No. 12 – November 2011

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* The ICHA includes IAU Commission 41 (History of Astronomy), all of whose members
are, ipso facto, members of the ICHA.
A. C41/ICHA Programme at the 2012 Beijing IAU General Assembly

As at all recent General Assemblies, IAU Commissions and Working Groups are invited to hold Business Meetings and Science Meetings of their own alongside the main scientific programme of the GA.

At the time of writing, we have not received our final allocation for time slots at the Beijing GA, although this is expected imminently (please see the Commission’s website www.historyofastronomy.org for any update). Subject to confirmation, then, the programme for C41/ICHA and its WGs will consist of the following:

**COMMISSION 41**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Meeting</th>
<th>One 90-minute session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Meeting 1</td>
<td>Opening invited lecture by Prof. Shi Yunli¹</td>
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<td>Remainder of three 90-minute sessions</td>
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<td>Field expeditions, including transits of Venus. Organised by Rajesh Kochhar, Sara Schechner and Jay Pasachoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science Meeting 2</td>
<td>Two 90-minute sessions</td>
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<td>Discovery and classification. Organised by Steve Dick and Ken Kellerman.</td>
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**Historical Instruments WG**

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<th>Business Meeting</th>
<th>One 90-minute session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Meeting</td>
<td>Two 90-minute sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Current research on historical instruments, observatories and sites, with a particular focus on Tycho Brahe’s instruments</td>
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¹ Shi Yunli, Professor of the History of Astronomy at the University of Science and Technology of China in Hefei, has agreed to be the opening speaker at the C41 sessions in Beijing.
**Astronomy and World Heritage WG**

| Business Meeting | One 90-minute session | Science Meeting | Two 90-minute sessions | Presentation and discussion of the astronomical heritage web portal project and the “extended case studies”. |

**Astronomy and World Heritage WG and Historical Instruments WG**

| Science Meeting | One 90-minute session | Common issues in the conservation and protection of different categories of astronomical heritage |

**Historical Radio Astronomy WG**

| Business Meeting | One 90-minute session | Science Meeting | Two 90-minute sessions | To be announced |

Prof. Shi Yunli has also very kindly agreed to arrange a visit to the Old Beijing Observatory and, if possible, to other instrument collections and historical sites.

We anticipate giving full details of the programme in the following Newsletter.

*Clive Ruggles, C41 President*

**B. 2012-2015 C41 Organizing Committee Elections**

According to item 43 of the IAU’s Working Rules, we need to hold elections for the 2012–2015 Organizing Committee at least six months before the Beijing GA. The President may only serve one term, and the Vice-President (currently Rajesh Kochhar) is normally elected to succeed the President. However, we are required to have at least two nominations for the new Vice-President position. OC members may only serve for a maximum of two successive terms, so Teije de Jong is not eligible for re-election, but the remaining OC members -- Juan Belmonte, Brenda Corbin, Ray Norris, Luisa Pigatto, Mitsuru Soma, Chris Sterken, Sun Xiaochun -- are all eligible. The Secretary is normally chosen by the OC from its own membership following the GA.

Accordingly, we invite nominations for Vice-President and for OC membership, which should be transmitted to Juan Belmonte (E-mail: jba@iac.es), the current
Commission secretary. The deadline for nominations is **29 February 2012.** The
election will be held during March–April.

*Clive Ruggles, C41 President*

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**C. Journals and Publications**

**Acta Historica Astronomiae**

This series of history of astronomy books, published by Verlag Harri Deutsch in
Frankfurt am Main, started in 1998. Descriptions of the first volumes of the series
was given in the IAU Comm. 41 Newsletters 2, 6 and 9 and 11, where the titles of
the first 41 volumes were listed. Since then, the following titles appeared (the texts
are mostly in German):

*Vol. 42*: Gaab, Hans: Der Altdorfer Mathematik- und Physikdozent Abdias Trew
978-3-8171-1882-3

An extensive biography of this contemporary of Kepler and Melanchthon, describing
his works in mathematics, geography, optics, mechanics and musical theory, his
astronomical works, mainly dealing with comets, his "reformed astrology", and
calendrical works. The book also includes a complete bibliography of his writings,
manuscripts, and letters.

*Vol. 43*: Dick, W.R., Duerbeck, H.W., Hamel, J. (eds.): Beiträge zur

Fifteen contributions, ranging in scope from Copernicus' De Revolutionibus via
histories of observatories in Bützow, Strasbourg, and Graz, to biographies of modern
astronomers, plus obituaries, short contributions, and book reviews.

Verfertiger von Chronometern und Präzisionspendeluhrren. 273 p., ISBN 978-3-8171-
1884-7

A biography of the clockmaker Heinrich Johann Kessels of Altona, his contacts with
scientists and clockmakers, and notes on constructive characteristics of his products
is followed by an illustrated list of the surviving and lost pendulum clocks, pocket
and box chronometers, as well as other instruments made by Kessels. Selected
 correspondence and printed sources describing his clocks conclude the volume.

More information on the contents and ordering possibilities can be obtained from
the editors of the series (W.R. Dick, wdick@astrohist.org, H.W. Duerbeck,
hilmar@uni-muenster.de, and J. Hamel, juergenhamel@t-online.de). See also the
publisher's webpage [http://www.harri-deutsch.de/verlag/reihen/aha.htm](http://www.harri-deutsch.de/verlag/reihen/aha.htm). Previews of
most of the previous volumes are available at Google Book Search (http://books.google.com/)  

Hilmar W. Duerbeck

Books 2011

- **Trinchieri G., Manara A. (eds.)** *Schiaparelli and his legacy*, Memorie della Società Astronomica Italiana 82, 2 (Section I – Life and science of Schiaparelli, pp. 209-299).

Some research papers by C41/ICHA members - 2011

- **Chinnici I., Randazzo D.** “A manuscript by Ramsden at Palermo Observatory”, *Nuncius* 26 (2011), 243-264.

D. News

☞ **Formation of Johannes Kepler Working Group**

The Johannes Kepler Working Group (JKWG) operates under the International Astronomical Union Commission 41 (History of Astronomy). It was initiated at the XXVIIth General Assembly of the IAU, held in Rio de Janeiro in August 2009. (This year happened to be the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Astronomia nova*). The membership of the Working Group has since been expanded to provide a world-wide forum for discussion and an international base for action to further Kepler scholarship.

The principal aim of the JKWG is to raise Kepler's profile among scientists, historians of science and the public. For instance, members of the Working Group are investigating the possibility of digitizing the excellent modern edition of Kepler's Collected Works published under the editorship of the Kepler Commission of the
Bavarian Academy of Sciences (Johannes Kepler gesammelte Werke, Munich, 1937—).

A website has now been set up, whose address is:

www.iac.es/project/johanneskepler

It is currently under construction and will, we hope, provide a source of reliable and up-to-date information about Kepler and his work for students at all levels, as well as a platform for publication of such material as translations of items from Kepler's extensive correspondence.

The Transit of Venus Working Group Activities

Transits, planets and minor planets: the quest for the solar parallax
Townsville, OLD (Australia), James Cook University, 31 May-2 June 2012

While at the time of the 2004 transit other conferences examined the eighteenth century and nineteenth century transits of Venus, there has never been a conference that examines these transits and other methods (involving observations of planets and minor planets) used to pin down the value of the solar parallax. This conference will examine the transits of Venus, along with these alternate approaches, which were pursued vigorously during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The program will include oral presentations and poster papers, a conference dinner, and a half-day field trip.

The conference proceedings will be published by Springer (New York).

Scientific organizing committee: Wayne Orchiston (Australia – Chair), Suzanne Débarbat (France), Steven Dick (USA), Hilmar Duerbeck (Germany and Australia), Willie Koorts (South Africa), Luisa Pigatto (Italy), David Hughes (England), Jay Pasachoff (USA), William Sheehan (USA), Chris Sterken (Belgium), Robert van Gent (The Netherlands); local organizing committee: Wayne Orchiston (Chair), Andrew Walsh, Vicki Darlington, Alex Hons, Melissa Norton.

For more information, contact: Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au

Venus Transit Conference
Tromsø (Norway), Science Centre of Northern Norway, 2-3 June 2012

Scholars at the University of Tromsø will host a conference on the cultural and scientific history of the transits of Venus, in Tromsø 2-3 June 2012. The conference takes place in Tromsø for two reasons. First and foremost, the last transit of Venus of our century lends itself to be observed on the disc of the Midnight Sun in northernmost Norway, 5-6 June 2012. Second, several Venus transit expeditions in this region were central in the global enterprise of measuring the scale of the solar system in 1761 and 1769.

The site of the conference is the Science Centre of Northern Norway, which is located at the campus of the University of Tromsø. After the conference, participants will be invited to either stay in Tromsø until the midnight 5-6 June, or take part in a
“Venus Transit Tour” in Finnmark, where we will visit the historical sites Vardø, Hammerfest, and the North Cape. The post-conference program culminates with the participants observing the transit of Venus in or near Tromsø or Vardø. In Tromsø, the town’s Astronomical Association will facilitate observation of the transit, whereas the other group will observe the event along with a local committee in Vardø. After the conference, a book will be edited by the organisers, based on papers presented at the conference.

Information on participation and call for papers: http://site.uit.no/venus2012/

Organizing committee: Marie-Theres Federhofer, Steinar Thorvaldsen, and Per Pippin Aspaas (University of Tromsø, Norway), and Anne Bruvold (The Science Center of North Norway, Tromsø)

For more information, contact Per Pippin Aspaas (per.pippin.aspaas@uit.no)

Special Venus Transit issue of the Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage

On the occasion of the forthcoming Venus transit on June 5, 2012, the editors of The Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage plan to dedicate the March 2012 issue to articles on historical studies of Venus transits. Manuscripts may still be considered for publication.

For the author’s guide, see the homepage of the journal: http://www.jcu.edu.au/eps/disciplines/astronomy/JCUPRD_044508.html

Manuscripts may be submitted to Wayne Orchiston (Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au) or the undersigned (hduerbec@vub.ac.be)

Hilmar W. Duerbeck (Chairman)

Sullivan Papers Available

The National Radio Astronomy Observatory Archives is pleased to announce the availability of the papers of Woodruff T. Sullivan III. Sullivan’s book, Cosmic Noise: A History of Early Radio Astronomy (Cambridge University Press, 2009) discusses the history of radio astronomy through 1953, and represents 30 years of intensive research by him. In 2010 Sullivan donated to the NRAO Archives the 188 audio tapes and related paperwork for the extensive set of interviews he conducted between 1971 and 1988 with 255 radio astronomers around the world, many of whom are now deceased. The interview tapes are a unique resource for the history of radio astronomy, which was still a relatively young field when Sullivan began his interview project in 1971.

The 2011 Pollock Award from Dudley Observatory, made annually for a project in the history of astronomy or astrophysics, provided funding for a summer intern, Sierra Smith, who digitized the 22-40 year old audio tapes, and worked with NRAO Archivist Ellen Bouton to create the Web finding aid for the Sullivan papers as well as Web pages for individual interviewees. See the the NRAO Archives website for
the finding aid, which includes links to the interviewee pages and also to the listing of conference talks and lectures on radio astronomy history and on SETI recorded by Sullivan.

It is standard practice for Archives to obtain signed permissions from interviewees before making interviews available to researchers, either in person at the Archives or on the Web. Ms. Smith also worked on contacting interviewees or their heirs for permissions, and the Archives now has signed permission forms from many interviewees. However, there are still people for whom we have been unable to find contact information, and we seek the help of readers of this newsletter. A list of interviewees for whom we lack addresses, either for the interviewee or for heirs/next of kin, is posted on our site. Please review the list, and contact me if you are able to provide addresses or contact information for the listed interviewees or their heirs/next of kin, or for people who may know of appropriate addresses. Your help in making these interviews available to researchers will be greatly appreciated.

Over the next year Dr. Sullivan will be donating the remainder of his research materials on radio astronomy history to the NRAO Archives. We are grateful to him for his gift, which provides an extraordinary resource for historians and researchers. Note: this article also appeared in the Historical Astronomical Division News (American Astronomical Society) no. 79, October 2011.

Ellen N. Bouton, National Radio Astronomy Observatory (USA) Archivist
ebouton@nrao.edu

History of astronomy in India

The study of stone inscriptions as sources of records of astronomical events has produced over 500 records so far. The first part of the results have been published in IJHS (see: “Some research papers by C41/ICHA members - 2011”)

A workshop for undergraduate students was organized in May 2010 to explain the procedures adopted for prediction of eclipses as was done in ancient India. A similar workshop was held in May 2011 also. The sessions included understanding sundials especially those in Jaisingh’s Observatory, use of astrolabe, calculation of possibility of eclipses and transits by the methods described in Grahalaaghava by Ganesha Daivagna of 15th century. The resource persons were Prof S Balachandra Rao, Dr Padmaja, Dr Uma and Ms Rupa (Bhavan’s Gandhi Center of Science and Human Values), Dr B S Shylaja (Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium) and freelancer Mr V S S Sastry.

An exhibition called Kalpaneya Yatre (Journey of Imaginations), covering all aspects of astronomy, was organized in the premises of Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, during Nov 25 – Dec 5, 2010. This was the collaborative effort of various Institutes and Departments of Science and Technology (Karanataka State and Government of India). (see www.taralaya.org) It covered the history of astronomy – the pictorial representations and visualizations were appreciated by over 40000 visitors during the 10 days. A view of the exhibition is below.
3rd Conference on Cultural Astronomy
Campobasso (Italy), University of Molise, November 8, 2011

The University of Molise (Campobasso, Italy) organizes the 3rd Conference on Cultural Astronomy (November 8th 2011). The Conference will be held in Campobasso, a pleasant town in Central Italy, with some archaeological sites (Altilia, Pietrabbondante).

The aim of the meeting is to treat history of astronomy and its links with other cultural branches, that is:
1- History of Astronomy
2- Astronomy in Classical and Modern Literature
3- History of Celestial Mechanics
4- Anecdotes in Astronomy
5. Archeoastronomy

Besides will be greatly appreciated papers on: Women in Astronomy.

Scholars interested in the Symposium can register by sending an E-mail request to ARmeetings@unimol.it; the Proceedings of the Conference will be printed.

No fees are requested.

For more information please write to: ciccone@unimol.it (tel. +39 0874 404445).

For the organizing committee:
Prof. Ennio Badolati (President) (badolati@unimol.it)
Dr. Sandra Ciccone
Nexus International Conference on Architecture and Mathematics
Milan (Italy), Politecnico of Milan, June 11-14, 2012

The 2012 edition of the Nexus International Conference on Architecture and Mathematics will be held at the Politecnico of Milan in June 11-14, 2012.

One of the themes for this edition will be Architecture and Astronomy / Archaeoastronomy. The accepted papers will be published in the international (ISI) Journal Nexus Network - Architecture and Mathematics.

The website of the conference is:

For further details feel free to contact Kim Williams at kwb@kimwilliamsbooks.com or Giulio Magli at Giulio.Magli@polimi.it

Giulio Magli
Faculty of Civil Architecture, Politecnico of Milan

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E. ICHA Member News

Brenda G. Corbin, ICHA OC, compiler
brenda.corbin@verizon.net

Ileana Chinnici (Italy) has completed some works on the life and the scientific activity of Angelo Secchi (1818-1878) SJ, one of the founders of astronomical spectroscopy. She has written two contributions for a book on Secchi edited by Aldo Altamore (Università di Roma 3) and, in collaboration with Antonella Gasperini (INAF-Osservatorio Astrofisico di Arcetri, Florence), has edited the correspondence between Angelo Secchi and Pietro Tacchini (1838-1905), who established the Italian Spectroscopical Society in 1871. Both books will be published in 2012. Moreover, during the next winter, she will spend three months in London to study the spectroscopic materials kept at the Science Museum – a research project financed by the Science Museum and supported by the INAF-Osservatorio Astronomico di Palermo.

Steven J. Dick (USA). During 2011-2012 Steve Dick is holding the Charles A. Lindbergh Chair in Aerospace History at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D. C.

Nick Lomb (Australia) has published *Transit of Venus 1631 to the present* (ISBN 9781742232690), New South & Powerhouse Museum, 2011. This book aims to prepare the public for the 2012 transit of Venus by relating its history and significance as well as explaining how and where to view it safely. It discusses Kepler's prediction of the 1631 transit, Horrock's observation of the one in 1639, the role of Edmond Halley, British and French expeditions in 1761 and James Cook's sighting of the 1769 transit from Tahiti. That voyage by Cook is obviously of crucial importance to people in Australia as it led to the British settlement of the country. The following transit in 1874 was extensively observed from the newly settled country with Henry Chamberlain Russell, the director of Sydney Observatory, publishing a beautifully illustrated book of the observations by the various observing teams under his control. The new book republishes some of these illustrations together with some of the original watercolours, found in the Observatory's archives, on which the published illustrations were based. Modern images from the 2004 transit as well as images of Venus from the Magellan spacecraft are included. More details and ordering information are at [http://www.unswpress.com.au/code13/p2690](http://www.unswpress.com.au/code13/p2690). An American edition is to be published by The Experiment, New York (ISBN 978-1-61519-055-3) in April 2012.

Christiaan Sterken (Belgium) has recently edited *Scientific Writing for Young Astronomers*, Parts 1 and 2 as part of the European Astronomical Society Publications Series. Part 1 (EAS 49, ISBN 78-2-7598-0506-8) contains a set of seven lectures that were delivered during two schools that took place in 2008 and 2009 and addresses students in astronomy. Part 2 (EAS 50, ISBN 978-2-7598-0639-3), authored by Sterken, is meant for a much wider public in the natural sciences and uses many historical examples to illustrate principles of writing, research and research ethics. The books have been sent to every library that subscribes to *Astronomy & Astrophysics*. Full information is found at this link: [http://www.swya.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=220&Itemid=294&lang=en_GB.utf8%2C+en_GB.UT](http://www.swya.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=220&Itemid=294&lang=en_GB.utf8%2C+en_GB.UT).

Woodruff T. Sullivan, III (USA) has been awarded the 2012 LeRoy E. Doggett Prize for Historical Astronomy by the Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society. Dr. Sullivan is the eighth recipient of the Prize which is awarded biennially to an individual whose long-term efforts and lifetime achievements have had significant impact on the field of the history of astronomy. This award is in recognition of his research, writing, teaching, and leadership in the history of astronomy community, especially in the field of the history of radio astronomy. His 2009 work *Cosmic Noise: A History of Early Radio Astronomy* is a detailed study of the subject from an intellectual, technical, and social point of view through the 1950s. In preparation of this and earlier books, Woody interviewed some 250 early radio astronomers and gathered original documents. He reports that “*Cosmic Noise*” is the fruition of a 38-year long project. He is invited to give a plenary lecture to the full American Astronomical Society during their meeting in


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