

Editorial

The very first meeting of the International Conference on the Coordination and Organometallic Chemistry of Germanium, Tin and Lead, ICCOC-GTL-1, took place in Marseille, France in 1974. Since then it has been a tri-annual event which has been hosted in six other European countries, along with meetings in Canada, Japan, Australia and, in 2004, ICCOC-GTL-11, in Santa Fe, CA, USA. The conferences provide an important forum for the dissemination of all exciting new developments and advances within the broad format of the chemistry of germanium, tin and lead. The meetings, which have always been conducted in a pleasant and cordial atmosphere, follow a one-session format which allows all participants to enjoy and contribute to the diverse range of conference themes.

The twelfth meeting of this group took place in Galway, Ireland from 9 to 13 July, 2007. The main themes which emerged from the presentations were continued progress in the areas of multiply-bonded species, related heavy-element aromatic systems and low-valency chemistry in general, and new materials incorporating the three elements. In addition, the traditional areas of coordination chemistry, applications in organic synthesis and biological activity were well represented, along with a session dedicated to the application of physical techniques for the study of the chemistry of the three elements.

The meeting was, however, overshadowed by the loss of the lead conference organizer, Professor Des Cunningham, in late 2006. Des was a regular participant at ICCOC-GTL, missing very few of the preceding 11 meetings. The Galway conference would have been a fitting finale to his career, as he was due to retire in 2008. Throughout his career Des made a significant contribution to Group 14 chemistry, from the early days of Mössbauer studies, through coordination chemistry, crystallography and finally to novel approaches to the synthesis of tin-containing materials. He will be missed by all his friends and colleagues worldwide, for his science, the enthusiasm he had for his subject and for his easy-going attitude to life.

When Des was seriously ill and realized that he might not live to see the conference take place in Galway, his colleagues in Galway and close scientific friends were able to assure him that the meeting would take place. We are delighted that so many eminent chemists from around the world have contributed to the event, making it the conference that Des was hoping for and which was dedicated to his memory.

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