

Events of May 7th and events leading up to them.

The arranging of the lecture and the role of such lectures in the Departmental structure.

Every Summer Term suggestions for chemical speakers for the following academic year are invited from staff, research students and undergraduates. These suggestions are sorted out at a meeting of the Chairman of the Department, the student chemical society secretary, the staff representative on the chemical society committee and the member of staff responsible for Departmental annual colloquia.

Of the lectures agreed for the student chemical society, several are selected by the Chairman to be supported by The Chemical Society of London, who then pays expenses, and are deemed to be joint meetings with that body. One other lecture per year is also arranged as a joint meeting with the Royal Institute of Chemistry.

Staff and students (particularly 2nd + 3rd Y Chemists) are encouraged to go to as many of these lectures as possible and often laboratories are closed early to facilitate this. The speakers are usually entertained at dinner after the lecture by both staff and students of the Department.

The lecture of May 7th : Chemical and Biological Properties of Toxic Chemicals.

The day prior to the lecture it was reported to Professor Bradley that there had been a hint that some trouble might occur at this lecture. This came as a complete surprise to members of the Department. Because of this possibility of trouble (clearly of unknown kind or magnitude) Professor Bradley asked me if I would take over from the student chairman and chair

the meeting since he himself would not be present, and took into this hint of trouble.

On the morning of May 7th I had a phone call from Mr R. Butler asking me what steps I proposed to take. I went down the valley and had discussion with Mr Wyatt and on the basis of these reached the following conclusions -

- (1) because of the possibility of damage to the lecture, hints of which had now reached various people, it would be advisable to change the venue of the lecture to Wivenhoe House. This seemed quite sensible and not too inconvenient since first year students rarely attend such meetings, the second year students were doing practical in the Department anyway, the third year students were thought on the whole to be too busy revising to attend and the Staff and research students likely to be most interested happened to be there working in the house.

Accordingly I asked Dr Bowden to inform the second years of this change at 3.45 p.m. and also the rest of the Department. The Professor Bowden's secretary (in the Valley) was asked to inform all members of the Department there.

In the event it transpires that my decision to change the venue was, in fact, already known down the valley soon after lunch.

- (2) Despite suggestions to the contrary, I decided that it should be unnecessary to have the police on the site at the start of the lecture and that the likelihood of needing such assistance was small.
- (3) The porters were instructed not to prevent anyone entering the lecture room.

These points were discussed with P.J. Bradley prior to this departure and he agreed with my conclusions.

4.30 p.m. May 7th

Just prior to the lecture as we waited in the next-door common room groups of people could be seen making their way up towards the House from the valley.

Our usual average complement of chemists seemed to be present in the lecture room - most seats being filled - and so I introduced the speaker. As soon as I had done this the "window" door opened and there appeared a large group of people. I went over and spoke to them and was joined by Dr Bowden since none of them appeared to be chemistry students. I asked if they were members of the chemical society and received the reply that they were entitled to attend as members of the University. They were allowed to enter (not that we could have stopped them anyway) and to stand round the sides of the room. At some stage in this process since the incoming stream seemed to be never-ending I tried to point out that the room was already full - my remarks were ignored, another attempt to do this showed that I had divided in two a party of 6th formers from Malden Grammar School who had come specifically to hear the lecture. And so everyone was admitted to the room which was now uncomfortably overcrowded.

I announced that perhaps I should re-introduce the speaker and this I did. As soon as I had finished - I am not now certain whether Dr Durb actually said anything or not - there was an interruption from the back right hand corner of the room. A student-Treasurer announced that he was going to read an indictment to Dr Durb concerning the gown warfare and Porten Down. This indictment read from a piece of paper was

taken up by a number of people in the room who took turns in reading it. I naturally apologized to Dr Duch and he agreed that we should let them carry on. After about five minutes, however, and having discussions with various chemists present including Dr Bowden and Prof Gordon, Dr Duch agreed with me that there appeared to be no possibility of giving a lecture and that we should leave.

I started to guide Dr Duch towards the "window" door. At this movement someone in the room shouted "Dr Duch is trying to leave". There in the doorway bunched together to prevent this and at least one person sat on the ground to block the exit.

At this stage I asked Dr Bowden to stay with Dr Duch at the lecture position and asked Dr Duch to stay there. I managed to squeeze out through to the bar area and found Mr Davis - the head porter and asked him to help me in convincing the speakers to leave. He went off for assistance and I returned to Dr Duch's side.

~~At this stage~~ Sometime during the whole affair someone came up to Dr Duch and shouting something like "mustard gas" emptied a packet of yellow material over him. This also covered Dr Bowden and half of my jacket. This person was challenged by Prof. Gordon and gave his name to him. My mind is not absolutely clear on the timing of this incident although, in fact, I was also covered. I am not clear whether it took place whilst we were waiting for the porters to come or at a later stage in the "cigarette" area.

However, I noticed the porters making their way through the "window door" and by dint of pushing overcame the obstruction of

the doorway. We only got, however, as far as the "cigarette
 hook" area before being caught up by the demonstrators.
 Dr Inch was hemmed into a corner with Dr Roberts
 by a cordon of demonstrators who linked arms and
 prevented the rest of the chemistry staff from reaching
 him.

As I saw him being pinned in the corner I
 considered that matters were getting out of hand
 and ~~went~~ squeezed past the throng meeting Mr
 Jarvis who said to me that we had better call
 the police. I said to him that I agreed and
 he asked me to do it. I went in the direction
 of the motor's door but met Mr Wyatt who
 offered to do this for me.

I then returned to the "cigarette machine" area.
 I soon found myself in a row immediately behind
 the row of students pinning in the speakers. I moved
 towards the side door (out to garden) with a view
 to trying to get the speakers out through here but
 two students blocked this door and generally
 adopted an obstructive air - one was subsequently
 identified as Chantlett - from photographs. Dr Inch
 was constrained to remain in this corner and to
 listen to the remainder of the indictment. He then
 attempted to converse with the students who continued
 shouting various comments at him. In the inner ring
 at this time I positively identified a girl - Nichol who
 several times I had given a lift in from the byegrass.
 At the rear of the room shouting slogans was Mullins.

At this stage I was alarmed by the
 vicious attitude of these demonstrators and began
 to wonder whether we would ever get the speakers
 out. The atmosphere was particularly oppressive
 in the confined space.

After what seemed an age the police began to arrive at the end of the corridor. There were various shouts of "Fugg" etc as they arrived. They waited until their numbers had built up and then advanced along the corridor where the students had sat down to obstruct progress. About 8-10 police eventually got through to near the speakers. I linked hands with one of the porters and I think Dr Greenblatt to keep them behind back. The miller got rather confused. The police were obstructed from moving Dr Ingh out to the corridor or back to the kitchen area.

At this stage I squeezed out through the corridor, went under the house and came up the back stairs to the kitchen side of the lobby. Here I met Mr Kelly. I started pushing my way through opening a passage and persuaded the police to edge Dr Duck out this way. He was buffeted and harassed in this procedure. With Dr Bowden I then led him down the back stairs, under the house and out to the awaiting police cars. We sat him in one with Dr Bowden pending the departure of the car. There was a delay which resulted in the mob of demonstrators, who had now realised ~~that~~ Dr Duck had departed, almost catching up with the car. Several scuffles broke out between students and police concerning a second police car departure.

I remarked to several chemists and others that at that moment I felt ashamed to belong to this University.

This is as correct account as I can recall at this time.

Jo Miller

24/5/68

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