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# CULTURE AND COSMOS

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## Editorial

The following welcome announcement has been received from Dr. Wayne Orchiston.

**Nicholas Campion**  
**Study of Religions Department**  
**Bath Spa University College**

## THE INTER-UNION COMMISSION FOR HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY

We are pleased to announce the formation of the Inter-Union Commission for History of Astronomy (ICHA) by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the Division of History of Science of the International Union for History and Philosophy of Science (DHS/IUHPS). The ICHA is an international body representing the interests of *all* professional historians of astronomy worldwide. It encourages research into the history of astronomy, facilitates communication between researchers, organises scientific meetings, undertakes collaborative projects, and publishes a bi-annual newsletter. The ICHA will also prepare recommendations for the IAU and the IUHPS, and will liaise with other international organizations.

Membership is open to the entire history of astronomy community. Those who are IAU members become full members of the new Commission, while those who conduct their research through the IUHPS become associate members. New members (of either kind) are elected to the ICHA at the triennial General Assemblies of the IAU.

The ICHA is governed by an Organizing Committee (OC) of ten. The inaugural OC, which is based on the current OC of Commission 41, comprises:

**President:** Professor Richard Stephenson

(UK: [f.r.stephenson@durham.ac.uk](mailto:f.r.stephenson@durham.ac.uk))

**Vice-President:** Professor Alex Gurshtein

(Russia: [agurshtein@hotmail.com](mailto:agurshtein@hotmail.com))

**Secretary:** Dr Wayne Orchiston (Australia: [wo@aaoepp.aao.gov.au](mailto:wo@aaoepp.aao.gov.au))

**Members:** Dr Steven Dick (USA: [steve.dick@usno.navy.mil](mailto:steve.dick@usno.navy.mil))

Dr Wolfgang Dick (Germany: [wdi@potsdam.ifag.de](mailto:wdi@potsdam.ifag.de))

Professor Rajesh Kochhar (India: [rkochhar2000@yahoo.com](mailto:rkochhar2000@yahoo.com))

Dr Tsuko Nakamura (Japan: [tsuko@cc.nao.ac.jp](mailto:tsuko@cc.nao.ac.jp))

Professor Il-Seong Nha (Korea: [SLISNHA@chollian.net](mailto:SLISNHA@chollian.net))

Professor Woodruff Sullivan (USA: [woody@astro.washington.edu](mailto:woody@astro.washington.edu))

Professor Brian Warner (South Africa: [Warner@physci.uct.ac.za](mailto:Warner@physci.uct.ac.za))

Production of the *ICHA Newsletters* is the responsibility of an Editorial Board comprising Dr Ileana Chinnici (Italy), Professors Gurshtein and Stephenson, and Dr Orchiston. Newsletters are scheduled to appear in June and December.

The official establishment of a genuine Inter-Union Commission by the two parent Unions is a major step forward for the history of astronomy community. IAU Commission 41 was founded in 1948, and for decades there has been close co-operation between colleagues from this Commission and those associated with the DHS/IUHPS. During the 1970s an attempt was made to have C41 formally recognized as a joint commission of the two Unions, but this initiative was unsuccessful.

However in 1994 the idea somehow took hold that C41 had become 'A joint IAU-IUHPS Commission' (*IAU Transactions XXIB*, p.207), even though its status was unchanged, and this notion was perpetuated through the 1994 *ICSU Yearbook* (see p.104). Once this fiction of a 'Joint Commission' or 'Inter-Union Commission' was established, it was accepted without question until the true situation was discovered in late 2000.

The quest for a true Inter-Union Commission then became a priority of the C41 OC, and we are delighted to see so pleasing an outcome. Under the aegis of the ICHA, historians of astronomy worldwide can look forward to an era of unprecedented co-operation and harmonious collaboration. Finally, on behalf of all members of the ICHA we would like to thank the General Secretaries of the IAU and the DHS/IUHPS for their unstinting support and encouragement.

Professor F. Richard Stephenson (President, ICHA)  
 Professor Alexander Gurshtein (Vice-President, ICHA)  
 Dr Steven J. Dick (Immediate Past President, IAU C41)

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Dr Wayne Orchiston (Secretary, ICHA)

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