

Robert Fox *

Outgoing President of the ESHS

THE INSTITUTIONS HOSTING THE 2ND ICESHS:

The European Society for the History of Science

THE SOCIETY WAS FOUNDED IN OCTOBER 2003 at a meeting in Paris attended by representatives from nine countries. It grew, after extensive preliminary discussions, from a recognition of the benefits that academic disciplines could draw from greater international collaboration within Europe. Those benefits had already been acknowledged within the International Council of Scientific Unions, which had set further coordination on the European scale as one of its priorities, and a number of other disciplines had already led the way. For the history of science, the European Association for the History of Medicine and Health (founded in 1989) was an especially important model.

The founding General Assembly of the society took place on 12 October 2003 at the Sorbonne, where it was hosted by Danielle Jacquart in the premises of the Ecole pratique des hautes études, IVe section. The Assembly elected a provisional slate of officers and agreed on a pattern of major congresses to be held (along with a General Assembly) every two years, with at least one additional meeting organized in each of the intervening years, normally in collaboration with one or more of the many national societies in our discipline. The first congress, held in Maastricht at the invitation (and with the invaluable support) of the Dutch national society Gewina and the University of Maastricht, took place from 4 to 6 November 2004. The second was the meeting in Cracow, where the ESHS was privileged to collaborate with the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Jagiellonian University and the Institute for the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

It is the proceedings of this congress, held from 6 to 9 September 2006, that are now published here.

Both of the congresses were highly successful, in the attendances they attracted, in the high quality of the papers and discussion, and, most importantly, in the encouragement they gave to exchanges and collaboration between colleagues anxious to strengthen their links across the European continent. Now, we look forward to a third congress, to be held in Vienna from 10 to 12 September 2008.

From the start, the ESHS website (<http://www.eshs.org>) has been an essential means of communication, and I welcome this opportunity of acknowledging the contribution of the society's first secretary, Stéphanie Dupouy, and its first webmaster, Christelle Rabier, in setting that aspect of our activities on the right road.

In accordance with the procedures of the ESHS, an election for officers to serve from 2006 to 2008 took place in the General Assembly. Our vice-president Eberhard Knobloch succeeded Robert Fox as president, and Helge Kragh was elected as vice-president and president-elect (to serve as president from 2008–2010, following Professor Knobloch's two-year term of office). Happily for the society, Erwin Neuenschwander, Simon Werrett, and Danielle Jacquart agreed to continue as (respectively) treasurer, newsletter editor, and representative of the society's official seat (which remains at the EPHE, IVe section), while Leonardo Garibaldi (as secretary), Stefano Bonetta (webmaster), and Raffaele Pisano (public relations officer) are welcome newcomers to the steering committee.

One development during the 2006 congress deserves special mention. This was the formalization of an association with *Centaurus*, which the ESHS is now privileged to have as its official journal, under the editorship of Hanne Andersen.

A sad note at Cracow was the departure from the steering committee of Claude Debru, whose commitment to the vision of what emerged in 2003 as the ESHS never wavered. His belief in the ideal of a European community in the history of science and the energy he invested in the passage from ideal to reality were an inspiration to all of us who were involved in the launching of the society.

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