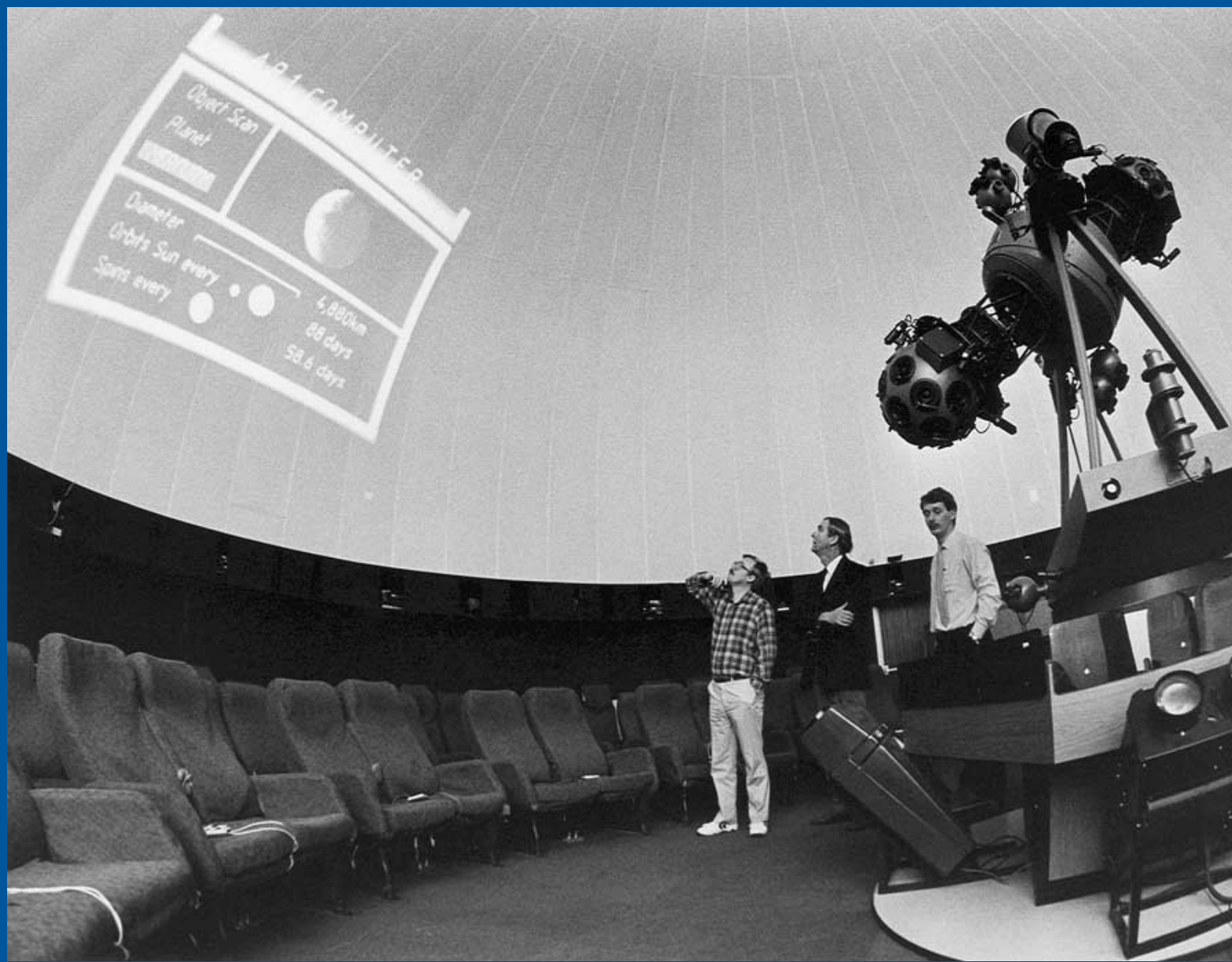


ARMAGH PLANETARIUM IN THE 1980s

Another world first



World's first interactive system. Note the keypads on the seats for the audience to direct the show

Yet another world first in the Star Theatre was the introduction of an electronic audience participation system. Now the audience could control the show themselves! Each seat was fitted with a small keypad, using this device the audience could use their buttons to respond to multiple choice quizzes in the show, be polled on their preferences and even steer the direction of the show by selecting the topics. *Space Odyssey*, created in Armagh, was the world's first ever completely interactive planetarium show. Again this innovation from Armagh has spread to planetaria world-wide.

Multimedia first

Armagh Planetarium continued its proud tradition of technological innovation. *Encyclopaedia Galactica* was a pioneering exhibit applying multi-media computer techniques. Visitors to the exhibition area could sit at keyboards to use a simple menu interface to select and view any of 500 000 images and video clips with explanatory text stored on state-of-the-art laserdiscs. This was entirely new technology at the time, pioneering the technology of today's interactive CD-ROM discs and DVDs. The public found this instant access to movies and videos fascinating, and the system received favourable press and television coverage world-wide. *Encyclopaedia Galactica* was featured in the BBC's *Tomorrow's World* and received full-page coverage in the prestigious *New Scientist* magazine.

The Star Theatre was continually being enhanced with the latest technology, three more video projectors were added, so effects could be displayed in all four directions, even directly overhead. Computer controlled laserdisc players replaced the videotape players from the 1970s.