

## CANDIDATE FOR ISE PRESIDENT ELECT

### PROFESSOR ROBERT HILLMAN

#### Personal history

Robert Hillman is Professor of Physical Chemistry at the University of Leicester. He is also currently Dean of the Faculty of Science, where his duties naturally generate many skills valuable to a Society officer and strongly connect to the Society's missions of scientific excellence and promotion of education. In addition to high level responsibilities for research and education, these duties include interactions with delegates from other institutions and nations, spanning technical and strategic issues.

His research interests lie in the modification and characterization of electrode surfaces, an area that goes to the intellectual heart of electrochemistry, yet requires points of contact with its many and diverse applications. Much of his recent work in this area involves the development and application of in situ spectroscopic and physical techniques for exploring interfacial structural and dynamics; his work on the EQCM resulted in the award of the 2003 ISE Tacussel Prize. Beyond the research dimension, he has gained experience of the educational process – a core commitment of ISE – at all levels. His term of office as Dean ends at approximately the same time as the commencement of the President Elect's term, leaving him free to commit time and energy to ISE.

Before taking the Chair of Physical Chemistry at Leicester in 1992, he held a lectureship at the University of Bristol. This followed a B.Sc. at Imperial College London and a D.Phil. at the University of Oxford. He has also been Adjunct Professor of Analytical Chemistry at the University at Buffalo since 1990. During his career, he has published approximately 180 papers, many of which are the outcomes of rewarding collaborations with colleagues from around the globe.

As an ISE member, he has served the Society in a number of roles. These include two terms as UK National Secretary, two terms as Secretary General of the Society, contributions to *Electrochimica Acta* (as an author, a member of the Editorial Board and - less visibly - a regular referee of manuscripts submitted to the journal), and currently chairmanship of the Scientific Meetings Committee. Together, these activities provide a unique collection of experience and insight into the Society. These will be critical for a senior officer to understand the challenges and opportunities that confront the Society and from which its members might benefit in the near future.

#### Candidate's statement

This is an exciting time for ISE and its members. The Society is undergoing significant expansion of its membership, meetings activities and commitment to the promotion of all aspects of electrochemistry. My goal as a senior officer of the Society will be to maintain and enhance this forward momentum within the best intellectual and collegial traditions of ISE. My vision of the ISE of the future is a professional society with a truly international outlook, committed to the sustained delivery of scientific excellence by an executive body responsive to the needs of the membership.

I am honoured by the invitation to stand for this Office and recognize the talents and skills of many former holders of this position. I also recognize the magnitude of the challenges ahead for a society undergoing rapid advancement and for a membership with the highest aspirations. I welcome these challenges and believe that my prior experience with the Society will make it possible for me to contribute positively from the outset. As a former member of the Executive Committee of ISE, I also recognize that the concept of "serving" as a Society officer is the correct description.

One of the acknowledged strengths of ISE is its diversity, which immediately defines the primary role and constraint of the office of President: leadership that simultaneously promotes coherence and diversity. In my activities on behalf of ISE I have had first hand experience of this diversity when required to re-write the Society's constitution in a manner that satisfied legal requirements ensuring financial stability and that at the same time satisfied very different aspirations from members across more than 60 countries. My many discussions with members provided me with new and enlightening perspectives that I would welcome the opportunity to put into practice as President Elect.

In partnership with a number of distinguished colleagues, I have had the opportunity to participate in major developments of ISE in recent years. The growth in membership has brought new opportunities, but has also provided organizational challenges. In response to these, we now have a Society Office to provide continuous support and services for members and a fully developed website that facilitates communications on a regional and technical basis. Most recently, we have started to take full control and financial responsibility for our Annual Meetings. The intention is that we will be able to satisfy the Members' demands for diversity of location and local culture without compromise of

scientific excellence, quality of service or value. Recent changes to ISE's organizational structure have made the Society Officers more accountable to the membership. Simultaneously, operational improvements have provided the practical means and the communications infrastructure to facilitate this responsiveness to members' needs and aspirations. I am pleased to have had the experience of contributing to all these developments, and now hope to be able to deliver on some of the opportunities this favourable situation promises.

ISE is a society of long tradition and strongly held beliefs. What then is my vision for its future? The over-riding desire of the membership is a commitment to scientific excellence, through research and education. The challenge I seek to fulfil is to deliver this excellence blended with inclusiveness, such that all members have the opportunity to both contribute to and benefit from it. This will undoubtedly involve continued evolution of the activities of the Society, but I would endeavour to accomplish this in a manner that remains true to the traditions and principles of ISE.

The two most visible activities of the Society are its journal and its meetings. While these are primarily accessed by existing members, they are also the greatest attractors for non-members to join the Society. I therefore see the increased profile, quality and technical excellence of these activities as critical to ISE's future. I will continue to support *Electrochimica Acta* as author, reviewer and editorial board member, but will also seek to ensure that the excellent work of the Editorial team receives all the support it deserves from the Society at large. My involvement with ISE conferences is already substantial, through the planning activities of the Scientific Meetings Committee and, most recently, through involvement with organization of ISE 2006. These are both part of a major transformation of ISE activities over the last few years, in which the Society has taken greater responsibility for organization and finance of its meetings. We have also initiated the concept of Spring Meetings, providing a technical and geographic complement to the Annual Meetings. My experience in this area gives me a very clear view of the mechanics as well as the intellectual basis for an activity that will be the largest single feature of ISE's economic landscape for the next decade.

While the importance of these and other new ventures is unquestioned, it is also vital that the Society serve its members by doing the simple things well. ISE as a society today is almost unrecognizable from ISE a decade ago: we do more things, in new ways and to the benefit of a far greater community. Nonetheless, the core values of the society and the underlying aspirations of its members are still strongly held: they need the correct environment in which to achieve scientific excellence in collaboration with colleagues around the world. My intention is to facilitate this in a spirit of collegial competitiveness.

Robert Hillman (May 2006)