

LAUDATIO STUART BENNETT

A. Van Cauwenberghe

Prof. Stuart Bennett obtained a Diploma in Applied Mathematics in 1964 and a Ph.D. degree in 1970, both at Sheffield University in England. In 1972 he became lecturer in the Department of Control Engineering. Since 1989 he is full professor at the same department at Sheffield University.

In 1982 he was visiting Research Fellow at the Department of the History of Science and Technology at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. and in 1988-1989 he enjoyed a sabbatical leave as Senior Research Fellow at the same institution.

Prof. Bennett is a specialist in computer control : real-time and interactive computing including management information systems and computer control in the process industries. As such he (co-)authored 4 books and wrote more than 30 papers.

He also got interested in an early stage in the history of control engineering, particularly measurement and control instrumentation. He wrote two books on this subject, one describing the historical development from 1800 to 1930, the other one from 1930 to 1955. He is the author of the section "History of Control" in the well-known "Encyclopedia of Systems and Control" (Editor M.G. Singh, Pergamon Press, 1987). He authored 13 papers on the same subject.

His current activities embrace :

- strategic planning and operations control for complex mixed-mode systems;
- instruments and the heat treatment of steel : a comparative study; and
- technology, organization and people.

His present duties include teaching as well as administration. His teaching relates to computer control, software engineering and real-time system design. He is member of the University's Teaching Quality Assessment group, a member of Court, Council and Senate of the University of Sheffield and of the Finance Committee of his university.

During his stay at the Smithsonian Institution he took part in the organization of two exhibits : "Workers and Managers" (1989-1990) and "The Information Age" (1990).

Prof. Bennett is also a member of IFAC's (International Federation of Automatic Control) Technical Committee on the "Social effects of automation" as well as of the History Committee of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) Control System Society. He is also a trustee of the Kelham Island Industrial Museum.

From this we rightly conclude that Prof. Bennett is a brilliant engineer, a man of science and technology, a scholar with wide and interdisciplinary interests. As a young professor, working in a country where the industrial revolution started, he got interested and became proficient in the history of the technological evolution in control engineering, a discipline that greatly influenced the shaping of our modern industrialized society.

The Sarton Committee is happy that he accepted to deliver a G. Sarton Memorial Lecture to-day in Ghent, one of the very first towns where the industrial revolution took roots, in the "terra firma" of the European continent.

