

On third day, Dr. Harsh Gupta, Secretary, DOD, Govt. of India delivered a special lecture on 'Gas Hydrates – Energy for the future in India'. Followed by this, the following three plenary lectures were held: (1) Operational oceanography - A perspective from the private sector by Dr. Ralph Rayner, Managing Director, Fugro GEOS, UK, (2) A multi-ping side scan sonar system Ship wreck by Mr. John C. Spruance, Vice-President, R&D, M/s. Edge Tech, USA, and (3) World waves: high quality coastal and offshore wave data within minutes for any global site demonstrated for Indian waters by Mr. Frode Berge, Director, Oceanor, Norway. In session 5, track I was devoted to Ocean Observation Systems and track II for ROVs/AUVs and Desalination, where six papers each were presented. As a part of COT 2003, conventional and innovative oceanographic and deep-sea mining equipment (both indigenous and abroad) were exhibited.

In a brief valedictory function held on 12th afternoon, Prof. Ravindran profusely thanked the Secretary, DOD, Govt. of India for his encouragement and full support and

his colleagues as well as various committee members for their wholehearted co-operation rendered for the success of the conference. In his reply, the Secretary, DOD congratulated Prof. Ravindran and his team for the achievements made in the last ten years both in technology and NIOT campus development. He lauded them for conducting COT 2003 in a short notice so meaningfully. He was hopeful that NIOT would make further strides in the next five years including the exploration/exploitation of polymetallic nodules and gas hydrates. Dr. Atmanand, Joint Secretary, read out the proceedings of the three-day conference and Dr. Purnima Jalihal, Member, Organising Committee, proposed a vote of thanks.

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13th CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRYOZOOLOGY ASSOCIATION AT CONCEPCIÓN, CHILE

The International Bryozoology Association (IBA) was established in 1965 to encourage research and promote exchange of ideas on the Bryozoa. Since its foundation it has grown into an association numbering 254 members worldwide, and covering both the fields of palaeontology and zoology.

The IBA organizes an international conference every three years where papers and posters are presented and members exchange ideas. The first IBA met at Milan in 1968, and the present one, the 13th International Conference (IBA 2004), was organised by Hugo Moyano (Universidad de Concepción) and Juan Cancino and María Christina Orellana (Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción) at Concepción, Chile from 11th to 16th January 2004. Concepción is a city of some 325,000 inhabitants in central Chile, about 45 minutes flying time south of Santiago. The modern city, though regularly affected by earthquakes, is located inland protected from the effects of tsunamis that destroyed its earlier incarnations.

Seventy bryozoologists from 28 different countries registered for the conference. The themes were: (A) Systematics, zoogeography and evolution, (B) Molecular Biology, (C) Ecology, (D) Gondwanian

Bryozoa: past and present, (E) General Palaeontology and (F) General Bryozoology. Sixty-four full papers and 25 posters were presented during 16 sessions continuing through the five days of the conference. Most papers and posters were on systematics, zoogeography, evolution and



(From left to right) Dr. Timothy S. Wood (IBA Secretary), Dr. Guha, Dr. Dennis P. Gordon (IBA President) and Dr. Claus Nielsen at the conference venue, Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción, Chile.

ecology Forty-one full papers and 13 posters were on living bryozoans, retrieving some important observation on biology, distribution and ecological attributes

Comparison of polar and temperate suites was the subject matter of quite a few papers. Studies on bryozoans from the Antarctic areas and Arctic fjords chiefly concentrated on competition for substrate space, intraspecific competitive interaction and sediment-colony relationship. Discussion on life-history strategies of some closely related Antarctic bryozoans revealed that the Antarctic bryozoans (and other organisms), reared in aquaria, become functionally incapable with a rise of water temperature by 2°C only, a grim future for the Antarctic biota with global warming much exceeding this level during the next 100 years.

Although known as marine fouling organism themselves, biofilms fouling bryozoan colony surfaces were studied in three papers.

Reports on studies related to the structure and chemistry of bryozoan skeleton in general and of stable light isotopes in a variety of polar and temperate species in particular have opened many new directions for future research.

Speciation in bryozoans has always met with problems. Systematic study on some extant taxa has shown that colonial characters are of great value in discrimination between species. Pamstaking refinement in species-level taxonomy on a Recent bryozoan showed that most of the genetic species are recognisable from their skeletal morphology, an attribute when established, would change our idea on the true diversity of Recent bryozoans, to be raised from the oft-quoted figure of 6000 to nearly 50,000 species.

The Session-V was devoted to freshwater bryozoans, where cases of biodiversity, ecology and fouling characteristics were discussed. In two papers dealing with molecular phylogenetic research many new basic problems in taxonomy were highlighted.

SEM images have been proved to be a vital tool in bryozoology in understanding many new morphological features and revising old types (of Alcide d'Orbigny, for example). Taxa discarded some fifty years ago needed to be revived.

The paper entitled "Diversity, evolution and paleoecology of the Tertiary bryozoan assemblages of

western Kachchh, Gujarat" by the author of this note and K. Gopikrishna, the only contribution from India, was presented at the 10th Session on 15th January 2004. There were notes of appreciation by fellow bryozoologists in the fact that such a diverse assemblage of the Tertiary bryozoans exists in Kachchh, Gujarat, India. The report of the earliest diverse assemblage (15 species) of *Thalamoporella* promises to be important in understanding the evolution of avicularia in this important cheilostome genus. The area (Kachchh) hopefully will make a place among important Tertiary bryozoan localities of the world.

In the final paper of the conference Dennis Gordon talked about two biodiversity initiatives, *Species 2000* and *OBIS* (Ocean Biogeographic Information System). To make full use of these initiatives and close the knowledge gap more hands on systematics are needed.

The mid-conference excursion was arranged in the temperate rain forest of the Nahuelbuta National Park, an area of native habitat of majestic araucarian (*Araucaria*) trees with southern beeches (*Nothofagus*). Views of the snow-capped volcanoes of the distant Andes made the excursion a memorable one.

The abstracts of papers presented in this conference have already been published as Volume 74 of the *Boletín de la Sociedad de Biología de Concepción*, and full papers are scheduled to be published by Taylor & Francis.

Excellent pre-conference (4th - 10th January, 2004) and post-conference (18th - 25th January, 2004) field trips to northern Chile and South Chile (including Magellan straits) respectively were arranged. Illustrious photo-galleries along with other information on International Bryozoology Association (IBA) are available at its Website [<http://www.civgeo.rmit.edu.au/bryozoa>]. The 14th IBA Conference is scheduled to be held in 2007 at the Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, USA.

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CORRIGENDUM

In the editorial columns of *JGSI*, v 63, no 5 of May 2004, p 480, third line from top, please read 'Central and State Groundwater Boards' instead of 'Central and State Government Boards'