

# FULCRUM

NUMBER 33

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**FULCRUM is the newsletter of ISASC(E), the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors (Europe). It is published in February, May, August and November. Contributions should be sent to the Editor, John Knights.**

## Autumn Meeting

The Autumn meeting took place at the Yew Tree Hotel, Kegworth in the English Midlands on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October. Some 25 people attended the gathering and

because this year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the society, nostalgia was a major theme of the meeting.

Various members gave accounts of their involvement with ISASC and which acquisitions started their journey into collecting.

Mike Sharpe put on a display of all the front covers of Equilibrium. These illustrated better than words, the infinite variety of items that are included in the description scales and weights and the multiple areas of interest that our membership have dealt in over the past 40 years.

A welcome guest was Andrew Lound who updated the meeting on the fate of the exhibits at the erstwhile Avery Museum. The current owners of the business considered it to be no longer a relevant part of their operation and hence

summarily closed it down last year. There has been much speculation as to how this heritage collection will be disposed of but Andrew advised that, so far, nothing too drastic has occurred. It is still expected that much of the material will end up in museums in and around Birmingham but the fate of the other artefacts is still uncertain. This is especially true of the



larger pieces. It does appear likely that Andrew could be involved in the disposal of the artefacts. It is highly unlikely that they could find anyone better qualified.

There were the customary bourse and display tables for people to poke around and the day proved to be a most enjoyable occasion for all those attending.

Meetings secretary Peter Elliott is to be congratulated in organising this landmark event and giving everyone such a memorable day.



## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### **1.0 OFFICERS REPORTS**

#### **1.1. Chairman**

The Chairman was absent due to illness; hence the meeting was conducted by the Secretary, who welcomed the attendees. 23 members were in attendance.

The Chairman's report was read out by the Meetings Secretary.

It referred to 40 successful years as a collectors' society but also stated the sad fact that declining membership has now led to a situation where the future of ISASC (E) has to be carefully considered.

### **1.2. Secretary**

The Secretary reported that no particular problems had arisen in the past year and that the Society's matters were in good order. He also stated that the Constitution is up for review, a task jointly taken on with the Treasurer, and that this review needs to reflect the smaller size of the society, the lack of Officers and the likely need for winding up the society in an orderly manner.

### **1.3. Membership**

Mike Sharpe as acting Membership Records Holder reported that membership currently stands at 62 plus 11 museums. Low numbers of new recruits have not offset the higher numbers of people who have left.

### **1.4. Treasurer**

The Society's accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting. Currently the net assets stand at around £6100. The losses incurred throughout the year are mostly due to postage costs and payments for EQM. The Treasurer offered to discuss in detail any matter relating to the accounts, with any member who wished to do so. He referred to ongoing work reviewing the Constitution and that following further discussions in Committee the proposed changes would be circulated for voting prior to the next AGM.

### **1.5. Information Officer**

Diana Crawforth-Hitchins reported that only a few enquiries came in. Any issues arising from or in connection with articles in EQM should be taken up with the Editor (Jan Berning).

### **1.6. Meetings**

Peter Elliott reported on the meetings held in 2016. There was an informal meeting at John Wintour's farm at Alvington, and indeed John has offered to conduct a similar event next year. This is tentatively scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> July. The present AGM formed part of the only official meeting this year. A straw poll was taken as to whether Kegworth or Warwick would be the preferred venue for the 2017 AGM. Kegworth was chosen by 9 versus 6 for Warwick.

### **1.7. Publications**

The Jubilee issue of EQM had been sent to the membership shortly before the meeting, thus bringing EQM almost back on track. Beyond that the Publications Secretary had nothing to report.

### **1.8. European Representative**

The European Representative reported that he dealt with the very few issues that arose from the EU members. Replying to a question from the floor he stated that the approach to meetings in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany was quite different, but that the former two societies focussed almost entirely on weights. He brought to the attention the forthcoming meeting of the German society in Boppard.

## **2.0 SOCIETY BUSINESS**

**2.1** The proposal by Barry Oliver and seconded by Diana Crawforth-Hitchins that the 2015 AGM minutes be accepted was approved unanimously.

**2.3** The proposal by Janet Scarratt and seconded by Jimmy Earle that the April 2015 to March 2016 audited accounts be accepted was approved unanimously.

**2.4** The recommendation by the Committee that the annual subscription rate be kept at £40 was approved unanimously.

## **2.0 OPEN FORUM**

Janet Scarratt recommended that the Committee liaised with the Charity Commission to assure the use of any funds towards winding up the society was in line with regulations. The Secretary clarified the situation with Trustees, stating that Ken Govier was no longer a Trustee after his retirement from the Membership.

Barry Oliver asked if the Twitter account for ISAC had been set up, which was confirmed by the Secretary. There appeared to be little effect of this on Membership applications and other enquiries.

Mike Sharpe proposed a vote of thanks to Diana Crawforth-Hitchins for helping him setting up the EQM covers on the display wall.

John Corfield recommended to seriously look at emailing copies of EQM to the membership to reduce postage costs.

## **4. A.O.B**

There was no other business.

## **Impending Closure of Blythe House**

Our good friend **Barry Oliver** presented this item to the meeting at Kegworth and because of its importance to members who use the Blythe House facility for research it is reproduced below.

**Some ISASC members will be aware that the Science Museum has a back-up store at Blythe House, just behind Olympia, and another and even bigger back-up to the back-up at Wroughton airfield just outside Swindon. Blythe House is also currently used by the British Museum and by the V&A, again as back-up stores. What is less well-known is that the Government owns Blythe House and has recently decided, in its wisdom (?), to tip the museums out and sell the building off for redevelopment and many million pounds of profit. It is of course in a prime central London location, so it makes perfect sense to the bean-counters in the Treasury. But on the other hand, they have promised millions of pounds to offset the relocation expenses. It's all rather unclear.**

**Following a brief and understandable headless-chicken time after being informed of this doom, the Science Museum has set up The Seven Year Project. For one or two years this will consist of a committee of senior people planning the closure, packing and removal of their entire inventory at Blythe House, followed by the actual doing of it. They provisionally envisage that the actual crating and removal will take from three to four years. Most will obviously go to Wroughton, but there is vague talk of some going to a property in the Old Oak Common area of London (that's in the Paddington district), but I know nothing about this.**

**For now, researchers should be safe for visits for the rest of this year, all of 2017 and probably for all of 2018. Provisionally doors close to visitors in early 2019 and the ultimate closure date is 31/03/2023. Note the use of the word 'provisionally.' I think it would be prudent to assume a worst-case scenario, and knock a year off that timetable. I therefore urge any members running serious research projects and who envisage a visit to Blythe House, to do so by the end of 2017, to be on the safe side. Bear in mind that once the doors close, it is unlikely that anything will thereafter be available to researchers until late 2023 at the earliest!**

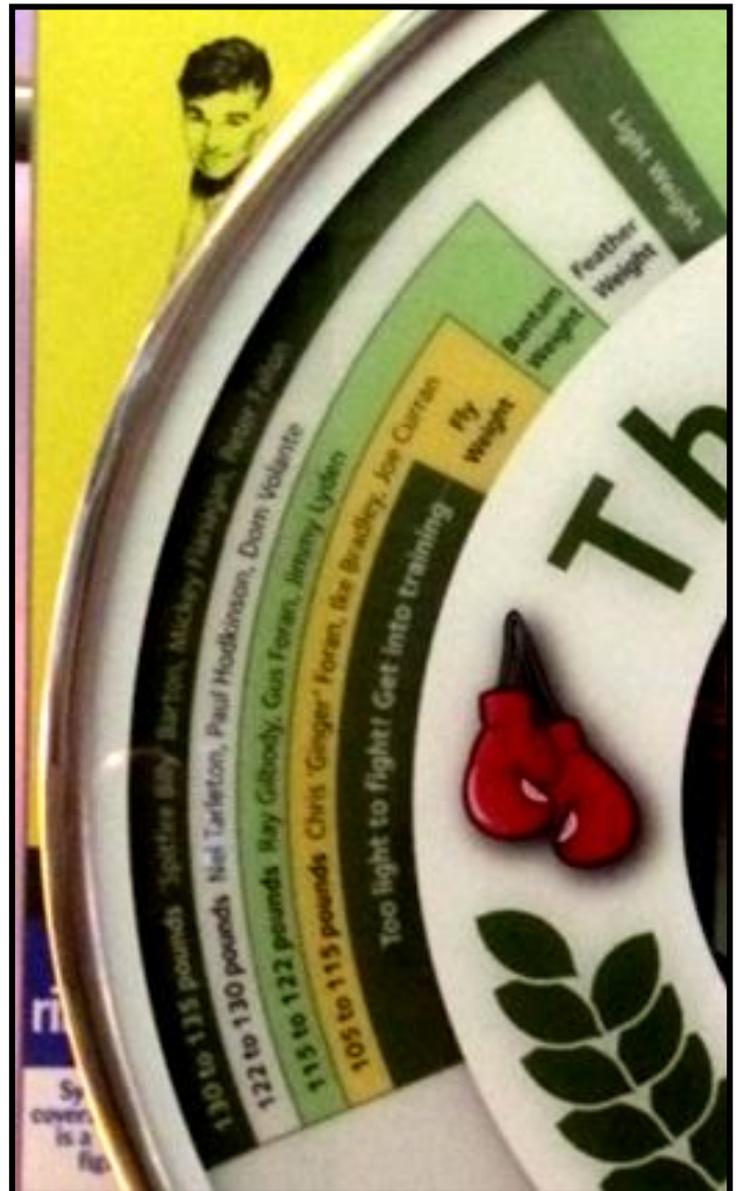
***You have been warned!*As to the suitability of Wroughton for the permanent storage of fine scientific instruments, that's a debate for elsewhere, as is the matter of the distinct inaccessibility of Wroughton. I suspect that the Old Oak Common property will be used to provide a central London location for researchers and some items will be ferried up from Wroughton on request, much as books from their library holdings are currently. But this is by no means certain!**

### **Lawks a Mersey**

I was recently in Liverpool, in the North West of England and was very impressed with the way the city has changed in recent years. One impressive innovation is the Museum of Liverpool, a somewhat charmless concrete block on the outside but which contains a feast of local history within.

One display champions the impressive boxing heritage of the city. There are a host of pictures and brief biographies of some of the famous fighters who have come from Liverpool over the years. As a way of involving the visitors to the museum in the story there is a large dialled Berkel personal scale marked up with the weight values corresponding to the various fighting weights of boxing. Customers are invited to stand on the scale to see the weight band they fall into and which size of person they would therefore be entitled to punch in the face. This is all very informative until you observe that the pointer of the machine has clearly become displaced at some stage. Instead of resting in the six o'clock position, when there is no load on the scale, it starts at a value equivalent to some two and a third stones or 15 kg. It could be an interesting fight.

J Knights



They have clearly gone to a lot of trouble to adapt this scale to illustrate the various fighting weights but have failed to notice the dislodgement of the pointer (probably caused by naughty boys jumping on the plate)