

THE LONDON MARATHON, THE UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH, AND ARTHUR ISRAEL VOGEL

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My father, Abraham Weintraub, is the oldest finisher ever of the London Marathon. He is also the fastest marathon runner in the world over age 90. It was with thrill and pride that I was there at the London 2000 and 2001 Marathons as he crossed the finish line. During my stays in England, I was privileged to be housed at the dormitory of the University of Greenwich in Woolwich, London, together with the fine athletes that run *The Marathon for Age Concern*.

These visits to London led me from being a spectator at the finish line at the Marathon on a chemical literature adventure that led from Woolwich to Vogel's textbooks. During our short stay at the dorm we visited the library at the University of Greenwich. The campus librarian graciously gave us a tour of the University Library and presented us with a copy of the book *An Illustrated History of the University of Greenwich*, by **Thomas Hinde**. Since the book is not held at any library in Israel, it was a great pleasure for us to add this book to the collection at the NACE Library.

The University of Greenwich opened its doors in 1891 as the Woolwich Polytechnic. The rich history and contributions of the University of Greenwich traces back to 1864, when in an effort to educate the poor, Quintin Hogg and Lord Kinnaird launched a "ragged boys" school near Charing Cross.

The discussion of **Arthur Israel Vogel** in Hinde's book caught my attention. Most chemists and chemical engineers are familiar with the name Vogel from his books on Chemistry which they probably used as textbooks during their student years or as reference books to search for specific information. Although Vogel passed away in 1966, his works are still in print and updated regularly by new editors and widely used around the world.

As I was eager to find out more information about Vogel's life we placed a query on a listserv for science

librarians and received several responses. One of the respondents was **Dr. Eugene Garfield**, Past President of the American Society for Information Science & Technology, and Chairman Emeritus, Institute for Scientific Information, who referred us to an obituary of Arthur Vogel in a 1966 issue of the journal *Chemistry in Britain* by G. H. Jeffery. All of the biographical information about Vogel presented here is taken directly from either that reference or from the book by Hinde. Garfield responded, in part, with the following observation:

"I was somehow attracted to this inquiry because I have been thinking a great deal lately about citation index coverage of book material. The author in question, A. I. Vogel, was an incredibly prolific author. Anyone who is doing a biography of him should be aware of the enormous impact of his numerous books and papers. Indeed, this impact continues in the newer editions of his books. In the Web of Science there are over 8,000 lines of information indicating that for each there is one or more publications that have cited his work. It seems that almost every page of his books was cited explicitly by someone." (22 February 2001.)

Vogel was Head of the Department at the Polytechnic (which became part of the University of Greenwich) for 32 of his 34 years at the school. His special interest was refractive indices and surface tension, although his research was notable for its wide ranging applications. An essential feature of his research was the purity of compounds. Shortly before his death, he prepared a paper on the 1000th pure compound to be investigated in his laboratories.

During wartime, evening classes were transferred to the weekends. Vogel was Jewish and could not teach on Saturdays. Part of Vogel's teaching load was taken over by his colleague, Dr. Jeffery, the only other full time staff member of the Chemistry Department in London at that time.

Vogel is best known for his textbooks. These are listed here with dates of publication of the first edition: *Elementary Practical Chemistry* (1936), *Textbook of Qualitative Chemical Analysis* (1937), *Textbook of*

Quantitative Chemical Analysis (1939), Practical Organic Chemistry (1948), Elementary Practical Organic Chemistry (1957).

In a tribute to Vogel, Jeffery stated:

"The initial writing and the constant revision of this large volume of publications represents a prodigious effort by one author, and typical of the man, all new material incorporated into the books was carefully checked in the laboratory".

During our stay in Woolwich, we saw the laboratory named in honor of Prof. Vogel, where his roll-top desk is preserved.

My trips to England, to see my father cross the finish line at the London Marathons, took me on an adventure into the land of Chemical Literature that led from The University of Greenwich, to Prof. Vogel's desk and textbooks.