The history of National Purine Clubs and the International Purine Club

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The field of purinergic signalling has rapidly expanded in recent years and has led to the establishment of Purine Clubs in several countries, which have held local meetings in between the International Purine meetings, which are held every 2 years.

The first Purine Club was initiated in Italy by Flaminio Cattabeni, Maria Abbracchio and Lina Puglisi (with enthusiastic encouragement from Geoff Burnstock) and was established formally in 1991, with Flaminio Cattabeni as the first President and Maria Abbracchio as the Secretary. The first ‘Council’ also included Giuliana Fassina (a pharmacologist), Mario Marzilli (a clinician), Antonio Lucacchini (a biochemist) and Giancarlo Pepeu (a physiologist and pharmacologist). Latter Presidents were Gloria Cristalli and Pier Borea, and the current President is Renata Ciccarelli. In 1998 (under the aegis of the Italian Purine Club), the 6th International Symposium on ‘Adenosine and Adenine Nucleotides’ took place in Ferrara, under the Chairmanship of Pier Borea and Pier Baraldi and the 8th International Symposium in 2006, again in Ferrara, Chaired by Francesco Di Virgilio, Pier Borea and Pier Baraldi. Prizes were awarded to young purine scientists. The Italian Purine Club was responsible for starting the series of International meetings: starting in Milan (Purines 1992), Purines 1996 (also in Milan), in Madrid (Purines 2000), in Chapel Hill, USA (Purines 2004) and in Copenhagen (Purines 2008). Members of the

Council later also promoted the highly successful Joint Italian–German Meetings.

The German Purine Club was first proposed in 1995 by Herbert Zimmermann. He first suggested a ‘Collaborative Research Centre’ of the German Research Council on ‘Nucleotides, a new and universal class of extracellular signalling substances’, but it was not until discussions were held during the International Purine 2000 Meeting in Madrid, which had been organised by Maria Teresa Miras-Portugal, that the German Purine Club was officially established with Peter Illes the first President and Herbert Zimmermann the Vice President. Rather than follow the formal basis of the Italian Purine Club, it was decided to run the club on an informal basis. Peter Illes and colleagues succeeded in putting together a German Research Council-funded Research Programme on P2 receptors, centred in Leipzig, Frankfurt, Aachen and Berlin in 2007. Herbert Zimmermann has been the President of the German Purine Club since 2008, with Peter Illes as Vice President. The next Joint Italian–German Purine Club meetings are planned for Berlin 2011 and Pisa 2013.

The Japanese Purine Club was first suggested by Kazuhide Inoue in the fall of 2002 and was established officially March of 2003. The first President was Kazuhide Inoue and the Secretary was Schuichi Koizumi. A Committee board of six Directors was created consisting of Fasao Kato, Soluichi Koizumi, Masabumi Minanii, Makoto Tsuda, Teramasa Nakatsuke and Manoko Omatsu-Kanbe. Before the official establishment of the Purine Club in 2003, there were successive annual meetings held mainly at the National Institute for Physical Sciences in Okazaki, but with one Special Meeting in Tokyo in 2003, with 109 attendees including several invited international scientists. In July 2009, The Japanese Purine Club hosted a very successful International Symposium on Purinergic Signalling

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in Fukuoka organised by Kazu Inoue and Fusao Kato. Kazu Inoue is the current President.

The Brazilian Purine Club (perhaps later to be combined with Portugal) was established in August 2009, during the FeSBE Meeting in Aguas de Lindoya. Robson Coutinho-Silva was elected as the first president, Helling Ulrich Vice President and Ana Battastini Secretary, and a Committee including Roberto Paes de Carvalho, Maria José da Silva Fernandes, Wamberto Varanda, José Fernandes, Carla Bonan and Benedito Machado.

A UK Purine Club has just been established and the first meeting organised for Nov 2009 in Sheffield. Geoff Burnstock is the first President and Allie Gartland the Secretary. A Committee has been set up consisting of Alan North, Nick Dale, Richard Evans, Jim Gallagher, Charles Kennedy, Alex Verkhatsky, Vera Ralevic and Robert Unwin.

A North American Purine Club was initiated in October 2009 with the President Ken Jacobson, secretaries Jonathan Dranoff and Jean Sévigny, and the Organising Committee members Luiz Belardinelli, José Boyer, Jiang-Fan Chen, Pamela Conley, Bruce Cronstein, Ken Harden, Ed Inscho, Joel Linden, Allen Moorman, Michael Rathbone, Katya Ravid, Simon Robson, Michail Sitkovsky, Gary Weisman, Connie Wilson and Jeff Zablocki. At present discussion will be mediated by communication using LinkedIn. There are currently 62 US members on the LinkedIn Purine Website.

I understand that plans are also afoot to establish Purine Clubs in Spain and Hungary/Austria.

An 'International Advisory Purine Programme Committee' was proposed in 1994 by Geoff Burnstock, Flaminio Cattabeni and Maria Abbracchio. The first meeting was held in Milan at the Purine 1996 Meeting and again during the Ferrara Meeting in 1998. At the Purine 2000 Meeting in Madrid, a meeting was convened and a change in structure was suggested, whereby a 'Federation of National Purine Club Chapters' was formed, with representatives from different countries. Representation from 22 countries on the committee board became too cumbersome and the 'Federation' concept was unofficially abandoned in 2001. The plan to set up an 'International Purine Club Committee' was reignited by Renata Ciccarelli (the current President of the Italian Purine Club) at the joint Italian–German Purine Club Meeting in Camerino in July 2009. An informal meeting was held to discuss this issue, with Geoff Burnstock, Ken Jacobson, Herbert Zimmermann, Gloria Cristalli, Allie Gartland and Maria Abbracchio and the plan to set up a Steering Committee limited to the presidents of established National Purine Clubs, in addition to Geoff Burnstock, who agreed to be the President and Maria Abbracchio, who agreed to be the Secretary. Ken Jacobson, who has started a purinergic internet (LinkedIn), was also invited to be a member.

Geoff Burnstock, the Editor-in-Chief of 'Purinergic Signalling', has the agreement of Springer to make it the official journal of the International Purine Club (IPC) to discuss news, nomenclature changes, notification about prizes, announce Purine meetings, etc.