

Call for papers (with apologies for cross posting)

10th International Conference on the History of Chemistry (10th ICHC)

CHEMICAL BIOGRAPHY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

University of Aveiro, Portugal, 9th to 12th September 2015
Conference website: <http://10ichc-2015.web.ua.pt/>

This interdisciplinary conference welcomes participants from a range of academic disciplines including history of science and technology, science and technology studies (STS), economic and business history, and the history of material culture and museum studies. We also warmly welcome participants from chemistry and related disciplines with an interest in the history of their discipline.

Biographies—whether in the form of books or articles—have always been an important genre in the history of chemistry. General histories of chemistry have often taken a biographical approach, most notably the four volume work of J. R. Partington. Many chemists, especially in the German-speaking world, have written autobiographies which along with the formal obituaries produced by national academies of science have formed an important source of information for historians of chemistry. More recently the American Chemical Society published the “Profiles, Pathways and Dreams” series which extended the autobiographical form up to the end of the 20th century. For several decades in the latter half of the 20th century, professional historians of chemistry avoided the biographical approach as being inherently too hagiographical and “Whiggish”. However following the pioneering work of scholars in the history of physics the biography has been taken up anew as a framework for analysing thematic problems and social-cultural questions. This conference will critically examine this conceptual “turn” in the historiography of chemistry and explore ways in which the biographical approach can be fruitfully employed by historians of chemistry.

The conference will embrace all aspects of the history of alchemy and chemistry including the history of materials and the history of biochemistry. Papers which simply present the biography of a chemist will not be accepted, as there must be a line of argument or a historical problematic. Papers might address:

1. Autobiographies as a source for historians of chemistry
2. Biography and discipline building
3. Biographies and nationalism
4. The making and unmaking of chemical heroes
5. Myths and misrepresentation
6. Iconography as a mode of self-representation in the visual arts, sculpture and photography
7. The historiography of the biographical mode
8. Collective biographies including biographical dictionaries and the “biographies” of research groups

Proposals for papers on other topics can be submitted, but preference will be given to papers reflecting the conference theme. Proposals can be made for sessions, standard papers (20 minutes), short papers (10 minutes) and posters. Proposals (abstracts) should be uploaded using EasyChair on the website <http://10ichc-2015.web.ua.pt/> and be a minimum of 150 words and a maximum of 300 words. The session proposals should also contain the abstracts of the proposed papers. The deadline for all proposals is midnight (Universal Time/GMT) on 31 March 2015. Further details of the conference, including local arrangements and accommodation, will be found on the website. Please address any queries to the chair of the programme committee, Peter Morris, at peter.morris@sciencemuseum.ac.uk.