

# History of the European Ceramic Society

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## Foreword

Using the term “history” to describe the development of an organisation carries with it the implication that either a large number of significant events have taken place during its lifetime thus far, or that an appreciable passage of time has elapsed since the start of that organisation. In the case of the European Ceramic Society (ECerS), it is much more the former than the latter, since this coming year will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ECerS since its original inception at the Canterbury Science of Ceramics meeting in 1987. In addition, it is eminently appropriate that the author of this history should be the first president of ECerS, who pioneered the fledgling organisation during its initial formative years and set clear guidelines in place for its future development at the first ECerS Congress in Maastricht in 1989.

Since these early days, ECerS has expanded from its 7 founder members into the membership of 24 it boasts today. It operates as a homogeneous unit, seeing itself as co-equal in status with the American Ceramic Society (ACerS) with whom it proudly sits alongside at International Ceramics Federation meetings. Yet, ECerS is very unlike ACerS, being essentially a federation of the 24 national societies of which it is composed, many of whom have very different individual structures, membership procedures and guidelines for operation. However, ECerS acts as the central hub to draw together these disparate and in some cases quite small national units, with its 2-yearly meeting being the main focus for researchers from academia and industry to gather together and share current findings across the full spectrum of ceramic activity.

It is therefore entirely appropriate that ECerS should look back over its 20 year period of history with some sense of pride that this expansion and growth has occurred, and put on record the various events that have contributed to what it is today. Writing history is an important task which ensures that significant events are not forgotten. Rudi Metselaar has tackled the history of ECerS in his own characteristically thorough style, recollecting events, changes and most importantly of all, people. As events fade away in the memory, it is essential to remember the significant contributions made by those who have supported and helped to build up ECerS during these 20 years, planting the stepping stones which have marked out its progress.

I am very pleased on behalf of the current membership of ECerS to record my thanks to Rudi for completing this masterly (but quite brief) tome, and sincerely commend it to your attention not only for a pleasurable read, but also

that it might remain on your bookshelf as a collection of useful memories about the early years of ECerS.

Derek P. Thompson, President: ECerS  
Newcastle, UK, December 2006

## Introduction

The collective memory of a society is generally quite brief because of the continuous renewal of its membership. Therefore it seemed appropriate to document the initial phase and the development of the ECerS on the occasion of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is with great pleasure that I collected the data presented in this paper.

Rudi Metselaar, Eindhoven

## Landmarks in the history of European ceramic cooperation

### The pre-ECerS period – AEC and Science of Ceramics

Looking for the roots of a European cooperation in the field of ceramics, we first find the Association Européenne de Céramique (AEC). This was essentially a federation of societies of bricks producers. Although the AEC organized a meeting every third year, scientists were hardly interested. As a reaction starting in 1961 a series of meetings was organized alternately by the Basic Science section of the British Ceramic Society and the Netherlands Ceramic Society under the name Science of Ceramics. From the fifth meeting on, held in 1969 in Sweden, the organization expanded to a real European one with representatives of the ceramic societies of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and UK and in 1977 also from Poland and Yugoslavia. The AEC no longer organized its own meetings and became a sleeping organization. Later on, at the Council meeting of the newly established European Ceramic Society, held in Amsterdam on 18 December 1987, all former AEC members agreed to abrogate this society and to use the remaining capital to sponsor the Science of Ceramics or its successor.

Although the Science of Ceramics meetings were organized by representatives of the European ceramic

societies and sponsored by the AEC, there was no general European society yet.

The immediate cause for a formal cooperation came from outside. In 1987 the American Ceramic Society, ACerS, received two petitions from members asking to establish a European branch of the Society. On February 24, 1987, a delegation from the USA came to Brussels, where a meeting was held with representatives of the European societies organizing Science of Ceramics. All parties agreed that this occasion should be used to formalize the existing cooperation in Europe by establishing a European Ceramic Society.

### European Ceramic Society History, 1987-2006

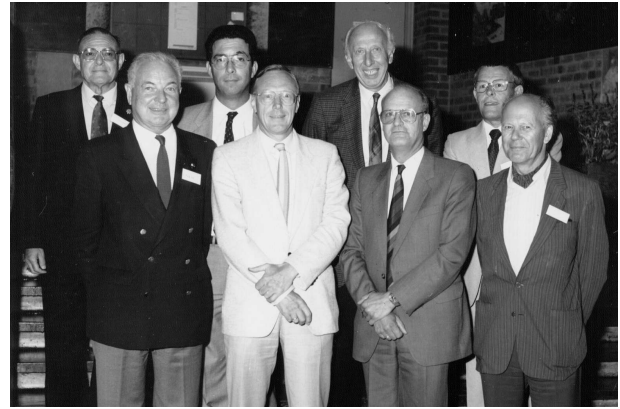
May 19, 1987 during a meeting in Brussels, the national societies accepted the draft of the Constitution and it was decided that during the 14<sup>th</sup> Science of Ceramics meeting, to be held in Canterbury, UK, in September, the final meeting would be held. Indeed on 9 September 1987 the European Ceramic Society was established and representatives of the ceramic societies of Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and The Netherlands signed as charter members of the Society.

At this meeting the proposal of the president of the AEC, Mr. Lehmann, to abandon this Society was unanimously accepted.

The new constitution contained a number of important decisions: a) the series of Science of Ceramics meeting would be continued biannually under the name ECerS Conference, b) the language of the meetings would be English, c) each country would have one vote in the Council meetings and would be represented there by its president and one other person, d) the country organizing the next ECerS Conference would deliver the President of the society, e) each country could be represented by only one ceramic society and membership of this society should be open for every individual.

The Netherlands Ceramic Society accepted to organize the first ECerS meeting in 1989 and Dr. Rudi Metselaar was installed as first president of the new society. It was also decided to establish a Permanent Executive Committee consisting of the president, president-elect, immediate past-president and secretary. This committee is authorized to decide urgent business, which does not allow delay until the next meeting of the Council.

Step by step improvements were made in the organization. In the first period the country organizing the Conference also supplied the president of the Society and took care of the secretariat. Because the organization of the Conference asked so much of the time of the president the Council agreed in 2000 to uncouple the tasks. Dr. Nicola Babini became the new president and the organization of the next ECerS Conference in 2003 became the responsibility of the Turkish Ceramic Society. Already in 1995 the Belgian Ceramic Society accepted to host the permanent secretariat of the Society.



*Fig 1. Representatives of the charter members at the inaugural meeting of the European Ceramic Society on 9 September in Canterbury. Front row, from left to right Dr. F. Fierens (Belgium), Prof. Dr. R. Metselaar (The Netherlands), Dr. D. J. Perduijn (Vice-president AEC), Dr. R. Cauville (France), top row Prof. A.G. Verduch (Spain), Dr. G. N. Babini (Italy), Prof. Dr. H. Hausner (Germany), Dr. G.J. Gittens (England)*

A very important decision was made during the first Council meeting on December 18, 1987 when the members agreed to establish a scientific journal and authorized the president to start discussions with Elsevier Publishing Company. A year later a contract with Elsevier was signed and Dr. Richard Brook was installed as the chief editor of the journal. To avoid competition Elsevier decided to discontinue the International Journal of High Technology Ceramics. The first issue of the Journal of the European Ceramic Society appeared in June 1989.

During the years several standing committees were formed and some changes were made in the Constitution. In 1991 an Educational and an R&D Committee were formed, followed in 1995 by a Communication committee, with the task to increase the visibility of the Society by establishing a site on the World Wide Web. In 2005 steps were taken to form two new working groups. The Industrial W.G. should reinforce the position of traditional ceramics in the Society and the Art, Design and Tradition W.G. should make a link to ceramists working in the field of pottery.

The enormous expansion of the Society and the wish to improve the communication with the individual members led to a series of new initiatives in 2002. At the Council meeting in Athens in December of that year it was agreed to ask for a financial contribution of each of the member societies in order to carry out the new plans. The first of the new initiatives was the establishment of a Bulletin. The first issue of the Bulletin appeared in June 2003, published by Göller Verlag with Mrs. Karin Scharrer as chief editor. In the same context of increased visibility and communication towards the members Paolo Zannini was charged with the task to construct a new web site on



*Fig 2. Private chat during the 4<sup>th</sup> ECerS Conference in Riccione.. From left to right: Dr. M. McLaren, former president of the ACerS, Dr. H. Hausner, former president of the ECerS, Dr. G.N. Babini, organizer of the Riccione meeting, watched by Mrs. A. Bellosi, co-organizer of the meeting.*

a professional basis. To improve the flexibility of the management of the Society changes were made in the Constitution in 2003. Under the new statutes the ECerS is legally recognized as a 'European non-profit association'.

### **Membership**

The membership of the new society increased continuously. Founding members of the ECerS were the ceramic societies in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and England. Although not represented at the meeting in Canterbury, Sweden also joined the Society in 1987. At the Council meeting in 1988 Portugal and Yugoslavia were also accepted as members, Norway followed in 1989, Poland in 1990, Czechoslovakia in 1991, in the same year Turkey, Romania and Hungary became members, after the falling apart of Yugoslavia, Slovenia entered in 1992, in 1995 Denmark, Latvia, Greece and the Slovak Republic, in 2002 Georgia and Serbia, and in 2003 Russia.

### **The ECerS Conferences**

As mentioned above, from 1989 onwards a biannual meeting was organized in one of the member countries. Starting with the meeting in Amsterdam, the conferences have always drawn a truly international participation, also from countries outside Europe. Extended abstracts have been published for all meetings.

At the conference site an exhibition of scientific equipment was held.

During the Council meeting, in Canterbury in 1987, it was agreed to honour "a ceramist belonging to a member country of the society for outstanding contributions to ceramic science, technology and educational activities and production". On suggestion of Dr. Malcolm McLaren from the ACerS, this award has been named

"Stuijts Award" as a remembrance to the late Prof. Leo Stuijts. The award is presented at the biannual meetings of the ECerS.

In 1994 the Council decided to present at the biannual meeting also the "International Ceramic Prize" to "a ceramist belonging to a country outside Europe for outstanding contributions to ceramic science or technology".

### **Standing Committees Research and Development**

Hans Hausner 1989 initiated the first activity in this area although the ECerS had not yet installed any working groups. He started to prepare a database containing the European ceramic research laboratories and their activities. Questionnaires sent to member societies resulted in a large database, which was made available to participants on floppy disks. In 1990 the activities were transferred to the International Ceramic Federation, ICF, and extended with data on institutes in Japan and USA. In order to continue the European contribution to this database it was decided in 1991 to install a working group. Three further activities planned for this WG were described as follows:

Collection and dissemination of an agenda of the main conferences and symposia organized by the member societies and by related organizations; stimulation of participation in projects sponsored by the European Union; participation in the various attempts (e.g. VAMAS), to establish a classification system for ceramics.

Later, with the organization of the first so-called Topical Meeting in 1996 on "Advances in the characterization of ceramics", a series of specialized meetings began, coordinated by the R&D committee.

### **Communication**

In 1995 a website was created and maintained by Rudi Metselaar, using the facilities of the Eindhoven University. In order to make the site an effective communication medium for the Society the Council decided in 2004 to create an independent ECerS site using professional software. Dr. Paolo Zannini took over the responsibility and completely reshaped the website, which is now available under [www.ecers.org](http://www.ecers.org)

### **Editorial**

One of the major achievements of the Society has been the creation of a scientific journal of high quality. From the very beginning Richard Brook has been chief editor of the Journal and under his leadership it has become one of the top-ranked media for the publication of scientific papers in the field of ceramics. During the years we saw a continuous increase in the number of submitted papers and an increase in the impact factor of the journal from

0.7 in 1998 to 1.6 in 2005, which means that it is presently rated as second in the ISI category 'Materials science, ceramics'.

In July 2002 the Council decided to issue a Bulletin with the aim to improve communication of the ECerS activities to the individual members of the national societies. Hereto Karin Scharrer reinforced the working group in the position of chief editor of the Bulletin.

**Education**

The activities of the Society in the field of education started in 1991 when a 'Summerschool on Ceramic Processing' was held in the Netherlands. To ensure continuation of educational activities a committee on education was established in the same year. This committee organized a number of meetings intended for students, under the name 'Euroforum'. In 1997 it was decided to no longer organize Euroforum as a separate meeting, but to combine this activity with the ECerS Conference. To stimulate participation at the conference a student speech contest was organized. To this end all societies send a selected candidate to the Conference and pay for his/her expenses. Further a poster competition is organized for students.

**Industrial**

In 2005 it was proposed to form an Industrial WG to bring the activities of the ECerS closer to the field of industry. A working programme is presently developed, that includes the possibility to organize a periodical meeting on Research and Development in Traditional Ceramics and the compilation of an industry database to be involved in future enterprises.

**Art, design and tradition**

The working group started its activities in 2005 and is focused on distributing the knowledge of the European cultural heritage. To this end it intends to organize exhibitions and conferences, create a database of ceramic artists, create an inventory of the leading international libraries in ceramics, and build up a multi-lingual ceramic thesaurus.

**International relations**

Already during the first ECerS Conference in Maastricht initiatives were taken to establish a forum where representatives of the international ceramic societies would meet each other on a regular basis. This led to the establishment of the International Ceramic Federation, ICF, in 1990 with the ECerS as one of the charter members. Several Council members of the ECerS have been active as presidents of the ICF: Metselaar (1991-93), Hausner (1993-95), Freer (2003-06), Babini (2006- ) and several others participated in standing committees.

Close relations developed in particular with the American Ceramic Society and some Council members participated in the Globalization Task Force of the ACerS. Discussions with the American Ceramic Society, the Ceramic Society of Japan and the Chinese Ceramic Society led to changes in the Constitution of the ICF and the decision to organize the International Ceramic Congress on a biannual basis, starting with a meeting in Toronto in 2006 and followed by Verona (2008) and in Japan (2010).

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Members**

The European Ceramic Society represents the ceramic societies of the following countries:

Belgium	Norway
Czech Republic	Poland
Denmark	Portugal
Finland	Romania
France	Russia
Georgia	Serbia
Germany	Slovak Republic
Greece	Slovenia
Hungary	Spain
Italy	Sweden
Latvia	Turkey
The Netherlands	United Kingdom

**Appendix 2 - Presidents of the ECerS**

1987 -1989	R. Metselaar
1989 -1991	H. Hausner
1991 -1993	M.A. Delgado-Mendez
1993 -1995	G.N. Babini
1995 -1997	J.F. Baumard
1997 -1999	J.E. Bailey
1999 -2001	P.H. Duvinneau
2001 -2005	G.N. Babini
2005 -2007	D.P. Thompson
2007 - present	J.G. Heinrich

**Appendix 3 - Chairpersons of the Working Groups**

**Research and Development**

1992 - present	R. Freer
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**Communications**

1995 - 2004	R. Metselaar
2004 - present	P. Zannini

**Education**

1991 -1999	J. Desmaison
1999 -2001	O. van der Biest
2001 - present	O.S. Ozgen



Fig. 3. Participants at the inaugural meeting in Canterbury in 1987

#### Editorial

1988 - present R. Brook (Journal)  
 2002 - present K. Scharrer (Bulletin)

#### Industrial

2005 - present H. Mandal

#### Art, design and tradition

2005 - present W. Siemen

#### Appendix 4 – Science of Ceramics and ECerS Biannual Meetings

##### Science of Ceramics \*

1961 Oxford (England) - (Ed. G.H. Stewart)  
 1963 Noordwijk aan Zee (The Netherlands) - (Ed. G.H. Stewart)  
 1965 Bristol (UK) – (Ed. G.H. Stewart)  
 1967 Maastricht (The Netherlands) – (Ed. G.H. Stewart)  
 1969 Ronneby Brunn (Sweden) – (Eds. C. Brosset and E. Knopp)  
 1971 Baden-Baden (Germany)  
 1973 Juan-les-Pins (France)  
 1975 Cambridge (England)  
 1977 Noordwijkerhout (The Netherlands) – (Ed. K.J. de Vries)  
 1979 Berchtesgaden (Germany) – (Ed. H. Hausner)  
 1981 Stenungsund (Sweden) – (Eds. R. Carlsson and S. Carlsson)  
 1983 Saint-Vincent (Italy) – (Ed. P. Vincenzini)  
 1985 Orleans (France) – (Eds. P. Odier, F. Cabannes and B. Cales)  
 1987 Canterbury (England) – (Ed. D. Taylor)

##### European Ceramic Society

1989 Maastricht (The Netherlands) – (Eds. G. de With, R.A. Terpstra and R. Metselaar)  
 1991 Augsburg (Germany) – (Eds. G. Ziegler and H. Hausner)

1993 Madrid (Spain) – (Eds. P. Duran and J.F. Fernandez)  
 1995 Riccione (Italy) – (Eds. B.S. Tranchina and A. Bellosi)  
 1997 Versailles (France) – (Eds. J. Baxter, L. Cot, R. Fordham, V. Gabis, Y. Hellot, M., Lefebvre, H. Le Doussal, A. Le Sech, R. Naslain, A. Sevagen)  
 1999 Brighton (England)  
 2001 Brugge (Belgium)  
 2003 Istanbul (Turkey) – (Eds. H. Mandal and L.Ovecoglu)  
 2005 Portorož (Slovenia)- (Eds. D. Suvorov, M.M. Krzmann)  
 2007 Berlin (Germany)- J.G. Heinrich, C. Aneziris

#### Appendix 5 – ECerS Topical and Euroforum Meetings

##### Topical meetings

1996 - Advances in the Characterization of Ceramics, Manchester, UK  
 1996 - Electroceramics V, Aveiro, Portugal.  
 1997 - 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting on Integrated Ferroelectrics, Jouy-en-Josas, France  
 2002 - Shaping of Advanced Ceramics, Gent, Belgium  
 2004 - Nanoparticles, Nanostructures and Nanocomposites, St.Petersburg, Russia  
 2005 - International Symposium on Nitrides, Eskisehir, Turkey  
 2006 - Reliability of Ceramics, Cracow, Poland

##### Euroforum Meetings

1992 - Limoges, France  
 1994 - Höhr-Grenzhausen, Germany  
 1996 - Veszprem, Hungary

#### Appendix 6 – Awardees

##### Stuijts Award

1st ECerS (1989), Maastricht (NL), Richard Brook  
 2nd ECerS (1991), Augsburg (Ge), Ton Burggraaf  
 3rd ECerS (1993), Madrid (Sp), Salvatore de Aza  
 4th ECerS (1995), Riccione (It), Hans Hausner  
 5th ECerS (1997), Versailles (Fr), Roman Pampuch  
 6th ECerS (1999), Brighton (UK), Niels Claussen  
 7th ECerS (2001), Bruges (Be), Philippe Boch  
 8th ECerS (2003), Istanbul (Tu), Rudi Metselaar  
 9th ECerS (2005), Portorož (SI), Hasan Mandal  
 10<sup>th</sup> ECerS (2007), Berlin (Ge), Stuart Hampshire

##### International Prize

4th ECerS (1995), Riccione, Malcolm McLaren  
 5th ECerS (1997), Versailles, Rudi Metselaar  
 6th ECerS (1999), Brighton, Bob Newnham  
 7th ECerS (2001), Bruges, Masahiro Yoshimura  
 8th ECerS (2003), Istanbul, Gary Messing  
 9th ECerS (2005), Portorož, Yukio Sakabe  
 10th ECerS (2007), Berlin, Mrityunjay Singh

\* Between brackets the names are given of the editors of the conference proceedings, published under the title Science of Ceramics respectively Euro Ceramics