

74th Congress of the European Orthodontic Society, Mainz

The 74th Congress of the European Orthodontic Society was held in Mainz in the Congress centre overlooking the Rhine, one of the busiest rivers of Europe with a constant stream of boats, barges, and other pleasure boats passing its doors. The Congress was organized by our President and his lady, Professor Hans Sergl and his wife Ingerborg. We are grateful to them for their excellent organization and hospitality. The meeting was combined with the 90th anniversary of the German Orthodontic Society under the Presidency of Professor Gerda Komposch. It was good to have this joint meeting with our German colleagues.

Before the Congress started the European Board of Orthodontists held its second sitting and 11 of the 17 candidates were awarded Membership of the Board. The weather was wet, and on Sunday evening there was a thunderstorm and the spire of the Cathedral was struck by lightning causing the bells to ring. Fortunately, the examiners did not get too wet, and from then onwards the weather improved and the participants had a wonderful week, culminating in an outing by boat along the Rhine with the Silver Mill competition.

Prior to the opening of the Conference there was another Forum of National Orthodontic Societies which was attended by 41 delegates from 21 National Societies. Various topics were discussed and it was suggested that National Societies should have better representation in the Society. It was pointed out that at the moment the Society has 13 countries represented on its Council of 15 members. It was also suggested that the National Societies should have a greater influence in the selection of the President of the Society and that when a name is proposed it should be sent to the National Society for their approval. However, the final

decision must be with the Society. The Newsletter which had been sent out had been very much appreciated by the National Societies and it was felt that this should be repeated.

The opening of the Congress was on Tuesday evening and the lecture theatre was full for the ceremony which commenced with music by a group from the Faculty of Music at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. The flags of the various Nations who were present were brought in by the children of Mainz. After welcoming the participants, the President then asked Professor Gerda Komposch and other dignitaries to speak. He then invited Professor Gottfried Schmuth to give the Sheldon Friel Memorial lecture 'Considerations on functional aspects in



Hans and Ingerborg Sergl.

dentofacial orthopaedics and orthodontics'. The evening was brought to a close by the welcoming reception, where old friendships were renewed and new ones were made.

The first session of the scientific programme was given over to the W. J. B. Houston Memorial papers, and the prize was awarded to Nichola Price for her paper 'The expression of embryonic fibronectin splicing variants in human masseter'.

The keynote speakers for topic 1, 'The neuromuscular system and its significance for orofacial anomalies and their treatment', were T. M. Graber, N. F. Annunziato and H. Schmalbruch. These papers gave an excellent basis for the whole session. There were many excellent papers given and our knowledge of the advances made in this area was enhanced. In the evening there was an organ concert in the newly-restored St Peters Church. The music played demonstrated the immense variety of the stops available to the organist and also his expertise. It was only a short distance across the road to the Elector's Castle for the President's reception. Here, the President and his lady welcomed us to a magnificent buffet and entertainment by a dance group from Mainz.

On Thursday the keynote speakers for the second topic 'The vertical dimension of anomalies: aetiology, diagnosis and therapy' were D. G. Woodside, R. M. Nanda and F. P. G. M. van der Linden. This session was then followed by the papers on free topics which varied from a paper on 'Molecular signalling' by the recipient of the Houston Scholarship, D. Rice, to the 'Stability of occlusal treatment' by A. M. Kuijpers-Jagtman. On the Thursday evening, the postgraduates enjoyed a special evening which had been arranged for them with food and music more suited to the younger generation.

On Friday morning the papers on free topics continued and at the end of the morning the official ceremony for the 90th Anniversary of the German Orthodontic Society was held. Professor Gerda Komposch presided over the meeting and Professor P. Hommelhoff of Heidelberg gave a stimulating and thought-provoking lecture on 'Europe: a chance'. In the afternoon, there was time to see the posters, table clinics, and videos. There was an excellent display of 255 posters, the

quality of which is improving every year. There were also 16 table clinics and four videos on varying topics.

The day concluded with the Gala Banquet which was a magnificent occasion. The President and his lady took the floor, and showed how ballroom dancing should be done. He then introduced members of the dancing group to which they belong who demonstrated various forms of dancing, after which the audience were invited to participate. All those present agreed that it was a memorable evening.

Saturday dawned with a clear blue sky and we boarded the boat for the Silver Mill outing to the Loreley Rock. As we left the Congress Centre the jazz band began to play and we travelled along the Rhine past the many picturesque towns and castles. There were many vineyards and small islands along the river which were full of wildlife. Passing the entrance of the Nahe river at Bingen we proceeded to Oberwesel, where we moored for the Silver Mill competition which took on a typical local flavour, the idea being to re-enact the rescue of the beautiful maiden from the rocks. The teams from the various countries had to first of all burst balloons with a sword, and the winners then had to knock over the heads of the President and the three honorary officers peering over the battlements of a castle. The winners of this round then had to dress up in a horse's costume and, with a lance, take two hanging rings off a pole. The two winners then had to dislodge one another from a narrow plank of wood using a lance with a boxing glove on the end. The winners were South Africa who were then allowed to rescue the young maiden. It was an amusing and pleasant afternoon, and we then boarded the boat to visit the Loreley rocks, where legend says that the seven rocks are seven hard-hearted virgins who were turned to stone. The warmth of the wonderful spirit of friendship which was present ensured our safe return to Mainz. The evening was warm and still, and as we approached the Congress Centre the moon was rising over the city of Mainz, leaving one with a feeling of gratitude for a wonderful Conference.