

## COMMISSION 41: HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY (*HISTOIRE DE L'ASTRONOMIE*)

**PRESIDENT:** Richard Stephenson

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Alexander Gurshtein

**ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:** Steven Dick, Wolfgang Dick, Rajesh Cochhar, Tsuko Nakamura, Il-Seong Nha, Wayne Orchiston, Woodruff T. Sullivan and Brian Warner.

### 1. REPORT ON THE COMMISSION 41 ACTIVITY IN SYDNEY

In the course of the 25th IAU General Assembly in Sydney, during two and a half working days Commission 41 arranged five thematic scientific meetings, gatherings of all four existing Working Groups, and one general business meeting, which was simultaneously the first official get-together of the Inter-Union Commission for History of Astronomy (ICHA) formed jointly by the IAU and the IUHPS/DHS in 2001.

As usual during GA's, key topics of C41/ICHA scientific meetings in Sydney covered a very broad spectrum of actual problems, namely:

1. Applied Historical Astronomy (2 sessions);
2. The Early Development of Australian Radio Astronomy (4 sessions);
3. Recent Research (2 sessions);
4. Ethnoastronomy & Archaeoastronomy (1 session);
5. Pioneering Observations in Radio Astronomy (1 session).

The all-day meeting on the early development of Australian radio astronomy was organized by C41 jointly with Commission 40 (Radio Astronomy) and attracted an especially large auditorium.

All Working Groups of C41 arranged their own specialized scientific meetings:

- WG1 - Astronomical Archives (Chair - Dr. Suzanne Dbarbat);
- WG2 - Astronomical Chronology (Chair - Dr. Alex Gurshtein);
- WG3 - Historical Instruments (Chair - Dr. Il-Seong Nha);
- WG4 - Transit of Venus (Chair - Dr. Wayne Orchiston).

All in all, about a hundred oral and poster articles were presented during 14 sessions attended by not only C41 members but many other participants of the GA as well. Because such a huge number of presentations is hard to collect under a single cover, for the purpose of printing presented articles will be divided thematically into several segments and published in various organs under the auspice of then Commission President, Prof. Richard Stephenson, and then Commission Secretary, Dr. Wayne Orchiston.

During its general business meeting, the C41 approved the minutes of the previous general business meeting during Manchester's GA, approved the report of activities of the last triennium, discussed the formation of the ICHA and some other current issues, especially the situation with the membership drive, elected new members and the OC of the Commission, re-appointed the existing consultants, prolonged the existence of all four current Working Groups, and recommended establishing a new Working Group on Historic Radio Astronomy, which has to be a joint Working Group with Commission 40. Dr. Orchiston submitted the latter proposal. The business meeting approved also a type C resolution on an Applied Historical Astronomy Database submitted by Prof. Stephenson. The attendees were concerned about the necessity for the OC to introduce the by-laws for admitting the ICHA members who are not members of the IAU.

Some commission members expressed their cautious optimism concerning the formation of the new IAU division (the 'All-Union' Division XII), the C41 becoming a constituent of this new Division. There is a hope that the Division will be instrumental in strengthening C41's links with the IAU Executive Committee.

Before the GA in Sydney, on behalf of the OC the then Vice President of C41 prepared a draft for a resolution to declare the year 2009 as the World Year of Astronomy. Among three other resolutions, the GA unanimously approved this one. Another important GA resolution of interest to C41 is the one on public access to astronomical archives.

During the GA, the IAU Executive Committee approved two international symposia under the IAU aegis supported by C41: one is on the transits of Venus (the UK, 2004) and another is on multi-wavelength investigations of solar activity (Russia, 2004) that will include a considerable historic section.

Alexander Gurshtein  
*President of the Commission*