

## REPORT ON THE XXVTH ISFR CONFERENCE

The XXVth Conference of the International Society for Fluoride Research was held January 21-24, 2003, at Knox College, a venerable residence hall of the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Opened in 1909, Knox College was described in 1920 by GE Thompson in his *A History of the University of Otago* as one of the finest of its kind in Australasia. Together with its stately charm and splendid hilltop setting, the college provided an ideal venue for those attending the conference to reside close to both the meeting room and the dining hall.

During the preceding week of January 13-21, with Marjorie and Bruce Spittle acting as guides and Barry Milford driving the coach, fourteen conference attendees participated in a pre-conference tour of some of the most scenic parts of South Island, New Zealand. Throughout the week, unusually fine weather allowed full enjoyment of all the activities. The tour began with a special bonus visit to a large sheep and deer farm in Southland and then proceeded as outlined on pages 79-80 in *Fluoride* 2002;35(2). On the Milford Road, there was midsummer icy snow to walk on at the entrance to Homer Tunnel, but, overall, sunburn was more of a problem than frostbite. Especially memorable were the scenic cruises on Lake Manapouri, Doubtful Sound, and Lake Wakatipu. Unusual fauna included the 'live' tuatara display at Invercargill, bottle-nose dolphins in Doubtful Sound, New Zealand fur seals in Milford Sound, petrified fallen trees and a Hooker sea lion at Curio Bay, and the glow worm caves at Te Anau. On the tour, everyone enjoyed many valuable and stimulating informal discussions, especially about fluoride research.

The conference was hosted by the Department of Psychological Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago, and was convened by Dr Bruce Spittle of the Department. At the opening ceremony, a warm welcome was extended to everyone, and a video on the local Province of Otago was shown.

At the scientific sessions, six of seven planned mini-symposia were held that covered leading areas of fluoride research. The six keynote speakers who were able to attend and present their topics were:

- Professor Emeritus Niloufer Chinoy, Amelioration of fluoride toxicity;
- Dr Mark Diesendorf, Ethics of fluoridation;
- Professor Anna Strunecká, Aluminofluoride complexes;
- Professor Paul Connett, Effects of fluoride on bone, collagen, and cartilage;
- Professor Hardy Limeback, Fluoride and teeth; and,
- Dr William Hirzy, Environmental fluoride.

Mr. Andreas Schuld, who had planned to be the seventh keynote speaker on Fluoride and thyroid function, was unable to attend, but kindly made his material available on his website. After each mini-symposium, the presenters formed a panel for further discussion and questions. Besides the six keynote addresses, 13 platform papers and seven poster papers were presented on various topics as listed in the Conference Abstracts published in *Fluoride* 2002;35(4).

Fourteen countries were represented by 43 participants and guests: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, England, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, People's Republic of China, Poland, the Republic of South Africa, and the United States of America. The generous support of all who attended, particularly the fifteen members and guests from Japan and the four from Poland, was especially helpful for the conference to break even financially.

Optional additional activities included three pre-breakfast one-hour walks in the adjacent Botanic Gardens, the oldest in New Zealand. These walks had many participants, and the areas visited included the aviary, a Japanese garden, and some native New Zealand bush.

The public debate on fluoridation, proposed at the XXIIIrd ISFR Conference in Szczecin, was modified to a Fluoridation Forum when it proved impossible to obtain the two teams necessary for a debate. After some introductory remarks, Professors Connett and Limeback formed a panel to answer questions on fluoridation led by Dr Allan Blackman of the Department of Chemistry, University of Otago.

The Social Programme included an opportunity to visit the stately Edwardian Larnach's Castle, Olveston, and the Taieri Gorge by excursion train.

On the afternoon of January 23, 2003, everyone travelled by bus to the Penguin Place yellow-eyed penguin reserve on the Otago Peninsula. There New Zealand fur seals and young penguins still covered in down were observed. The group then boarded a vessel called *The Monarch*, which went to the harbour entrance near the cliffs at Taiaroa Head where the famous Royal Albatross Colony is situated. The windy conditions were ideal for watching the albatrosses fly, and up to 11 at a time were observed soaring in the air. *The Monarch* then recrossed the harbour to Dunedin, and the party returned by coach to the College.

At the General Meeting of the ISFR, Vice President Professor Koichi Kono took up the position of President. The resignation of the Secretary Professor Emeritus Gene Miller was received with regret. Cordial thanks were extended by Professor Kono to Professor Zygmunt Machoy for his service and guidance during his term of office as President of the Society, to Professor Miller for his long service to the Society as Secretary, and to Dr Bruce

Spittle for convening the XXVth Conference. By election, Professor Emeritus Ming-Ho Yu and Professor Jörg Spitz were chosen unanimously for the positions of Secretary and Second Vice-President, respectively. The Officers of the Advisory Board of the Society for the next two years until the XXVIth ISFR Conference in 2005 are:

- President: Professor Koichi Kono
- Vice President: Professor Emeritus Niloufer Chinoy
- Second Vice President: Professor Jörg Spitz
- Secretary: Professor Emeritus Ming-Ho Yu
- Treasurer: Dr Bruce Spittle
- Editor of *Fluoride*: Professor Emeritus Albert Burgstahler

Professor Kono reported that at the Business Meeting of the Advisory and Editorial Boards, on the recommendation of Professor Burgstahler, the nomination of three new Associate Editors of *Fluoride* and the addition of four new Editorial Board members were approved:

New Associate Editors of *Fluoride*:

- Professor Emeritus Niloufer Chinoy
- Professor Emeritus Lennart Krook
- Professor Hardy Limeback

New Editorial Board Members:

- Professor Hardy Limeback
- Dr Bogusław Machalinski
- Professor Masayuki Okazaki
- Professor Anna Strunecká

The Treasurer made a brief financial report and expressed appreciation for the generosity of recent donors. Owing to financial constraints, distribution of complimentary copies of *Fluoride* will be discontinued, apart from those providing abstracting services and where there is a statutory requirement. In turn, donors to *Fluoride* are invited to nominate those to whom they would like gift subscriptions given. Such gift copies will bear a suitable acknowledgement. Membership and subscription fees are unchanged for 2003. However, in the interest of fairness, membership and subscription fees for Australian and New Zealand residents will be increased in 2004 to AD45 and NZD45, respectively. A discussion took place about whether the subscription fee for institutions should be greater than for individuals but failed to reach agreement.

Professor Kono reported that it had been tentatively agreed by the ISFR Advisory Board that the XXVIIth Conference would be hosted by Dr Dianjun Sun and his colleagues in Beijing, People's Republic of China, in 2007.

Professor Spitz gave a slide presentation on Wiesbaden, Germany and invited everyone to attend the XXVIth Conference there in 2005.

The closing banquet held on the evening of January 24, 2003, featured New Zealand food and wine. It was preceded by a haggis ceremony in which the traditional Scottish dish containing oatmeal and offal was brought in with the playing of bagpipes and then spoken to with the words of Robert Burns in his Address to a Haggis. During the meal a quartet entertained by exquisite playing of classical music. Thanks were then extended all for making the conference so successful. A presentation was made to Marjorie and Bruce for acting as hosts. Professor Jörg Spitz again extended his invitation to meet in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 2005 for the XXVIth ISFR Conference. The farewell theme was echoed in song with the singing of Auld Lang Syne by Robert Burns and a traditional New Zealand farewell song Po Atarau / Now is the hour. Vocal appetites having been whetted, the group appreciated then hearing a fine rendition of a Japanese song. Something of a music hall atmosphere then prevailed with both story and song.

Final farewells were bid the next morning as everyone departed from Knox College.

Bruce Spittle