The Centenary of Niels Bohr’s Theory of the Atom

There are anniversaries, and there are anniversaries. This year marks a century since Niels Bohr introduced his peculiar atom—the one that purposefully ignored parts of traditional—classical—physics. The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Arts marked this event with a scholarly conference in Copenhagen in early June 2013.

The main organizer of this conference was Dr. Finn Aaserud, director of the Niels Bohr Archive at the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen. Aaserud, we should note, was a post-doc and associate historian at AIP in the 1980s. The conference was supported financially by the Carlsberg Foundation and...
The Niels Bohr centenary featured presentations by 34 speakers from 19 countries. Participants included physicists, historians and philosophers of science specializing in the early years of quantum physics, and a few historians who focus on related context.

As the first speaker, Prof. Helge Kragh (University of Aarhus, Denmark) made clear, the Bohr atom was a concept in flux, from its beginning.

Some speakers, e.g., Jaume Navarro (University of the Basque Country, Spain) stressed the state of physics into which Bohr plunged ca. 1913. Others spoke about the Correspondence Principle and other fundamental ideas introduced or emphasized by the new approach of Niels Bohr.

Conference speakers also brought forward contrasts between different quantum mechanical schools, early and ignored advocates of the possibility of nuclear fission, and Bohr’s firm commitment to neutrality and international scientific collaboration. Shown right is Thiago Hartz, a graduate student from the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil, who co-presented with Olival Freire on “Uses and appropriations of Niels Bohr’s ideas about quantum field measurements, 1935-1965. Hartz will soon defend his dissertation in the history of quantum physics and begin a post-doc at the Niels Bohr Archive in Copenhagen.

Events like the Bohr-atom centenary provide important opportunities to call together the variety of scholars needed to preserve the history of physics and explore its many dimensions. We hope that AIP and the Niels Bohr Archive and Institute in Denmark will find many more opportunities to work together to promote the history of physics in the future.

The Royal Danish Academy will publish the proceedings of the conference as a commemorative volume.

From AIP Publishing

Authors podcast about their research

To bring more visibility to the authors who publish with AIP, a series of podcasts has been introduced for several journals. Visitors to the journal home pages for AIP Advances, Applied Physics Letters, Biomicrofluidics, Physics of Fluids, and Review of Scientific Instruments can listen to podcasts to learn more about featured authors and their recently published work. Shown left is an interview of Tadd Truscott, assistant professor at Brigham Young University, and his student Taylor Killian, discussing, “Rebound and jet
The Society of Physics Students is pleased to welcome the 2013 SPS summer interns to the Washington, DC, area for a summer of science and networking. The SPS Summer Intern Program is now in its thirteenth year. A record number of physics students applied to this prestigious program for 12 positions within the host organizations, which include SPS, the AIP History Center, APS, AAPT, NASA, NIST, the US Department of Education, and the House Committee on Science and Technology.

Compared with traditional summer research internships, the SPS Intern Program is unique, providing a range of physics-related working experience for students from around the country. Students participate in a range of endeavors, from conducting scientific research at NASA and NIST, working on science policy issues on the Hill, exploring physics education initiatives, delving into the history of physics, contributing to resources aimed at career development, or developing new outreach projects that serve to communicate physics more effectively to the public. Please extend a warm welcome. Each
A few members of the ACA strategic planning committee pause for a photo op after an evening’s work. From the left: George Phillips (past president), Martha Teeter (vice president), Bill Duax (CEO), and meeting facilitator Fred Dylla (AIP CEO). Other committee members include Cheryl Stevens (president), S. N. Rao (CFO), Judith Flippen-Anderson (past president), and Marcia Colquhoun (administrative director).

ACA strategic planning effort

ACA leadership convened in College Park, MD, for a strategic planning meeting on May 29-30. ACA President Cheryl Stevens tasked committee members with conducting independent SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analyses prior to meeting face to face. AIP CEO Fred Dylla facilitated the discussion, focusing on the committee members’ three-to-five-year vision for the society. The ACA team was able to identify and agree upon several areas where tangible progress could be made; they will continue this planning exercise through an online wiki resource.

Member Society Spotlight

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Coming Up

Thursday, June 27

- AIP Publishing Staff Picnic and “Murder Mystery” (Melville)

July 4-5

- AIP and AIP Publishing closed in honor of the 4th of July holiday (Melville and College Park)

July 10

- Staff birthday breakfasts (Melville and College Park)

July 13-17

- AAPT Summer Meeting (Portland, OR)