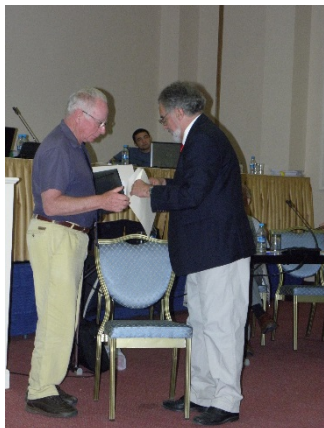


## WFPPhC-Award-2014 to Guy Bagnall / Great Britain



Within the 45<sup>th</sup> International Physics Olympiad in Astana/Kazakhstan in July 2014 there was a session of the International Board. During this meeting the Award-2014 of the World Federation of Physics Competitions was given to the former leader of Great Britain (from 1984 up to 2009), Guy Bagnall.

After some introductory words from the president of the WFPPhC, the head of the Award Committee, Jan Mostowski from Poland, gave the following laudatory speech:

*Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,*

*The World Federation of Physics Competitions awards a prize to individuals who have exceptionally contributed to physics competitions. The prize is awarded every two years. As the chairperson of the award committee I have the privilege and pleasure to announce this year's laureate, Guy Bagnall from England!*



*Let me now say a few words about Guy. In order to start, I will go back to the early eighties of the previous century. At that time the International Physics Olympiad was a small event, and only the so-called socialist (or peace loving) countries participated. Let me recall that in 1979 only 11 teams participated in IPhO! For comparison – this year there are 83 teams. Because of political changes and other reasons, there was much pressure from physicists to expand and extend the IPhO to other countries. This was not a simple task, as there was hardly any tradition of physics Olympiads outside the socialist countries. Nevertheless, the IPhO did manage to overcome the Iron Curtain. The Federal Republic of Germany was the first country from the West (so to speak) to host the IPhO in 1982.*

*The UK joined the IPhO in 1984, as Sweden acted as host. By that time, the IPhO had grown to 17 teams. The UK organized the Olympiad as soon as 1986, just two years after joining the IPhO. The UK was the third so-called “western” country to host the Olympiad.*

*Guy was the key person behind these developments. At that time he worked at the Harrow School in London as the head of the physics department. He was the person who shaped the British Physics Olympiad, and the main organizer of the IPhO in the UK in 1986. I must say that it was this Olympiad that opened the door to this becoming a truly worldwide event. The number of teams grew to 21 and began the rapid growth that followed. Teams from remote countries (from a European perspective) such as China, Australia, Canada, the USA, joined the IPhO and have participated every year since about that time. This could not have happened were it not for the quiet diplomacy of Guy.*

*The UK hosted the IPhO in 2000 for the second time. This was a much larger event, and Harrow School staff were not able to run it. Instead, Leicester University was chosen to be the host. Guy's role was very important in that event, too. He was responsible for the experimental part of the competition.*

*There is at least one more very important thing that we owe to Guy, namely the Syllabus. The Syllabus that we use now was first written in the mid-eighties and accepted in 1986 during the Harrow Olympiad. Guy was one of the crucial people who formulated it. Essentially, the same Syllabus has been used up till now – for nearly 30 years! Guy was also one of the key persons to formulate the Statutes (the constitution) of the IPhO. Although the statutes have been modified many times since their first introduction in the eighties, their main structure remains essentially unchanged.*

*In our opinion the Olympiad would not have been like it is today, had it not been for the work of Guy. He has always been a very quiet contributor, often in the shadow, never trying to stand out as the first, but, nevertheless, the most effective.*

*Also, I have to mention the role of Jenny, Guy's wife, who was a great help in making sure that the 1986 Harrow Olympiad ran smoothly, such as through her dealing behind the scenes with all sorts of unexpected and memorable problems with guests that cropped up.*

*By this award to you, Guy, we all want to express our warmest thanks!*

Then it was time to present Guy Bagnall his award. This was done by the WFPPhC-president, Helmuth Mayr, with following words:

*Dear Guy !*

*Having heard all these nice and honourable words in the laudatory speech, given by Jan, I want to present you your award.*

*It consist of three parts:*

*First there is a huge envelope with your diploma. The next part is a smaller envelope in it. Be careful with it.*



*And here is the third part, a huge one in a special box.*

*Unwrapping and holding it up, everyone can see: it's a globe. You, dear Guy, sitting near this globe, can notice that it is rotating the whole time. I am not sure whether you, dear friends, sitting in the back of this room, can see this, too. But believe us, it is actually moving.*

*However, there is a secret in this globe: There are no contacts and there is also no battery in this globe, but it is spinning all the time !*

*Obviously, it is the first perpetuum mobile ever presented to a group of physicists, and what can be a better award to a physicist like you, dear Guy, than such a perpetuum mobile ?*

*I am sure, you will have your own theory about it and the properties of perpetua mobile in general. Maybe you have now an idea about its detailed*

*properties, e.g. its Psi-function, in your mind ?  
However, enjoy your award.*

*But there is another secret, too:*

*Here one can see the special box of your perpetuum mobile, with the logo of the Federation, an honourable text to you and your name.*

*Now I am putting your perpetuum mobile back in the box, and so you do not get any information about the state of the globe. I mean, you do not know whether it is still a perpetuum mobile or not.*

*Doesn't it remind you in some way of Schrödinger's cat and its box ?*

*What about the Psi-function of the globe if your award is inside the box ? Is there a Psi-decay or how shall we describe its state ?*

*I am sure you will find time to enjoy these secrets of your award and to find out news about it.*



*Dear Guy, let me express my cordial congratulations !  
Your work has always been and will be an example to us !*

*Best wishes to you and your charming wife for your future !*

*The floor is now open for you.*

Guy Bagnall thanked us very cordially, including some historical facts of his role in the IPhOs, and got a long and warm applause from the audience.