

The John Dolphin Fellowships

by John Lough

Many members of The Chromatographic Society and readers of Chromatography Today will know of the sad passing away of John Dolphin at the age of only 62. John was a long-serving member of the Executive Committee of The Chromatographic Society in the 1980s. For much of this time, he was Treasurer and then Chairman from 1985 to 1987. The grainy black-and-white photographs shown below, taken from the Society's 'Bulletin' show John mixing with various luminaries of the time. He was also well known in the wider chromatographic community as the principal player of the chromatography division of Shandon Southern and its various subsequent metamorphoses. In this role, John collaborated closely with Professor John Knox of Edinburgh University and was responsible for bringing his Hypersil and Hypercarb products to market.



John Dolphin (second from left) at a Hypersil Young Chromatographer Symposium ca.1994 flanked by (from left to right) Harry Ritchie (still with Shandon / Hypersil / Thermo), John Knox and Mike Cooke (the then Chromatographic Society President)"

Since John's death, his family have inaugurated the John Dolphin Trust. In February The Chromatographic Society was very pleased to receive a significant donation in John's memory from the Trust to be used towards sponsorship of students undertaking PhD research. It is entirely in-keeping with John's perceptions of separation science and of life in general, that the donation be put to this purpose. As well as his interest in John Knox's academic research, in the early to mid-1990s John was responsible for setting up the "Hypersil Young Chromatographer of the Year" competition and award. The photograph below shows him alongside Harry Ritchie, John Knox and Mike Cooke (President of The Chromatographic Society at the time) at a "Hypersil Young Chromatographer of the Year" awards symposium.

It is appropriate that the first discussions about how best to make most effective use of this most generous bequest took place between members of The Chromatographic Society's Executive Committee and former colleagues of John Dolphin, at the Society's Separation Science in the UK: State of the Nation meeting in March.

The Society's main role is to foster the development of separation science. The donation from the John Dolphin Trust represents a fresh opportunity for the Society to significantly enhance the state of the nation's chromatography, at least as far as PhD students are concerned. Such opportunities don't arise often so it was important to consider this very carefully.

Ideally, The Chromatographic Society would have sufficient reserves to allow it to totally fund PhD studentships. However, despite the substantial John Dolphin Trust donation it was insufficient when added to the Society's reserves to meet the high level needed.

The challenge was to make effective use of the donation at a level short of fully funding PhD studentships but having a much higher level of impact than the Society's general bursary scheme.

The discussions concluded that, subject to ratification by the full CS Executive Committee and drafting detailed guidelines, the donation would be used to provide full support for up to five PhD students working in British universities each year to attend and present their work at



Dr John Dolphin, Dr Henri Colin, Prof J.H.Knox and Prof E.Sz Kováts. Prof. Ervin Kováts was the inventor of the relative retention system that bears his name.

major overseas conferences in separation science. This scheme will commence for conferences in the calendar year, 2010. It is anticipated that with CS funding augmented by the Trust and sponsorship donations from commercial companies that The John Dolphin Fellowships will be available for a minimum of fifteen years.

The Fellowships will be central to how the donation is used. However it may be possible to do more if other matching donations are received. For example, the British Mass Spectrometry Society (BMSS) provide support for summer studentships for undergraduates to carry out mass spectrometry research projects in the hope that they become inspired to proceed to look for a PhD position in mass spectrometry. The Chromatographic Society may follow this practice with summer studentships in separation science.

Your suggestions or comments are most welcome. Please e-mail chromsoc@meetingmakers.co.uk. Similarly, students may already indicate an expression of interest in applying for a Fellowship.