

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

THE 11TH FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM INVESTIGATES PAPERMAKING MATERIALS

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THE 11TH FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM IN THE Oxford and Cambridge Series was held at Robinson College, Cambridge, U.K., during the week of Sept. 21, 1997. PITA, TAPPI, and the Technical Section of CPPA cosponsored the event.

The theme of the symposium was *The Fundamentals of Papermaking Materials*. P. T. Herdman, Symposium chairman, gave the welcome and introduction. Joseph D. Wright, president and CEO of Paprican (Canada), delivered the keynote address, *The Future of Paper*. This wide-ranging, thought-provoking paper contained over 50 references setting a standard of excellence, which was continued throughout the event. Dr. Wright looked at the history of development in communications, which was dominated by paper-based technologies (printing, typing, and xerography) through recent computerized activities aimed at a "paperless office."

Despite the revolution, paper refuses to disappear. Several factors account for the continuing growth in certain market sectors. From the sociological point of view, paper is well suited to many communication tasks; from the technological perspective, it is by far and away the cheapest disposable display technology; and from the R&D angle, the world is changing rapidly. Dr. Wright summarized this with his own aphorism - *plus ça change, plus ça va vite* - which translates roughly as the more things change the quicker they go. How true!

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

The Symposium was structured to reflect the primary materials used in the papermaking process and, therefore, was divided into the following sessions:

1. Physical properties of fibers.
2. Chemical and physico-chemical properties of fibers
3. The properties of pigments and fillers
4. Properties of sizing materials
5. Papermaking process chemicals
6. The structure of the paper sheet

Each session contained reviewed research papers representing the latest work in the field from many

countries. There were also six specially commissioned reviews, which provided relevant background technology. Each contained numerous references.

The review papers are a highly regarded part of the Symposium and have been used as teaching material by many institutes throughout the world. The educational role of the Symposium was also recognized by the European Commission who sponsored 20 student attendees.

Delegates to the conference participated in the traditional half day social activity, which included a visit to Duxford Aircraft Museum, the largest aircraft museum in Europe and center for restoration work. Other social events included a wine tasting evening at Wimpole Hall, a traditional English country house. The Symposium banquet followed an organ recital, which featured a selection of music sung at appropriate intervals by a group of choral scholars from King's College.

Social activities for companions of attendees consisted of a half day walking tour of some Cambridge Colleges, two full-day guided tours of the local countryside with the themes of "Constable and Gainsborough" and "Cromwell Country."

PROSPERITY AND PARTNERSHIP

The Symposium was attended by a total of 310 people from 22 countries. This number was greater than expected and was believed to be due largely to two factors: Firstly, the economic situation in the industry had recovered significantly since 1993. Secondly, the Fundamental Research Society had considerable support in publicizing the event thanks to the assistance of the collaborating partners: PITA, TAPPI and the technical Section of CPPA. All of whom sent out information to their membership.

The 12th Fundamental Research Symposium will be held in Oxford in September 2001.

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