

**PRESENTATION SPEECH OF THE 2006 TRIBOLOGY GOLD MEDAL  
BY H.M. AMBASSADOR  
H.E. EDWARD CHAPLIN CMG OBE**

Professor and Mrs Bassani, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I first of all welcome you to Villa Wolkonsky. I especially welcome

- Dr Mario Ali', from the Ministry of Scientific Research
- Prof Emilio Vitale, Head of Pisa Engineering Department,
- Prof Italo Mannelli, from the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa
- Ammiraglio Cristiano Bettini, from the Livorno Military Academy

Today I have a special task and one that gives me great pleasure. It is to act on behalf of the Tribology Trust to present the 2006 Tribology Gold Medal and pay tribute to Professor Bassani, world famous for his achievements in tribology.

As you know tribology is the science of friction and wear which helps us to understand the operation of a large steel rolling mill, a person walking on a carpet, a non-stick frying pan, any movements of surfaces over each other including those on mechanisms of satellites and magnetic storage systems. At least in the sense of minimising friction, perhaps it has something in common with diplomacy.

Compared with traditional sciences, tribology is a young science and technology. It was in 1965 that the Committee established by the late Lord Bowden, then British Minister of Science under the Chairmanship of Professor Peter Jost found that the English language – as indeed all other languages – had no word for the multidisciplinary concept of “interacting surfaces in relative motion” and its technical and economical consequences. The word “Tribology” and the concept were first enunciated 40 years ago this year in a British Government Report now universally known as the “Jost” report.

The Tribology Gold Medal is the world’s highest honour in tribology. It has been awarded 35 times. In Britain the presentation is usually made by a member of the Royal Family, the last presentation being by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, at Buckingham Palace. When the recipient is a national of another country it falls to the Ambassador in that country to make the award. I am very pleased to say that this medal has now been awarded for the first time to an eminent Italian scientist, world famous for his work.

Professor Bassani has played a vital role in the development of science and technology of tribology in Italy; the range of Professor Bassani's research activities have been immense, covering much of the field of tribology. His work on space and cryogenic applications and on bearings in extreme conditions, including the effects of lubricant starvation and the role of advanced materials and coatings and lubrication with special lubricants, have been outstanding. As many of you will know better than I, there are many other areas of applied research where Professor Bassani has achieved great renown.

In 2005 Professor Bassani became the first President of the Italian Association of Tribology (AIT) which he was instrumental in founding. AIT encompasses academia associations and important industries, a combination regarded by many as a right formula for the promotion of the science and technology of tribology and industrial applications in the twenty-first century.

Professor Bassani has presented many papers at Tribology Conferences all over the world and he has received many honours. To these will today be added the 2006 Tribology Gold Medal. The medal itself, so I am told, is made of pure Gold. Whilst this material does not have good structural properties, as you know it has other very desirable qualities.

In the name of the Tribology Trust I now have the honour to present the 2006 Tribology Gold Medal to you, Professor Bassani, and may I add my own warm congratulations to those of your many friends and colleagues.