared between Jez Leckenby and Steve Warrington (Thermal Methods Group Committee, Royal Society of Chemistry), and Keyna O'Reilly, Diane Taylor, Brian Cantor and Christopher Viney (OCAMAC – Oxford Center for Advanced Materials and Composites). Diane Taylor is owed particular thanks for dealing efficiently with the enormous number of local details that can make or break a Symposium. The guest editor of this special issue gratefully acknowledges assistance from two regular *Thermochimica Acta* editors: Jim Hay and, especially, Jim Ford.

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