Annual General Meeting

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The President and Council of the Institute invite members, their guests, and members of other constituent societies to attend the Annual General Meeting 2015

Thursday, 13 August 2015
The Country Club, Johannesburg, Napier Road, Auckland Park, 2006
at 16:30

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Confirmation of minutes
3. Obituaries
4. Honorary Life Fellowship
5. Brigadier Stokes Memorial Award
6. Presentation of awards, medals, and certificates
7. Presentation of student prizes
8. Annual report of the Council and accounts for the year ended 30 June 2015
10. Election of auditors and honorary legal advisors for the year 2015/2016
11. General
12. Induction of President—R.T. Jones
13. Presidential address
14. Vote of thanks
15. Photographs of all Council members

A cocktail party will be held after the meeting
Scientific progress relies on the publication of ideas and experimental results that can be replicated, tested, and improved over time. The first printed book on metallurgy to have been published in Europe is considered to be *De la Pirotechnia*, written in Italian by Vannoccio Biringuccio, and published in Venice in 1540. Together with *De Re Metallica*, written by Georgius Agricola and published in Latin in 1556, this can be considered to mark the start of scientific and technical literature in this field. Scientific publishing of journal papers has been in existence for over 350 years, since the world's oldest and longest-running scientific journal, the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, was first published in London in 1665.

The nature of scientific societies has changed significantly since the early days when regular meetings were held to discuss science and run experiments, and publication of scientific papers took place. In this frenetic environment, it is essential that researchers are able to trust the material they read. The system of peer review is used to maintain standards and to improve the quality of papers. This vital system is, however, significantly flawed. There is little incentive for reviewers to invest sufficient time in the refereeing of original papers. This might improve the current situation where errors tend to be propagated from one paper to the next.

There is an increasing trend towards open access for papers in scientific journals and conference proceedings, which helps to reach as wide an audience as possible. This also supports the statement in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that says ‘everyone has the right freely to … share in scientific advancement and its benefits’.

Various measures (including the impact factor) have been used to rate the performance of journals, while a count of citations (or the h-index) is often used to rate the performance of scientific authors. Some flaws in this approach have been highlighted.

Scientific publishing remains alive and well, despite some problems and challenges. Electronic technology provides some wonderful opportunities to improve the way we communicate scientific results.