

Preface

For a variety of reasons, I welcome the opportunity of composing a preface to this special issue. First, it is, I believe, appropriate (and, I hope, forgivable) to indulge in what one may call ‘millennial musings’ pertaining to catalysis, a subject that not only captured my interest from an early age, but which has been the ruling passion of most of my scientific life, ever since I began to pursue postgraduate research in a laboratory at the University of Wales, Swansea in 1954. The person who worked at the adjacent bench in that laboratory was Wyn Roberts, who has been a loyal friend and sagacious counsellor for over fifty years.

As well as contributing greatly to numerous aspects of the ever-expanding fields of surface science and interfacial phenomena, Wyn Roberts has also been deeply interested in the historical evolution of catalysis, and is well versed in the practice of identifying milestones along the paths pursued in heterogeneous catalysis ever since the subject was christened by Berzelius in the 1830s. We are greatly indebted to him for this charming, authoritative and evocative personal reflec-

tion. We are confident that it will be consulted and perused with particular pleasure by present and future practitioners of the art and science of catalysis.

Finally, as a founding co-editor of *Catalysis Letters* (and *Topics in Catalysis*), I rejoice, along with all those people who have been involved in its fortunes, in the success that our journal has experienced during its first decade of existence. Reflecting upon this fact, it seemed most appropriate to Daniel Baltzer, Gabor Somorjai and me that we should take the opportunity at the Granada International Congress of Catalysis, July 2000, of producing this special celebratory and complimentary issue, which we hope will be welcomed and appreciated by all our authors, referees, readers and indeed by all (especially students) who are attracted by the perennially interesting and ever-new field of catalysis.

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May 2000 Royal Institution of Great Britain,
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