

Minutes of the XXIV International Scientific Instrument Symposium
Ancient Observatory
Beijing
27-28 July 2005

President: Paolo Brenni
Secretary: Sara Schechner
Treasurer: Marian Fournier

The Scientific Instrument Commission held its annual symposium on 27-28 July 2005 as part of the International Congress for the History of Science in Beijing on 24-30 July 2005. Approximately 25 members attended.

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Marian Fournier, Robert Anderson, Sofia Talas, Steve Turner, and Robert Hicks.

2) Review of Minutes from Last Meeting in Dresden, 2004.

The Minutes of the 23rd Plenary Session, held at the Mathematisch-Physikalischer Salon of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in September 2004 were circulated, reviewed, and accepted.

3) SIC Finances

Last year, the Treasurer, Marian Fournier, reported in Dresden that the Commission had €1986.49 in its bank account. The current balance this year is € 2,228.81.

Receipts:

\$ 900 grant from the IUHPS : \$600 for the website and \$300 for running costs

N.B. the grant did not include the usual \$ 1,000 for the annual meeting, as that was part of the International Conference of the IUHPS in Beijing.

Expenses:

€ 248.13 to Paolo Brenni for a meeting with the organizers of next year's symposium in Cracow.

4) Report of Ongoing Commission Activities

A. Online Resources and Initiatives

SIC website, <http://www.sic.iuhps.org/>

New links to digitized trade catalogues continue to be added to the Commission's website. We continue to place the SIC Bibliography online as well.

The Commission formally thanks Dana Freiburger for his work as webmaster of the SIC site and the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford for its support.

The SIC Bibliography this past year was compiled by Peter de Clercq. In the future, Harry Leechburch, the librarian of the Boerhaave Museum will take on this task. For all his many years of service, the Commission heartily thanks Peter de Clercq.

B. SIC Publications

Under the sponsorship of the Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienze in Florence, *Nuncius* has been publishing selected papers from SIC meetings in a special section of one issue each year. The next issue, edited by Jim Bennett, will be available soon to SIC members upon request after an announcement on *Rete*.

As reported last year, the Istituto offered the Commission an alternative and better way to publish our proceedings and papers in the form of our own, separate volumes of *Biblioteca di Nuncius*, with our own series numbers. The Commission accepted this generous offer.

Today the SIC Board announced the members of the publication's editorial board. They are Giorgio Strano, Mara Miniati, Alison Morrison-Low, and Stephen Johnston.

Charles Mollan moved that the Commission formally thank Paolo Brenni and Paolo Galluzzi for their work in putting this program together. This motion was seconded and readily approved.

5) Future Activities and Meetings

A. Scientific Instrument Commission Symposia

2006 Cracow

After a visit by Paolo Brenni to Poland last year, the SIC Board enthusiastically endorsed a meeting in Cracow for 10-14 September 2006. Ewa Wyka passed out a pamphlet describing the XXV Symposium, whose central theme will be "East and West: The Common European Heritage." The meeting will be held in the Collegium Maius of the Jagiellonian University Museum. The Jagiellonian University is the oldest university in Poland and dates to the 14th century. Planned events include a hands-on session, a visit to the Sundials Museum in Jedrzejów, a reception at the Polish Aviation Museum, and post conference excursions. Early registration information is available at <http://www3.uj.edu.pl/Muzeum/symposium/index.htm>.

2007 Cambridge, Massachusetts

The XXVI Symposium will be held at in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2007 at the new facility of the Harvard Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments.

2008 Florence?

Renovations of the Museo in Florence may delay this meeting.

B. Other Future Meetings

The following meetings are co-sponsored by the Scientific Instrument Commission.

Workshop: "Curating 20th Century Science"
Universiteitsmuseum, Utrecht
17-18 October 2005

The Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam and the Universiteitsmuseum in Utrecht are jointly organizing a two-day workshop entitled, "Curating 20th Century Science." Details can be found on the website, <http://www.museum.uu.nl/workshop/>.

Conference: "Who Needs Scientific Instruments?"
Museum Boerhaave, Leiden
19-22 October 2005

This three-day conference is organized by Museum Boerhaave and concerns the users, past and present, of scientific instruments. For details, please see the website, <http://www.museumboerhaave.nl/conference/index.html>.

Conference: On the Invention of the Telescope
Autumn 2008, Holland

Collaborative plans with the Antique Telescope Society for a meeting this year, probably in the Netherlands, are still in the works.

6) News from Members

Paolo Brenni mentioned his participation in "Instruments at Work," the Dutch International Summer School in the History of Science held in Utrecht on 3-16 July 2005. This was organized by the Utrecht Institute for the History and Foundations of Science, the University Museum Utrecht, and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Natural Philosophy, Radboud University Nijmegen.

Gloria Clifton reported that the Flamsteed house at Greenwich will close for renovation in August 2005. The Prime Meridian will remain open.

7) Other New Business

No other matters were raised by members. Everyone was eager to see the famous Tycho instruments on the rooftop of the Ancient Observatory and enjoy the dinner graciously provided by the Observatory.

8) Thanks

Formal thanks were expressed to the director of the Observatory and the organizers of the International Congress for enabling the Commission to hold its business meeting at this famous Beijing site.

Respectfully submitted by
Sara J. Schechner
SIC Secretary