

COMMISSION 41

HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY (*HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY*)

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Wayne Orchiston,
Antonio A. P. Videira,
Brian Warner

PROCEEDINGS, BUSINESS SESSIONS

1. General Matters

The Business Meeting of Commission 41 was held in Sessions 2 on 5 August 2009, with Acting President Clive Ruggles (UK) in the Chair. He called for a moment of silence for those members who had passed away in the last triennium, including Prof. Xi Zezong (b. 1927, d. 2008 Dec 27) and Prof. Chen Meidong (b. 1936, d. 2008 Dec 30).

2. President's Report

Clive Ruggles began by noting that, as Vice President, he had taken over the role of Acting President in November 2008 at the request of the President, Nha Il-Seong, following an eye operation. He also noted that Rajesh Kochhar had taken over the role of Secretary from David DeVorkin in August 2007, following the resignation of the latter owing to pressures of work.

He noted the Commission's high level of activity in the International Year of Astronomy, and in particular the following three co-sponsored meetings: 1 "Astronomy education between past and future", Special Session 4 at the Rio GA, 2009 Aug 6-10, jointly with IAU C46 (Co-Chairs: Rajesh Kochhar, Jean Pierre de Greve and Ed Guinan). 2 "Accelerating the rate of astronomical discovery", Special Session 5 at the Rio GA, 2009 Aug 11-14, jointly with IAU C5 (Co-Chairs: Ray Norris and Clive Ruggles). 3 "Astronomy and its instruments before and after Galileo", a symposium organized by the Historical Instruments WG, and supported by INAF and the Astronomical Observatory of Padova, in Venice, 2009 Sep 28 - Oct 3 (Co-Chairs: Luisa Pigatto and Clive Ruggles).

He proceeded to note the signing of the formal Memorandum of Understanding between the IAU and UNESCO on Astronomy and World Heritage, and the subsequent formation of the IAU Working Group on Astronomy and World Heritage, chaired by Clive Ruggles with vice-chair Gudrun Wolfschmidt. The activities of the WG promise to make a real difference in helping to promote astronomical heritage sites on to the World Heritage List.

He noted with pleasure the effective completion, with the publication in the February 2009 issue of *Journal for the History of Astronomy* of the second part of Robert W. Smith's article on the development of extragalactic astronomy 1885-1965, of the General History of Astronomy. This hugely ambitious project was proposed by C41 back in 1970, at a time when the history of astronomy was still relatively undeveloped internationally as an academic discipline.

The aim was to provide a major synthesis of the field on a quite unprecedented scale. While not achieving final publication in the coherent form initially envisaged, the books and articles making up the GHA nonetheless comprise an extraordinarily comprehensive reference collection stretching from pre-literate astronomy to the modern era. Further information and a complete list of the books and articles making up the GHA are available on the Commission website <http://www.historyofastronomy.org/>.

He reported that no Newsletters have been produced in the last triennium, but that they had to a large extent been superseded by the new website (<http://www.historyofastronomy.org/>), which was completely restructured and overhauled in 2008 thanks to a small grant from the IUHPS/DHST.

He reported that Hilmar Duerbeck (Germany) had taken over from Steve Dick (USA) in 2008 November, in order to lead the WG's preparations for the 2012 Transit. He then proposed a formal vote of thanks to Steve Dick for all his work as WG Chair, culminating in IAU Colloquium 196 at the time of the 2004 Transit.

For information on other C41/ICHA activities during the triennium, the Acting President referred members to the existing triennial report, mentioning in particular:

- o the "Astrum 2009" exhibition being organised in October 2009 in Rome by C41 members in collaboration with the Vatican Observatory;
- o the activities of the thriving history of astronomy research group within the "Systmes de Rfrence Temps-Espace" Department within the Paris Observatory; and
- o the 6th International Conference on Oriental Astronomy held in July 2008 at James Cook University, Australia.

The Acting President concluded by noting the "Oxford IX" International Symposium on Archaeoastronomy, to be held in January 2011 in Lima, Peru, and reported that the OC had already pledged the Commission's support for this important cross-disciplinary event. The meeting endorsed this support, and discussion followed about putting the meeting forward as a possible IAU Symposium. It was felt that any support from the IAU should be matched by support by international academic bodies of equal standing in some of the other fields contributing to the conference, such as the IUHPS.

The President's Report was unanimously accepted.

3. Secretary's Report

Rajesh Kochhar reported on the conduct of the election for the new OC. This took place in 2009 April, in accordance with the IAU's requirements that were strictly enforced this year. While some difficulties arose because of the discrepancies between the Commission's own membership list and the IAU's list, the election was nonetheless fair and democratic. He recorded the Commission's very grateful thanks to Michael Hoskin for acting as scrutineer.

The Secretary's Report was unanimously accepted.

4. Membership

The Acting President reported on the meeting for outgoing Commission Presidents, at which there had been a discussion on procedures for admitting existing IAU members into new Commissions.

He also noted that discrepancies continue to exist between the Commission's own membership list and the IAU's list, and undertook to submit a list of names to the IAU Secretariat of IAU members admitted to the Commission at the last two GA Business Meetings but whose names still do not appear on the IAU list.

The meeting approved the admission of the following IAU members to C41:

- Jean-Louis Bougeret (France)
- Chang Heon-Young (Korea)
- Kim Yongchul [Yong-Cheol] (Korea)
- Harry Nussbaumer (Switzerland)
- Jos Osrio (Portugal)

5. Admission of Non-IAU Members to ICHA

The subject then turned to the Inter-Union Commission on the History of Astronomy (ICHA), of which all C41 members are members ipso facto. The Acting President noted that, despite the clear new procedures for the admission of non-IAU members to the ICHA that had been adopted at Prague, there had been no applicants since the first 6 months of the triennium. He suggested that new ways must be sought by the incoming OC of publicising the Commission admission procedures to professional historians. In order that the broader interests of the ICHA are adequately represented on the C41 OC, it was agreed that moves should be made to identify a suitable person to take responsibility for IUHPS/DHST liaison and to co-opt them on to the OC.

6. Working Groups

The meeting noted the IAU EC's new directive that WG Chairs should not serve for more than 6 years, and approved the continuation of each of C41's five WGs.

7. Closing Business

The meeting noted the new membership of the new OC:

President Clive Ruggles (UK)

Vice-President Rajesh Kochar (India)

Immediate Past President Nha Il-Seong (Korea)

Organizing Committee Juan A. Belmonte Avils (Spain), Brenda Corbin (USA), Teije de Jong (Netherlands), Ray Norris (Australia), Luisa Pigatto (Italy), Mitsuru Soma (Japan), Chris Sterken (Belgium), Sun Xiaochun (China)

The Acting President then handed over the meeting to himself as new President. In this capacity he then closed the meeting.

8. Report on C41 Science Meeting, Sessions 3 and 4, 5 August 2009

by I. S. Glass, W. Orchiston & Mitsuru Sma

The meeting generated considerable general interest and was well-attended.

The first session was chaired by Ian S Glass (SAAO). Though J.H. Seiradakis's lecture extended well into the tea break, such was the interest that the entire audience stayed to the end.

14.00-14.30 Flavia Pedroza Lima (Fundao Planetario da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Instituto de Geocincias - UNICAMP, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; flaviapedroza@gmail.com) & Silvia F. de M. Figueira (Instituto de Geocincias - UNICAMP, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil): "Ethnoastronomy in Brazil" 14.30-15.00 Oscar T. Matsuura (Rua Itacema, 199 apto. 43, So Paulo, Brazil; otmats@terra.com.br): "Pioneering Astronomical Activities in the New World"

15.00-15.30 John H. Seiradakis (Department of Physics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece; jhs@astro.auth.gr): "The Antikythera Mechanism: An Ancient Greek Astronomical Computer"

The second session was chaired by Mitsuru Sma (NAOJ).

16.00-16.30 Ian Glass (South African Astronomical Observatory, South Africa; isg@sao.ac.za): "Alpha and Proxima Centauri: The Quest for the Nearest Star"

16.30-17.00 Erik Hg (Niels Bohr Institute/Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark; erik.hoeg@get2net.dk): "Seventy-five Years of Photoelectric Astrometry: From Experiments in 1925 to the Tycho-2 Catalogue"

17.00-17.30 Mitsuru Sma & Kiyotaka Tanaikawa (National Astronomical Observatory of Japan, Tokyo, Japan; Mitsuru.Soma@nao.ac.jp; tanikawa@exodus.mtk.nao.ac.jp): "The Investigation of the Earth's Rotation From Ancient Occultation Records"

9. POSTER PAPERS

Clifford Cunningham, Brian Marsden & Wayne Orchiston (Centre for Astronomy, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia; Clifford.Cunningham@jcu.edu.au; Brian.Marsden@jcu.edu.au; Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au): “How the First Dwarf Planet Became the Asteroid Ceres”

Hong-Jin Yang (Korean Astronomy and Space Science Institute, Daejeon, Korea; hjyang@kasi.re.kr), Changbom Park (Korea Institute for Advanced Study, Seoul, Korea; cbp@kias.re.kr) and Myeong-Gu Park (Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea; mgp@knu.ac.kr): “Astronomical Aspects of Korean Dolmens”

Jefferson Sauter, Irakli Simonia, Richard Stephenson & Wayne Orchiston (Centre for Astronomy, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia; Jefferson.Sauter@jcu.edu.au; Irakli.Simonia@jcu.edu.au; Richard.Stephenson@jcu.edu.au; Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au): “The Legendary 4th Century AD Georgian Solar Eclipse: Fact or Fantasy?”

John Pearson, Wayne Orchiston & Kim Malville (Centre for Astronomy, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia, John.Pearson1@jcu.edu.au; Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au; kim-malville@hotmail.com): “Forty Years of Solar Eclipse Science at the Lick Observatory and Paradigm Shifts in Solar Physics”

Stella Cottam, Wayne Orchiston & Richard Stephenson (Centre for Astronomy, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia; Stella.Cottam@jcu.edu.au; Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au; Richard.Stephenson@jcu.edu.au): “The 7 August 1869 Total Solar Eclipse and the Popularisation of Astronomy in the USA”

Tomoko Fujiwara (Center for Research and Advancement in Higher Education, Kyushu University, Japan; tomokof@rche.kyushu-u.ac.jp): “Detection of Unknown Objects in Tycho Brahe’s *Astronomiae Instauratae Progymnasmata*”

Clive Ruggles

Vice-President and Acting President of the Commission