

Chairman's Message

This year's AGM in June will see me reach the end of my five-year term as Chairman of the Scientific Instrument Society. At that time, our Vice-Chairman, Michael Stewart, and our Meetings Secretary, Nigel Parkinson, will also be coming to the end of their own five-year terms in their respective posts on the Committee. I am extremely grateful both to Michael and to Nigel for everything which they have done over that period. Michael has been responsible for the promotion of the Society and for bringing in paid advertising to the *Bulletin*. In recent years, he has also been our regular representative at the Scientific Instrument Fair in London, apart from which he has voluntarily organized several of the Society's events himself. As Meetings Secretary, as well as arranging such annual events as the Gerard Turner Memorial Lecture, Nigel too has organized several of the Society's study tours himself, including the upcoming visit to Farnborough and that which will accompany the AGM (see elsewhere in this *Bulletin* for further details).

Everyone who serves on the Committee gives freely of their time, in order to help make the Scientific Instrument Society the success that it is. And we all do it out of our common interest in – and enjoyment of – the history of science and technology, and the central part which scientific instruments have played in that history, whatever our own particular area of interest may be.

With Michael, Nigel and myself now soon to step down, the Committee will be short of the number of people it needs to carry out all of the functions which allow the Society to continue to operate.

Under our Constitution, nominations of people to serve on the Committee have to be sent out to all members of the Society in advance of the AGM. At the moment, we do not yet have all the names we need to be able to do so. In order to help out on the Committee, you do not need to be an expert in any area of scientific instruments. All that you require is enthusiasm, and a desire for others to continue to enjoy the Society as you do. The SIS draws its membership from a wide variety of sources: not just from the academic community, but also from collectors and enthusiasts like myself, dealers in the scientific instrument trade, and others. We enjoy each other's company because of our shared interests. So if you would like to help that spirit to continue, please do get in touch with any of the existing Committee members or with our executive officer to offer up your services. Please also consider this as a personal plea from me to you, to help ensure the continued wellbeing of our Society. The duties of a Committee member are not onerous, and the rewards outweigh the commitments. No-one would expect a new Committee member to step straight into one of the posts as an Officer of the Society, who are better drawn from the existing and past

Cover: Photograph of a Fine Indian Celestial Globe

A celestial globe from the 19th-century Indian workshop of the Hindu metalworker Lālah Balhūmal Lāhūrī, with original stand and rings. His workshop continued the instrument-making tradition established in Lahore in the 16th and 17th centuries of producing globes employing the *cire perdue* technique of casting seamless hollow spheres. All the globes made in this workshop are carefully and precisely engraved and display the 48 classical constellations rendered in Mughal design as well as approximately 1022 inlaid stars. The workshop also produced a number of astrolabes, and some of their instruments were made for English patrons, including a globe with English constellation names. The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, SCI285.

Emilie Savage-Smith, FBA

Committee members with the experience to do so. But the Society also needs ordinary Committee members to help the Officers and to be, perhaps in the future, Officers of the Society themselves.

I hope that my plea will not go unheeded. Please do consider putting yourself forward. In the meantime, I look forward to this year's programme of events with keen anticipation. Happy reading!

Marcus Cavalier



Fig. 1 *The Society's Turner medal is admired by Emilie Savage-Smith with Marcus Cavalier leading the ovation.*



Fig. 2 *Marcus Cavalier presenting Peter Thomas with his framed picture of a late eighteenth-century print of a tellurion (a mechanical model of the sun-moon-earth system).*

Hands-on Science!

A star event is our annual General Turner Memorial Lecture which in November last year was given at the Society of Antiquaries in London by Emilie Savage-Smith (Fig. 1). At the same event our Chairman, Marcus Cavalier, presented our retiring Executive Secretary, Peter Thomas, with a fine engraving (Fig. 2). I am, of course, grateful to all our contributors, but it gives me special pleasure to present Viviane Quirke's piece on the *Micrarium* as it takes me back to the 150th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held

in Oxford in 1988 for which I organized a 'hands-on' science exhibition called the *Scientific Amusement Arcade*, which was accompanied by an attractive 24-page booklet funded by Shell UK Ltd. I remember that I spent most of that week with a screw driver and spanner keeping the exhibitions working! One of the items I was especially keen to have was the Buxton *Micrarium* projecting microscope, which Janet Carter took the trouble to supply even though her husband Stephen (Fig. 3) having died only recently.

WDH



Fig. 3 *Stephen Carter describing a magnified ladybird's head with the aid of his microscope. From Willem D. Hackmann, Scientific Amusement Arcade (Oxford, 1988), item 25, p. 16.*