
Oughtred Society 2009 Annual Meeting

by Clark McCoy and Tom Wyman

The Annual Meeting on June 27, 2009 was especially interesting and was different from most Oughtred Society meetings. It was held at the Computer History Museum, Mountain View, California and attracted members from as far away as New Zealand.

The prime event was the auction of the collection of OS Founding Member Osborne Price, whose contributions to the Society were recognized in the Fall issue 2008 (Vol. 17, No. 2) of the Journal of the Oughtred Society. The fine display covered 16 tables and included a variety of rare box-wood and ivory rules, literature, abaci, other scientific instruments and was the best ever seen at one of our meetings.

Deborah Douglas, Curator of Science and Technology at the MIT Museum, brought several ‘mystery’ slide rules from the museum’s K&E collection about which she had questions. As usual the members in attendance were able to provide some answers.

Society member David Gamble from New Zealand easily won the “farthest traveled” award for the meeting. David brought a few items for display, the most impressive being a bound volume with detailed photos of his collection. He also was able to visit some of the local collectors on Sunday. It was a pleasure to meet David and an honor to have him at the meeting.

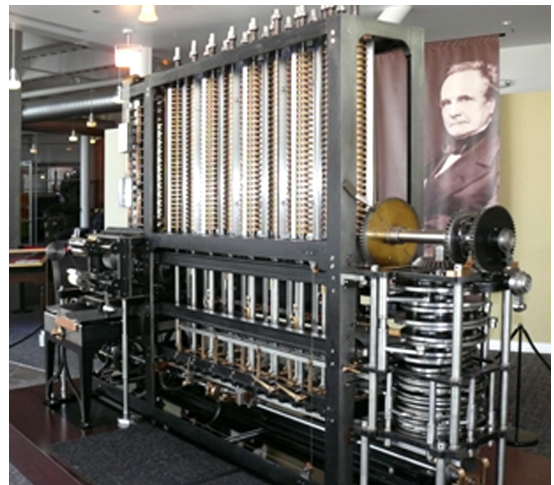


Figure 1.

Bidding was spirited for the best pieces within all areas of Osborne’s specialized collections and his keen eye for quality was evident throughout the auction. It was an opportunity for those present to enhance their collections with slide rules and other items which are rarely, if ever, seen on the open market today. A final reckoning showed that the total proceeds of the sale exceeded \$10,000 for the benefit of the estate of Osborne Price. The entire event was well organized and moved along smoothly thanks to the careful preparation by Rodger Shepherd, who also is an OS Founding Member, former OS Board Member and a long-time friend of Osborne and his wife. Fellow OS member and expert auctioneer, Bob Koppány, did a masterful job.

The Babbage Difference Engine #2 was on display and the few who had not seen the demonstration were in for a treat. The machine is located in the lobby of the Computer History Museum just around the corner from where our lunch was served. The museum also was open for general viewing.

After a short business meeting during which OS officers and directors for the year 2009-10 were elected, attendees adjourned to enjoy a reception, dinner and dessert at the homes of two local members, Tom Wyman and Bob Otnes.



Clark McCoy is a retired engineer from the broadcast and tape machine industries. He mostly collects K&E slide rules, planimeters, and K&E literature. His extensive collection of K&E catalogs is the foundation for his K&E catalog website.

Thomas (Tom) Wyman, after a 42-year career in the petroleum industry, served as President of the Oughtred Society from 1997 to 2007 and is a frequent contributor to the Journal of the Oughtred Society. He was the recipient of the Oughtred Society Award in 2005.

