

## Secretary General's Report

**THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICS STUDENTS** The Executive Committee, at a meeting in London on 19 June 1999, approved a request by the International Association of Physics Students (IAPS) to establish a permanent address for the IAPS at the EPS Secretariat in Mulhouse. The IAPS organizes an annual conference for young physicists—the next one will be in Helsinki in August. The EPS is to offer assistance in registering IAPS as a not for profit association.

**THE FRESNEL PRIZE** THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE has approved the new prize of the Quantum Electronics and Optics Division. The prize will be awarded yearly to one or more persons who have made a noteworthy contribution to the physics of optics, quantum electronics or quantum optics in fundamental and/or applied research. The prize may only be awarded for works which have been published or accepted for publication before the proposed candidate(s) has or have reached the age of 35.

**THE HANNES ALFVÉN PRIZE** THE EXECUTIVE Committee has also approved the new prize of the Plasma Physics Division. The Hannes Alfvén Prize will be awarded—for contributions to plasma physics—to an individual who has made an outstanding theoretical, experimental or technical contribution to research in the area of low temperature plasmas, fusion plasmas, astrophysical plasmas or highly compressed material. In order to honour the achievements

of teams, the prize may be awarded to a team or collaboration of up to three people.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER BRIEFS** THE President of EPS, Sir Arnold Wolfendale, has asked members of the Executive Committee to look into the following issues and make proposals on how the EPS can become involved. If you have any suggestions, you are invited to communicate them to the relevant person.

**INDUSTRIAL MEMBERSHIP** How can we increase membership? What can we provide for industrial members? Georgio Benedek *email benedek@titanium.mater.unimi.it*

**SCIENCE POLICY** How can we best influence international bodies (ESF, UNESCO, EU, etc)? Ana Maria Eiro *email ana.eiro@cc.fc.ul.pt*

**PHYSICS IN SCHOOLS** How can we prepare documents for schools which point out the value of physics in all sorts of careers? Tim Hickson

*email timhickson@kings.worcs.rmpc.co.uk*

**FOREIGN SECRETARY** Should an Executive Committee member "look after" external affairs? What would the scope of the position be? Denis Jérôme *email jerome@lps.u-psud.fr*

### **EAST–WEST AFFAIRS**

Rudolph Klein and Ryszard Sosnowski

*email rudolf.klein@uni-konstanz.de*

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**DIVISIONS AND DEMOCRACY** How can we improve the participation of members in the Divisions? Per-Anker Lindgard *email p.a.lindgard@risoe.dk*

**PLAQUES, PRIZES AND PRESERVATION** How can we improve our impact on the public? Denis Weaire *email dweaire@tcd.ie*

**David Lee is Secretary General of the EPS**

## president's column

### Famous Lives

One of the initiatives that the Executive Committee has started is a project which will, hopefully, help to popularize physics in schools. The idea is to produce posters, and possibly a book, which describe the life and work of famous European physicists of the past. The posters will be free to schools.

These short biographies will include exciting personal details as well as scientific discoveries. The overall aim is to get across to the young (12 to 16 year olds) the personal dimension: that these scientists were no different from other famous people and often had very interesting private lives.

In some cases we expect the personal side to illustrate the physics. That Marie Curie was so badly burned by radioactivity—and radioactive herself at her death—helps to illustrate the physics of radioactivity itself.

We hope the biographies will help the young generation to get acquainted with the life and scientific achievements of people of other nations; this should help promote the process of internationalization and further unification of Europe in the next century.

The person responsible for producing the biographies—by way of writing them herself or arranging for others to do so—is Svetlana Erykin, a Russian cosmic ray physicist. Dr. Erykin is well suited to the task by virtue of, among other things, the ability to "look after" Eastern Europe—a neglected area in Western European knowledge.

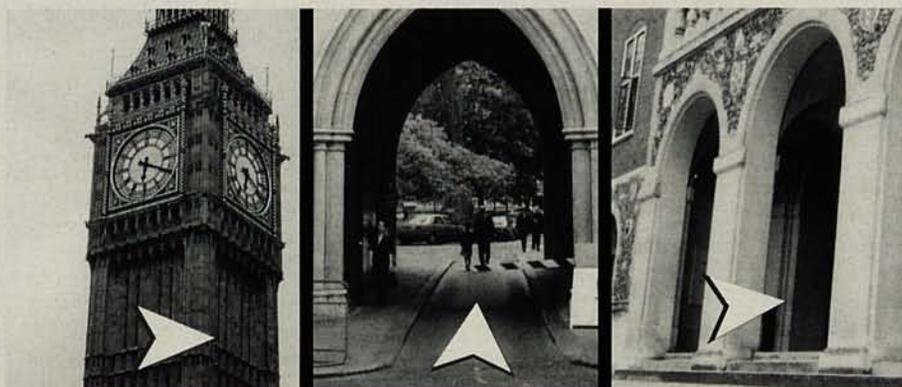
Of course, problems abound. How exactly does one choose the names? For example, was "X" really a physicist, rather than a chemist, or whatever? We have, in fact, been rather broad in our definition. We are trying to include all the names of physicists mentioned in school text books. We have also approached all the physical societies in Europe and asked for their lists and, in some cases, for actual biographies. Some have been forthcoming.

A basic question is: why only European names, why not a list of famous physicists world-wide? My answer is that since we are the *European Physical Society*, let us start there. An interesting comment by one physicist was: why not a book on Famous Failures in Physics? But we will have to let someone else look after that (imagine the litigation if we get it wrong).

We are still accepting text and names to add to the list. When all the physical societies have had a chance to comment and improve the posters (by translating, for example), we will endeavour to secure funds to enable us to reach our goal: a set of posters in every "secondary" school in Europe.

The list itself is available from [eneditor@univ-mulhouse.fr](mailto:eneditor@univ-mulhouse.fr). Please let us know if we missed anyone, or if indeed you wish to help out.

**Sir Arnold Wolfendale**



## EPS General Meeting How to get there

Take the London underground to Westminster (Circle/District Lines). Cross the road, walk past the Houses of Parliament (on your left). Turn right, cross the road, walk past Westminster Abbey (on your left). Turn left after the Abbey, walk through the arch ahead. Walk to the other side of the green to find Church House conference centre. The General Meeting is the governing assembly of EPS, and all members are welcome. It will be held during the triennial General Conference (EPS 11) on Wednesday 8 September after the President's address which is at 1330 hours. The agenda is simple: President's Address, Secretary's Address, Treasurer's Address, Public Understanding of Science.