

HIST CENTENNIAL MEMORIES

GEORGE KAUFFMAN: A PERSONAL
REMINISCENCE

Ian D. Rae, University of Melbourne, Australia, iandrae@bigpond.com

I was very interested to read Jeff Seeman's obituary-tribute to George Kauffman in the Fall 2022 *Bulletin* (*Bull. Hist. Chem.*, **2022**, 46(2), 205-217). I got to know George because of a mutual interest in writing about chemistry, a meeting of minds that was triggered by my reading his "Alias J. J. Connington: the Life and Work of Alfred W. Stuart (1880-1947) Chemist and Novelist," (*J. Chem. Educ.*, **1983**, 60(1), 38-40). I had included Connington/Stewart and his chemist Sir Clinton Driffield in my article "Dustcoats in Dustjackets" published by the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (*Chemistry in Australia*, **1982**, 49, 162-165) and later by the Royal Society of Chemistry (*Chemistry in Britain*, **1983**, 19, 565-569).

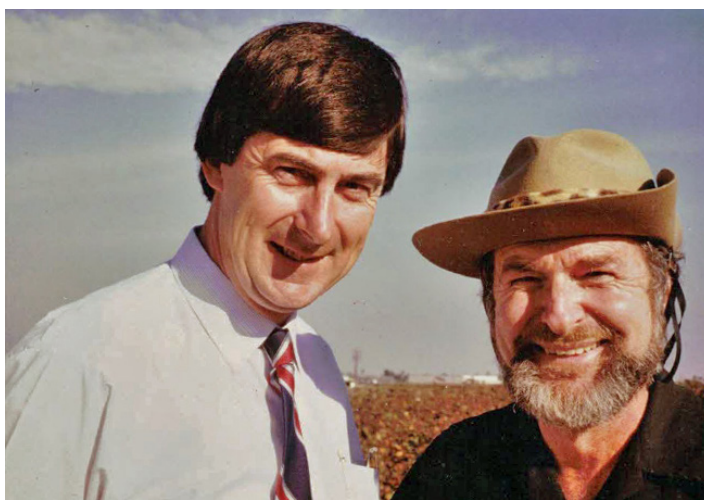
I wrote to George about our mutual interest, and he invited me to visit so we could talk more about it. I was able to accept his invitation in October of the following year, and the photograph shows us in the cotton field at California State University Fresno. I was envious of what I thought was his ability to visit Britain to research

his piece, but he said it was all sourced from literature and with the help of excellent librarians at Fresno and in UK. He encouraged me to do the same, a key piece of advice as I moved away from the laboratory. Of course

the advent of the internet has made long-distance research even more possible but I still rely on librarians for expert assistance.

George and I kept in touch by mail, and we soon found another coincidence. George was collaborating in the translation of a biography of the Russian chemist and composer Alexander Borodin (*Aleksandr Porfir'evich Borodin. A Chemist's Biography*,

by N. A. Figurovskii and Yu. I. Solov'ev, translated by Charlene Steinberg and George B. Kauffman, Springer, 1988), while I had been working on a study of Borodin's published chemistry ("The Research in Organic Chemistry of Aleksandr Borodin (1833-1887)," *Ambix*, **1989**, 36, 122-137). We joined forces with Yuri Solov'ev to produce a "popular" version for *Chemical and Engineering News* and were delighted when it was the cover story for the magazine when it was published (G. B.



Ian Rae (left) and George Kauffman in the early 1980s

Kauffman, I. D. Rae, Yu. I. Solov'ev and C. Steinberg, "Borodin, Composer and Chemist," *Chem. Eng. News*, **1987**, 65(7), 28-38.).

This called for a celebration, so once again I stopped off at Fresno, where George and Laurie were generous hosts. I learned a lot about the Central Valley—not a place that draws many tourists from overseas—and George and I enjoyed a meal at a restaurant run by the Armenian community who made their own potent red wine. This being California, George and I enjoyed a hot tub—Laurie bought us a beer!—and I inspected George's schneckenkengarten where he was raising a crop of snails for the table.

Years later we teamed up again to write about the Czech chemist and composer Emil Votoček (G. B. Kauffman, F. Jursik and I. D. Rae, "Emil Votoček (1872-1950): A Tribute to the Czech Chemist-Composer-Lexicographer," *Journal of Chemical Education*, **1999**, 76, 511-519).

I had an invitation to George's 80th birthday bash, but the best I could do was to phone in with a greeting. Nobody answered the phone and I found out later that they had all been in the backyard. If only I'd had his cell phone number ... but then I wonder if George ever had a cell phone: it didn't seem like his style.

ICHC 2023 in Vilnius – Call for Papers

13 ICHC 2023
Vilnius – Lithuania

The Working Party on History of Chemistry (WPHC) of the European Chemical Society (EuChemS) announced the first call for papers for the 13th International Conference on History of Chemistry (13ICHC). The meeting, intended to bring together historically interested chemists, chemistry educators and historians of chemistry from all over Europe and beyond, is scheduled for Vilnius, Lithuania, from Tuesday 23 May to Friday 26 May 2023. The conference will be hosted by Vilnius University (established in 1579), in the old city.

The conference will include scientific sessions, key-note lectures, a poster session, the WP business meeting, as well as social events such as excursions, receptions, and a conference dinner. Information about the city and about an excursion organized for Saturday 27 May 2023 can be found on the conference website, <https://www.ichc2023vilnius.chgf.vu.lt>.

The call for papers and for panel or session proposals has a deadline of 1 December 2022. The 13ICHC welcomes proposals on any topic on the history of chemistry, broadly understood, including historical works on molecular sciences, life sciences, industry, technology, and education. We will also welcome papers on the teaching of history of chemistry, in order to reach out to the wider community and to students and young colleagues in particular.

All proposals must be in English, the language of the conference. Submitted abstracts and session proposals (max. 200 words) will be subject to review by an international Advisory Committee, that assists the Steering Organising Committee to ensure the quality of the conference program. Sessions should include about 3-5 papers, and no more than one session can be proposed by the same organizer. There is a limit of one paper per presenter (including the papers listed inside a panel or a session). All proposals must use the templates provided on the conference website, <https://www.ichc2023vilnius.chgf.vu.lt/call-for-papers>.