Trevor H. Levere (1944–

Trevor H. Levere was born in London on 21 March 1944. His interest in science was nurtured by an early chemistry set, a good microscope as a present for his twelfth birthday, and the mentorship of several people who supported and encouraged his interest in birding. Influenced by a first-rate chemistry teacher at St. Paul's school in London, Levere majored in chemistry when he entered Oxford University in 1962.

As an undergraduate, Levere found his recreational reading in the history of science of works by Herbert Butterfield, Henry Leicester and Thomas Kuhn to be exciting. He was also fascinated by "the mix of science, instruments and the broader culture" in an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum on Anglo-Dutch interactions in the seventeenth century. Taking part in a variety of seminars at Oxford on history and philosophy, Levere was delighted to find that he could combine his interests and write his Part II B. A. thesis on an historical topic which later appeared in *Martinus van Marum. Life and Work* (R. J. Forbes, ed., 1969).

The history of science at Oxford was based in the Department of Modern History, where A. C. Crombie was the historian of science. Although Crombie's work was in medieval and renaissance science, he arranged for a doctoral scholarship and introduced Levere to noted historians of science in the UK, the USA, and Europe. The result was a D.Phil. in 1969 with a thesis that appeared as *Affinity and Matter: Elements of Chemical Philosophy 1800–1865* (1971, reprinted 1993), a work that still remains an essential reference for historians of chemistry.

Although almost no positions were advertised in the history of science in 1968, Levere was fortunate to be offered a one-year appointment at the University of Toronto as Lecturer. He would subsequently spend his entire career at the University, with appointments as Assistant Professor (1969), Associate Professor (1974), Professor (1981), University Professor (the University of Toronto's highest research honor, 2006), and University Professor Emeritus (2007). The Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IHPST) at the University was a year old when Levere arrived there, and he played a major role in developing it into an organization of international importance, serving two terms as director (1981–1986, 1993–1998). During this tenure he has supervised seventeen doctoral theses in the history of science.

Reflected in Levere's historical productivity of more than 100 books, chapters in books and articles is his continued interest in topics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European chemistry, as well as an interest in the history of Canada, the history of exploration, and the history of scientific apparatus. His books include *Martinus van Marum. Life and Work, vol. IV: Van Marum's Scientific Instruments in Teyler's Museum* (with G. L'E. Turner,1973), *A Curious Fieldbook: Science and Society in Canadian History* (with R. A. Jarrell,1974), *Poetry Realized in Nature. Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Early Nineteenth-Century Science* (1981, reprinted 2003), *Science and the Canadian Arctic: A Century of Exploration 1818–1918* (1993, reprinted 2004), *Chemists and Chemistry in Science and Society* (1994), and *Research and Honour: A Century of Science in the Royal Society of Canada* (1998).

He has also edited *Discussing Chemistry and Steam: The Minutes of a Coffee House Philosophical Society: Discussing Chemistry and Natural Philosophy 1780–178 7* (with G. L'E. Turner, 2002), *Nature, Experiment, and the Sciences: Essays on Galileo and the History of*

Science in Honor of Stillman Drake (with W. Shea, 1990), *Stillman Drake: Studies on Galileo and the History and Philosophy of Science* (3 vols, with N. Swerdlow, 1999), *Instruments and Experimentation in the History of Chemistry* (with F. L. Holmes, 2000), and *Editing Texts in the History of Science and Medicine* (1982).

Levere's *Transforming Matter: A History of Chemistry from Alchemy to Buckyballs* (2001) was written for university and high school students, for teachers who wish to incorporate the history of chemistry into their classes, and for all interested in the history of chemistry. It was translated into Japanese with the support of the Japanese Society for the History of Chemistry (2007). It has been considered one of the best histories of chemistry in several decades, presenting the subject in a readable style to a large audience beyond the specialist.

Levere continues to publish papers on the history of instrumentation as well as on Thomas Beddoes, and he intends to expand the latter into a book in a collaborative effort with L. Stewart, and the former into a monograph. He has been the editor of *Annals of Science* since 1999, serves as series editor of *Science, Technology and Culture 1700–1945*, is a member of the editorial boards of *History of Science* and *Archimedes*, and is on the advisory board of the *Canadian Journal of History*.

Levere is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the highest professional honor an historian in Canada can receive. He is also a *member effectif* of the International Academy of the History of Science (Paris), a Foreign Member of the Royal Holland Society of Sciences (Haarlem, the Netherlands), a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (London), and has held both the Killam Senior Research and Guggenheim Fellowships. He was awarded a D.Litt. by Oxford University in 1999. He has held Visiting Fellowships in England (Clare Hall, Cambridge University); the USA (Dibner Institute, MIT); Spain (Universitat Pompeu Fabra); France (Centre national de recherché scientifique); and short-term fellowships in Japan (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) and Germany (Georg-August University, Goettingen).

Trevor H. Levere received the 2009 Edelstein Award for the breadth and depth of his historical interests, his research productivity, his understanding of the intellectual and contextual aspects of the history of chemistry, and his promotion of the history of science in Canada.

Sources

Biographical information provided by Trevor H. Levere.

Nomination documents for the 2009 Edelstein Award, American Chemical Society Division of the History of Chemistry Archives, Chemical Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Photo courtesy of Trevor H. Levere.