



The new President

We are delighted to announce that at the March meeting of Council we elected Dr Patricia Fara as our new President.

Dr Fara is a distinguished historian of science, with a degree in physics from Oxford University and a PhD in History of Science from London University. She is Senior Tutor of Clare College, and lectures in the History and Philosophy of Science department at Cambridge. She is also President-Elect of the British Society for the History of Science.

Her major research specialties are science in eighteenth-century England and scientific imagery. Known for her contributions in the media (such as *In our Time*), she has published both academic and popular books on the history of science, including *Sympathetic Attractions: Magnetic Beliefs, Practices and Symbolism in Eighteenth-Century England* (1996), *Newton: The Making of Genius* (2002), *An Entertainment for Angels: Electricity and Enlightenment* (2002) and *Pandora's Breaches: Women, Science and Power in the Enlightenment* (2004). Her latest books are (her personal favourite) *Scientists Anonymous* (2007), her prize-winning *Science: A Four Thousand Year History* (2009), which has been translated into nine languages, and *Erasmus Darwin: Sex, Science and Serendipity* (2012). She is currently completing *A Lab of One's Own: Science and Suffrage in the First World War*.

Dr James Nye, Chairman

The invitation to become your President was as surprising as it was flattering, but naturally I felt extremely honoured and was absolutely delighted to accept immediately. I am very much looking forward to meeting the Society's members and attending events – and also, of course, to reading future issues of the magnificent journal. During 2016-18, I will also be President of the British Society for the History of Science, and I hope that the two Societies will be able to collaborate in some way.

I first became fascinated by time as a teenager perplexed by relativity. Later, when studying the eighteenth century, I encountered time in other ways – metaphorical images of a clockwork universe, John Harrison and the Longitude Prize, the decimal clocks that flourished briefly during the French Revolution. As I focussed on magnetism, I gradually realised how it carried temporal connotations that are no longer recognised. I met navigators and land-based experimenters struggling to understand how magnetic effects depended not only on location, but also on the year and time of day. I encountered mariners using compasses as horological instruments, as well as purportedly magnetic clocks, with concealed inner mechanisms, devised to display a harmonious universe sympathetically bonded by magnetic chains. The antiquarian William Stukeley measured terrestrial magnetism at Stonehenge in order to confirm the chronology of Druid history (although I failed to follow the arguments of some instrument-makers that their magnetic readings corroborated the date of Noah's Flood).

I am very excited at the prospect of a two-way conversation that will make horology more central to the interests of the wider historical community. For me personally, the most appealing aspect of this position is that I will learn an enormous amount from enthusiastic experts and will be able to participate in some absorbing discussions. And I have already discovered that being a tourist acquires new delights when there are clocks to be searched out and admired.

Dr Patricia Fara, President