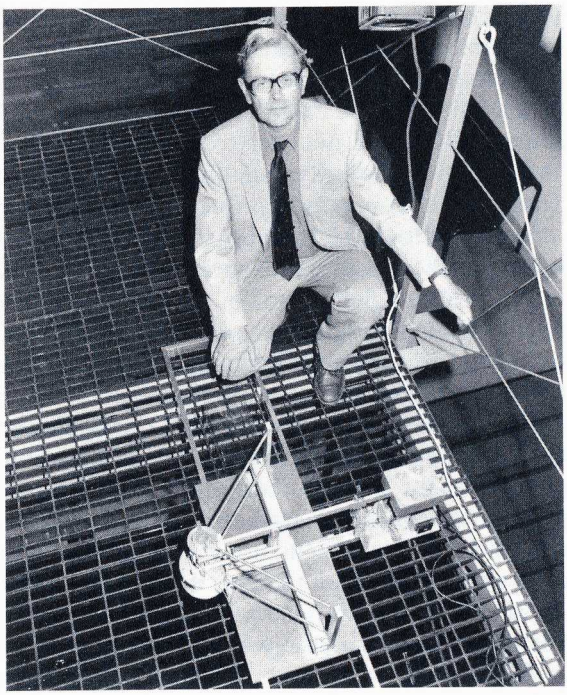
Back to Synopsis

Title 398

Professor Sir Brian Pippard FRS is a Member of the ISR Editorial Board, and was the Cavendish Professor of Physics at the University of Cambridge. He is seen here adjusting the greatly improved drive and suspension, which he designed by using parametric amplification, of the Foucault Pendulum, installed in July 1988 above the 20 m high stairwell of The Science Museum, London. A review of Foucault and the pendulum's history by W. Tobin and B. Pippard appeared in ISR 19/4 (1994). *Courtesy Science Museum, London.*



The scientific institutes and laboratories I visited during 1994 were entirely of my own choice, and not because the News Editor of *The Daily Telegraph* had sent me there, as in earlier years. I was perhaps invited, and gladly accepted, or I had heard or read about some exciting new work which might lead to a contribution for my Journal. Of course, not each resulted in an article, and I would consider the chances as 50 to 50 if I was lucky—in other years it might only be much less, only 30 per cent. That my first visit to Berlin Buch was unsuccessful I mentioned on Title 396.

In April I took the train to Edinburgh for the Annual Science Festival there, but it was another failure. The various displays and events were of a very popular nature, and although they no doubt contributed much to the general understanding of science in Scotland, they were not of the standard I wanted for I S R. I enjoyed the train trip and particularly staying at the New Club, [founded in 1784, see Title 308] in Princes Street.

In May, the Science Museum in London arranged an exhibition for the Eurotunnel Company about the design and construction of the Channel Tunnel. I was impressed by the high level of interdisciplinary technology which had made this important example of macro-engineering possible, within the original estimates of cost and time, but I could not find a suitable author to write about it for ISR. I had always hoped for an invitation to visit the tunnel during the construction phase, in particular to see the giant circular boring machine, which I had heard about at CERN where it was used for their accelerator tunnels, but the Science Museum exhibition was to be the next best I could achieve.

I myself wrote an Editorial about "The great Channel Tunnel" [ISR 1996 Vol. 21 (1) p. 1] in which I expressed my admiration for this achievement. It was just one year after its completion, and the literature I had received during the exhibition I visited two years earlier, was then of the utmost value.

In September the I attended the Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Loughborough but I did not go to Hamburg where the Gesellschaft Deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte had their biannual show.

In October two friends came to see me in London, Robert Eisner from Melbourne and a month later William Tobin from Christchurch, New Zealand. Robbie and I were students together at Imperial College in the 1930s and he was the only friend with whom I had remained in regular contact from those far distant days. Tobin had become a physics professor and had contributed a most interesting article on "Foucault, his Pendulum and the Rotation of the Earth" [ISR 1994, Vol. 19 (4) p. 326]. I very much enjoyed seeing them both.

Back to Synopsis

*To... ISR Volumes 19, 20, and 21. ISR 20/1 *20 Years ISR*. Title 399.*