

## ICPS 2007 Organisation Report & Tips for Future Organisers

### THE BID

#### \*Bid Team

Our original bid team consisted of UK participants at ICPS 2004 in Novi Sad, including the student liaison officer at the time at the Institute of Physics (IoP), who also sits on the Nexus committee, the student wing of the IoP and the UK & Ireland National Committee for IAPS. Other volunteers also joined the bid team, mainly through Nexus, but also via some personal contacts with other team members. Nexus, as the IAPS NC for the UK & Ireland, officially submitted the bid to host ICPS 2007 in the end. Many of the original bid team however did not stay on the organising committee until the actual conference, for a variety of reasons.

#### \*Host City and University

The bid team put together a list of possible host universities and carried out a bit of research into each one, to see how enthusiastic each one was and what benefits, if any, they had to offer. Quite quickly the choice was narrowed down to either the University of Sheffield or University College London. The bid team also included students from both universities, so there were inside contacts available. In the end UCL was chosen in a vote, mainly because it was believed at the time that the university would offer the use of lecture theatres at no cost, but also because of the many attractions and easy transport links London has. The fact that London is of course an expensive city was not felt to be too much of a disadvantage, since the conference includes items like meals and some free drinks, and organisers should be able to point delegates to cheap places and student discounts in London.

Sadly the UCL administration section later charged us for use of the lecture theatres, albeit at a lower price than usual. This caused considerable concern, however in the end the Dean of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at UCL offered to cover the entire cost of the hire charges, so in effect we did not have to pay for room use, other than in the evenings for parties. However at the bid stage, clearer confirmations should have been obtained from UCL, a task made harder by the fact that there was only one student from UCL helping with the bid at the time.

#### \*Conference Dates

Originally a 7 day conference was planned, from Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August to Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August. Due to budget restraints this was later changed to one day less, starting on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August instead. During the bid it was attempted to avoid days when flights to and from London may be more expensive; in the end the conference was started on a Friday, due to one guest lecturer only being available on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August, which would otherwise have been the departure day if the conference had been shortened to 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### \*Bid Document

A short document was put together with information on the planned conference, including sections on London as the host city and its many attractions, UCL as the host university, possible accommodation, which at the time was in residence halls belonging to the University of London (of which UCL is a part), but was later moved to the Generator youth hostel due to budget restraints, and other information on items such as catering options for meals, planned

excursion destinations and planned events during the conference. The advantages of having ICPS 2007 in London and at UCL were of course highlighted. A proposed timetable was also included and a logo was designed for the conference (although later altered slightly), based on an image from CERN showing particle tracks, which we were able to use and modify free of charge. Despite several details of the bid document being changed later on, it gave a good indication of what ICPS 2007 would be about.

#### \*Bid Budget

An estimated budget for the conference was included in the bid, with all the main anticipated expenses covered, such as venue hire (at the time only for evenings, since daytime hire was thought to be free), accommodation, meals and other catering (e.g. refreshments), excursion costs, accessories such as the conference t-shirts, and the cost of the social events.

Unfortunately the final budget was rather different from the bid one with many items changing dramatically during the organisation of the conference. A slightly greater effort should probably have been made to make more realistic estimates, however this is of course with the benefit of hindsight.

#### \*Bid Video

A short three and a half minute video presentation was created for the bid, containing images of London and UCL, as well as a number of UCL students, and members of the public in some cases, giving their support for the conference in their own native language, to showcase the multicultural aspect of London. Material for the video was shot during the summer of 2005 and the final version was greatly appreciated at the bid presentation, partly because a promotional video was usually not produced in previous years.

#### \*Bid Presentation

Two members of the bid team made a short presentation at the IAPS AGM in Coimbra 2005, as is customary. The main points of the bid document and budget were covered and the advantages of holding ICPS 2007 in London were highlighted. The bid video was also shown. In the end London won the vote against competition from Poland, Greece and Nigeria.

### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Usually a Local Committee will organise ICPS, but in countries which have a National Committee, choose whether members of this committee prepare the bid, or just students of the host university. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages.

\*Remember that not all original bid team members may remain on the organising committee for the entire two and a half years leading up to the actual conference.

\*If a Local Committee is organising ICPS, the host city and university is usually obvious, but if a National Committee is preparing a bid: When choosing a host city, take into consideration potential sightseeing attractions, flights to the city, transport within the city and how expensive it is. When choosing a host university, take into consideration its location within the city, the enthusiasm shown by its students and staff for the conference, and any benefits such as discounts on costs or free room hire.

\*Gather information on the chosen venue, such as available lecture theatres and whether there is a hire charge, whether there is university accommodation that can be used and the cost, and whether the university can provide meals and catering. If possible, make sure you get quite firm commitment and confirmations from the university. Also research into outside accommodation and catering if not available or unsuitable at the university.

\*Avoid conference starting and finishing dates on which flights to and from the host city may be more expensive.

\*Prepare an informative bid document, with a nice layout, preferably including a proposed logo and some pictures of the host city and university. Include information on the city, university, accommodation, excursions and planned events. Highlight the advantages of having ICPS in this particular country, city and at this particular university. Include a proposed timetable of the conference.

\*Prepare an estimated bid budget for the conference, based on research into the likely costs of all the important items, including mainly accommodation, venue hire (daytime and evening), meals, excursions, t-shirts etc. and parties. It is a good idea to include a contingency of about 5% to cover unexpected costs.

\*Remember that the information in the original bid document and the proposed budget may change significantly throughout the organisation.

\*A bid video for the presentation at the AGM is not essential, but a good idea.

## INITIAL PREPARATIONS AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

### \*Committee Members

Once the bid was successful and we were set to organise ICPS 2007 in London, an organising committee was formed, which consisted of most members of the bid team, but also of some new recruits from several different universities around the UK. A chair and vice-chair were chosen (Matt Mears and Will Davies respectively, from the University of Sheffield), and some provisional roles were allocated to other committee members. The new student liaison officer at the IoP, Samir Dawoud, acted as secretary, and of course as the link with the Institute. Other staff members from the IoP later attended committee meetings in a variety of functions.

Two issues arose from the chosen committee structure. Firstly the lesser issue was that the geographical spread of committee members across the country resulted in a reduced number of actual physical meetings, since each meeting involved travel expenses coming out of the budget, and it was not always easy to find a time when everyone was available. For this reason an online forum was set up to aid communication between meetings, and some virtual online meetings were held as well. The choice of having chairs not from the host university may have affected some preparations as well, since it was less easy for them to contact relevant people at UCL, although this was not a major problem (since there were UCL students on the committee at all times).

The second more difficult issue was the involvement of the IoP in organising the conference. It was not always clear what the status of the IoP staff (including the student liaison officer) on the committee was. Several other committee members felt they should be fully integrated, but should not be able to dictate our actions. The staff themselves often saw themselves more

as advisors, however at times this was interpreted by the committee as akin to controlling our actions, when the Institute recommended certain actions quite forcefully. This sadly led to a number of disputes with the IoP throughout the organisation process, almost culminating in the committee choosing to stop working with the IoP on the conference. This was avoided however, since the IoP had originally promised to underwrite the conference (i.e. cover any reasonable financial losses made by the conference) and effectively gave us a large amount of sponsorship (£20,000), the same amount as the Ogden Trust, who were reluctant to give us this money, should we split from the IoP.

A key issue was that Nexus, the IAPS NC for the UK and Ireland is intrinsically a part of the IoP, although the committee consists of students from the different universities. To make matters even more confusing, the ICPS committee did not only consist of Nexus committee members, and some of the latter did not join the ICPS committee, so the situation was not entirely clear.

The financial promise, and hence risk, taken by the IoP unfortunately meant that they insisted on certain things, such as reducing the conference to 6 days and originally providing fewer delegate spaces, since it was felt that not enough money would be raised to cover expenses. Delegate numbers were in fact increased to the maximum capacity of the largest lecture theatre later, so this was no longer an issue, and a 7 day conference may well have been too expensive. Nevertheless the sometimes rather authoritative communications from the IoP did cause some problems, also with things like the website, which was at first designed and maintained by a committee member, but later taken over by the IoP. Finally the budget was also prepared and controlled entirely by the IoP and updates were not always available and sometimes inaccurate. On the other hand however, some useful help with registration of delegates and financial issues, including payments, was received from the IoP, so not all was negative. The status of the IoP as a charity also meant that we were able to reclaim VAT (Value Added Tax) where charged on some budget items, and therefore effectively lower some costs.

One other issue which sometimes arose was that some outside organisations that we dealt with were not fully aware that ICPS is a student conference, since the IoP, as a professional body, was the first point of contact. Hence we had to make sure that there was some input and contact from the committee members as well, to ensure for example that we got any applicable student discounts. The backing of the IoP was also seen by some to actually make it less likely for other organisations to sponsor us, although this is debatable.

At various points along the way a working agreement between the IoP and the committee was written, with the various responsibilities explained, however this was not so useful in the end, as it was still not always adhered to and maybe a bit too bureaucratic.

Finally, once the Ogden Trust gave us the large sponsorship they also required one of their sponsored students to sit on the committee, although he later resigned for personal reasons. This requirement was not a problem at any point and some valuable input was made by this particular member.

#### \*Committee Roles

Other than the chair, vice-chair and secretary, some positions were at first quite vaguely defined, although a UCL contact was identified, Mischa Stocklin, at the time the only UCL student on the committee, although more joined later, and others took on some important roles

such as social events organiser, Doug Needham, IAPS liaison and delegate contact, Laura Pickard, excursions organiser and guest lectures, Jim Grozier, city tours, Dan Machado, sponsorship coordinator, Taimoor Khan (who later left the committee unfortunately and was replaced by Anne Pawsey) and webmaster, Adrian Stannard (who also left the committee after the disputes with the IoP). Some jobs such as catering and the handbook were not originally allocated; the latter was taken over by Nick Powell later on (as well as coordination of student lectures) and Rosie Davies helped out with the catering, although that was at a very late stage, so much of the catering and meal organisation was never allocated to a specific person, which was later seen to be a mistake. There were also some jobs which did not fall clearly into someone's job description, so were either shared out or taken over by whoever volunteered, such as student lectures and posters, guest lectures, delegate contact and advertising, and the opening and closing ceremonies. Most of these were carried out satisfactorily however.

#### \*Committee Meetings and Communication

Actual meetings were held roughly every month, although at times less frequently. They were supplemented by a few virtual meetings online, which were not always so productive however. There was also much communication on the two online forums provided by Adrian Stannard and Nick Powell, and some e-mailing. The problem with the actual meetings was, as mentioned before, that members had to travel across the country, thereby not only creating additional expenses, but also usually leaving only an afternoon for the meeting, although this was not usually a problem. The meetings were often held at UCL, but sometimes in Sheffield or Bristol. Communication between committee members was usually good, although sometimes there were some issues when some members were not properly informed of decisions that had been made. The main problem was that the IoP staff did not use the online forum, which meant that communication with them was by e-mail only, which again caused some concerns.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*A Local Committee will usually consist only of students from the host university, which can make it easier to hold meetings and to communicate with both each other and the university. However students from other universities in the country, especially when a National Committee is organising the conference, can be included, however travel to meetings must then be taken into account.

\*Remember that it is likely that some will leave the committee during the organisation process and that new members will join.

\*Important roles are chair, vice-chair, secretary, as well as a contact with the host university if the organisers are a National Committee and the chair is not from the host university.

\*Ensure that the secretary keeps a good record of the minutes of meetings and more importantly of actions that need to be taken by committee members.

\*The committee may choose to work with a professional physics organisation, which has advantages and disadvantages. If choosing to do so, make sure to be clear about the responsibilities and involvement of both the organisation and the committee, before starting the organisation. Make sure that important decisions can still be made by the committee, but do not simply ignore good advice when given. Charitable status of organisations can be helpful for financial reasons and help can be provided with registrations and payments. Make

sure the student element of the conference does not get lost however. The same applies to government involvement of any kind.

\*Sponsors may exceptionally require a presence on the committee in terms of a student sponsored by their organisation or company.

\*Committee roles should be quite well defined, particularly as time goes on. Jobs should be clearly allocated to one or more members, and all important things to be done should be allocated to someone. A good way of ensuring this is to go through the timetable and make sure that there is someone responsible for every aspect of every event held, including general items such as accommodation, budget, website, catering and accessories such as t-shirts. Remember that changes to the committee may require handovers or people changing jobs; ensure this happens smoothly.

\*Hold at least monthly meetings, but perhaps more frequently just before the conference.

\*An online forum is an excellent way of ensuring good communication between committee members and is also an ideal way of keeping a record of what has been done and what needs doing. Make sure all committee members regularly access and use this forum. Virtual online meetings are a bit less useful.

\*Keep an eye on the expenses incurred by the committee for travel, etc. It shouldn't become a very large item in the budget.

## VENUE ARRANGEMENTS

### \*UCL Lecture Theatres and Room Bookings

The largest lecture theatre (capacity of 366) at UCL was booked for the guest lectures, which all delegates are supposed to attend. Smaller lecture theatres were booked for the student lectures, which were run in three parallel sessions, so fewer delegates were expected at each lecture. The capacities were about 90-150 for each of these theatres. At first three theatres in the same building and only two floors apart were booked, but unfortunately it was later discovered that there would be construction work going on at this building with restricted access. This meant using theatres in different nearby buildings, and also not having the same three theatres on all days, due to some already being booked or not open on weekends. In the end however this was not too large a problem and lectures were well attended, although on a few occasions there were not enough seats. A lecture theatre (capacity 120) was also booked for the AGM, and other communal areas were booked for the welcome reception and poster session.

Originally it had been thought that the daytime bookings would be free of charge, but this turned out not to be the case. It was thought that bookings could simply be made online, but once the room bookings staff had been contacted directly (to arrange details and evening bookings) they insisted on payment, albeit at a 50% discount, since UCL students were involved in organising the conference. Given that the conference was mainly for international students, it is unlikely the bookings would have been free even if the organising committee had been only UCL students. In the end however UCL offered to cover these costs anyway, so there was no net expense to the committee (and indeed UCL gave us sponsorship on top of the room hire costs).

### \*UCL Evening Bookings

For two of the evening social events spaces at UCL were also booked, namely the front quadrangle for the National Party and the main halls (Cloisters) for the BBQ (since it was unfortunately raining that evening the outside areas were not used).

The evening bookings were always going to be charged to us, but at a quite reasonable rate. The UCL sponsorship actually covered this in the end, including most of the catering costs and other staff costs (e.g. security for parties). A late license was obtained for the National Party until midnight, although on the night it continued until nearer 1am. Payment in all cases was made after the conference, so only for what we had actually used (UCL gave us the sponsorship money to then pay room bookings, which is a bit complicated, but did work).

There were some issues that arose because of poor communication with UCL at times and certain details not being very clear, e.g. originally a late license until 2am was promised, costs changed frequently and other details changed as well. This led to a number of problems unfortunately, although most were resolved in the end.

### \*External Venues

On three nights (welcome, costume and farewell parties) a party area at the nearby University of London Union (ULU) (for students) was booked, with 2am late licenses on Friday and Saturday (and midnight for the farewell party). Again, discounts were given for the bookings, since it was a student conference. Some problems again occurred due to some poor communication and organisation from ULU, including waiting weeks or months for replies. However in the end all went quite smoothly, although some things were organised quite late. One issue was that we first believed we may be able to use the ULU kitchens for preparing food for the national party, but this later turned out not to be the case, with confirmation reaching us at a very late stage. In the end kitchens slightly further away from the university were hired, at an additional cost.

ULU did allow us to decorate the party areas somewhat and we were able to bring in a hired band and hand out free drinks tokens.

On some nights parties also continued (sometimes unofficially) at the Generator youth hostel where delegates were accommodated. On at least one evening this was arranged previously with the Generator, again providing free drinks to delegates, and also arranging karaoke. These arrangements were made easier by the fact that we were such a large group at the hostel. Space was somewhat limited at the Generator but the parties went quite well there too. No additional payment was required (other than to cover free drinks of course).

All three party venues (UCL, ULU and the Generator) were very close to each other, which was a big advantage.

### \*Lab Tours and Departmental Support

Tours of some of the UCL labs were also planned, including one in the London Centre for Nanotechnology (LCN). For this the relevant staff were contacted individually and a tour put together. Unfortunately space was severely restricted in most labs, so only very small groups were possible for each visit. However most staff were very helpful in organising these visits.

There was also a limited amount of support from the Department of Physics & Astronomy at UCL. The actual sponsorship came from other sources (Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and the UCL Friends' Trust), but the department provided some guidance and help. A room was provided free of charge to use as a committee office and storage room. Help was also provided in getting access to the department for committee members outside of working hours. The head of the department did make a welcome speech for the bid video but was unfortunately away during the conference. Instead, the Provost of UCL, Malcolm Grant, gave a welcome speech at the actual conference.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Ensure good communication with the host university, both with the department of physics and administration departments, such as room bookings. The support of departmental staff can be very useful.

\*Obtain details of bookings and regulations in writing whenever possible with firm confirmations, to avoid surprises later.

\*Check for discounts and if possible try to ensure free daytime room bookings at the university. The university is also likely to provide some sponsorship, as well as other help. Payment after the conference, if any, is useful.

\*Ensure good communication with any outside venues and again obtain details in writing. Check late licenses and any regulations which may affect the conference. It is good if any external venues are close to the university and/or accommodation.

\*Using a room at the university as a committee office during the conference is a good idea.

## BUDGET

The original bid budget was later extended to include all the various expected expenses and carefully itemised. At the beginning it was unfortunately slightly unrealistic (over £100,000), since it soon became clear that not enough sponsorship could be raised to cover all planned expenses. In particular accommodation at the university was rather expensive and other items such as a conference dinner had to be removed completely. With cheaper accommodation and other savings the total budget was later around £80,000, with the main expenses being the accommodation at the youth hostel (ca. £32,000), meals (ca. £12,000) and venue hires (ca. £8500). This included a contingency of 5% for unexpected costs, some of which was later used for items such as free drinks and a committee dinner after the conference.

With the total sponsorship of ca. £54,000 (thereof £41,440 from the IoP and the Ogden Trust and £6000 from UCL) and the registration fees (£100 per delegate for early registration), there was actually a generous surplus of ca. £10,000 shortly before the conference, so some items were able to be included again in the budget, and as previously mentioned, free drinks were provided amongst other things.

The budget was prepared and controlled by the IoP, which sometimes caused some problems due to miscommunications and updates not always being readily available. Often we had to wait a month or so before seeing the current status of the budget. At the time of writing the final financial summary of ICPS 2007 is not available yet, although basic details indicate that no significant loss was made.

Another problem was that the IoP were both reluctant to include expenses in the budget until they were confirmed in writing, and in some cases income until the money had actually reached us. This was seen to be a bit of a problem by some, since a budget is by definition a collection of estimates of expenses, as opposed to a financial summary or accounts afterwards. These issues were the main reasons for shortening the conference to 6 days and the temporary dispute about delegate numbers, the latter being resolved later. It should be noted that a 7 day conference would have been hard to organise with the final budget, although perhaps not completely impossible with hindsight.

The infrequent updates and conservative position of the IoP also meant that it was not realised until quite late that there was quite a generous surplus of money, which may have been put to (even) better use, if noted earlier.

Originally £4000 were put aside for committee expenses, mainly travel to meetings, but also some other expenses. Only about half of this was actually spent, although the other half was spent on a committee dinner after the conference. The latter was criticised by some members as being very expensive – about £100 per person, however it should be noted that the IoP did not agree to give any surplus money from the conference to IAPS or ICPS 2008, hence the money was used for the conference dinner instead.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Either prepare and update the budget yourself as a committee, or if an outside organisation does it for you, make sure you receive regular updates and know the financial status at all times.

\*Itemise the budget carefully and make sure you cover all expenses and income. Make sure you know exactly where all money is coming from and where it is going. Indicate separately when actual payment (expenses and income) occurs, so you can chase up outstanding payments.

\*Include a contingency (suggested 5%) for unexpected costs, but you may want to make plans for potential use of this money if still not used by the time the conference takes place. It is a good idea however not to use the whole amount in case any unexpected costs turn up during or even after the conference. Any amount not used at all can of course be given to IAPS after the conference.

\*Make plans for any surplus money you may have very close to the conference.

\*Assume early (cheaper) registration fees for all delegates in the budget initially.

\*Mark estimated costs and income differently from confirmed expenses and sponsorship/income, and adjust the budget as appropriate.

\*Keep an eye on committee expenses.

#### SPONSORSHIP

\*University, Organisations and Trusts

Since we were already working together with the IoP they agreed to give us £20,000 in sponsorship and to underwrite the conference, i.e. to cover any reasonable financial losses after the conference. As already mentioned before, this did lead to the IoP making certain requests about how the conference should be run, probably understandably, since they did not want to be in a situation of having to pay a lot of additional money. However, it was not always clear if the underwriting only went as far as the £20,000 already promised anyway, although it was understood later that additional money would have been given if needed (the conference did not make any losses in the end). The cautious, sometimes perhaps over cautious, approach of the IoP did cause some issues, however it was not an unreasonable stance to take, given they were shouldering the financial risk. The actual issues arose more because of the detailed handling of the budget (see the relevant section), not because of the financial guarantee given.

The Ogden Trust, a charitable organisation supporting and promoting the teaching and learning of science through sponsorship of students and projects and programmes at schools, provided another £20,000. This was arranged partly because of contacts already established with the IoP. As already mentioned it was essentially a requirement to continue to work closely with the IoP, in order to obtain this sponsorship. Jagdeep Rai, one of the trust's sponsored students also joined the committee for a time, as part of the arrangement.

UCL gave a total of £6000 in actual financial sponsorship, £4000 from the Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and £2000 from the UCL Friends' Trust, a trust set up to support a variety of UCL projects. The £4000 was mainly used to cover the cost of room hire, as well as some other related catering and staff costs, but was first donated to us, upon which we later paid the hire (rather than shifting money internally without any involvement from us).

The IoP London & South-East Branch also provided a further £1440, since they usually support London and nearby based students going to ICPS conferences abroad. In addition, both the IoP and UCL of course also provided valuable assistance and sponsorship in kind, as in providing free meeting rooms and resources.

Furthermore PPARC (Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council), now part of the Science and Technologies Facility Council, provided £3000 and the European Physical Society EPS provided €2000 towards the conference. The National Physical Laboratory NPL finally provided £1250.

The IoP and UCL were of course obvious organisations to approach for sponsorship and receiving this money was not too difficult. The Ogden Trust was approached mainly through the IoP as mentioned before. The other three councils and organisations were approached separately, again as reasonably obvious choices, IAPS of course having links with the EPS and NPL having been one of the excursion choices, with members of the committee having inside contacts there. Agreement for the amount took a bit longer with NPL until a deal was reached. No major requirements were asked for by these three organisations, although mention of the sponsorship was of course made in the handbook. A larger mention was made of the three main sponsors, IoP, Ogden Trust and UCL, also on the website, although NPL was also mentioned there.

Payment of actual sponsorship was not always fast, with some instalments still outstanding at the time of writing, but this may be due to bureaucracy.

## \*Companies

Company sponsorship did not play a large part in financing ICPS 2007. Sharp contributed £650 and were able to have a full page colour advertisement in the handbook for this. However this was viewed as buying an advertisement rather than pure sponsorship as such. Furthermore Nature magazine contributed two free subscriptions for the winners of the best lecture and poster competitions, although they had originally agreed orally to £2000 sponsorship, which they sadly withdrew later. As there was no written confirmation, the original agreement was of course not binding. Finally the creator of Plot-o-matic, a scientific graphic tool, offered free premium accounts for the web based application to ICPS delegates and received a half-page advertisement in the handbook for this.

Originally a much larger number of companies were targeted for sponsorship by sending out formal letters, but the response was poor. Some did not reply at all and most declined. Personal contacts to employees, such as in the case of NPL and Nature, proved more valuable, although in the latter case actual financial support was sadly not obtained.

The committee spent a considerable amount of time on two sponsorship related tasks. Firstly a sponsorship catalogue was prepared with different packages valued at different amounts, outlining what sponsors could get for providing a certain amount of money. This ranged from simply buying an advertisement in the handbook, as Sharp did, to sponsoring a single event such as the later abandoned conference dinner. It was also possible for companies to have their logos on various conference accessories. Although the catalogue was prepared very carefully and probably not a bad idea, it proved not as useful as first thought. Negotiations with most sponsors was on a more individual level anyway and other than in the case of Sharp, none of the packages outlined were actually used in the end. It did provide some guidance to potential sponsors however, but the time spent on it was probably too much.

Secondly an ethical policy was drafted to decide which companies, if any, the committee would not approach for sponsorship, e.g. weapons related companies, or those with poor environmental or ethical records. A considerable amount of time was spent on this and with hindsight probably unnecessarily so, since a few obvious companies that we did not want sponsorship from were discounted early on, and out of the others only one replied positively anyway. It was good to have the ethical discussion and be aware of potential issues, however some valuable organisation time may have been wasted by the length and depth of the discussion. An individual assessment of identified companies turned out to be more valuable, once basic ethical guidelines had been established.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Definitely approach the host university both for sponsorship and any non financial assistance they can provide.

\*Physics or general science related organisations and trusts, including possibly some government related organisation, are often a better and easier source of sponsorship than private companies. The former often have schemes of providing money to events such as ICPS anyway and the approach is sometimes easier.

\*If approaching private companies send formal cover letters asking for sponsorship, as well as information on the conference and what they can get in return for their sponsorship. A

sponsorship catalogue is not a bad idea, but don't overdo it. Highlight the potential benefits to the company through sponsorship.

\*Personal contacts within companies and organisations are very helpful in pinpointing the right people to talk to and perhaps even persuading these to agree to the sponsorship. Also check if the host university has any established links with companies who may be interested in sponsorship.

\*Be aware of what requirements sponsors have and decide whether they are acceptable. Excessive numbers of logos on the conference shirts may for example not be desirable. Of course make sure you mention all sponsors and fulfil all requirements.

\*Do consider any ethical issues that sponsorship from certain companies or organisations may create, but it is better to consider this on an individual basis when choosing which companies to write to. It may be a good idea to avoid sponsorship from companies or organisations which could cause concern amongst delegates.

\*Remember that sometimes non financial sponsorship may be obtained like donated prizes for competitions, e.g. free subscriptions to magazines or other free items. This is also worth looking into.

\*Some organisations, notably EPS, may be prepared to give out loans as well, to e.g. help pay a deposit if not enough sponsorship has been secured yet or payments have not come through. Such money would of course have to be paid back, so only accept this if you are sure you will get more sponsorship or payments. Don't take any unnecessary financial risks.

## WEBSITE

The ICPS 2007 website was originally maintained by a committee member, Adrian Stannard, and hosted externally, such that he had access at all times to make modifications and add content. Sadly Adrian later left the committee after a dispute with the IoP and the latter designed and hosted a new website, to which the committee however had no access. This caused serious problems due to very infrequent and slow updates to the site, including mistakes being included. It was also felt that the site did not look as good as the first one, in fact it was felt to be inferior in almost every way. The changeover also took place at a very bad time, in early 2007, meaning that there were several months with no website at a crucial time for advertising the conference to delegates. There was also an unexpected cost of £600 involved with the new IoP website, as it seemed they had passed the task on to an outside web team.

Part of the issue with the original site was the presence of an online forum for delegates to communicate with each other (as opposed to an organisers' forum), which the IoP did not approve of, in case people made inappropriate comments and the committee had too little control over the forum. The more casual tone and style of the website also raised issues, not only with the IoP, but also amongst some committee members. As informative as it was, some may have felt that the tone of address would not be serious enough when it needed to be. Nevertheless it was felt to be the superior site and the website was definitely one of the few areas where ICPS 2007 fell short of its expectations.

The original website also included a photo album to upload pictures of previous conferences, a feature that was absent in the final version of the site. There were also no links to previous

conferences. Information about the various events and how to register, as well as background information on London and UCL was however provided on both sites, although as mentioned updates were rather slow on the final site. A delegates' forum was sadly never implemented in the end. There were also issues with e-mail contacts, since individual e-mail addresses for the committee members (which were originally available at the old site) were never given out in the end, thereby causing some problems with communicating with delegates.

The new website did work adequately for actual conference registration, payment and abstract submission, although the online registration form was perhaps not tailored enough to ICPS specifically. Minor issues with some entries were raised. A problem was however again that the registration data was not always readily available to the committee in this way; there were sometimes significant delays in providing the recent numbers. Most of this was resolved in the end however.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*The website should be maintained by a committee member and hosted in such a way that access to the site is always granted. The committee should have full control over both the layout and content of the website and updates should occur promptly when needed.

\*Include information on the planned events, the timetable, the host university and city and other useful ICPS information. A FAQ (frequently asked questions) section is very useful to cover the main problems delegates may have. Remember to mention sponsors.

\*The website should look attractive and be easy to navigate. Information should be easy to find. Photos are a good idea, including the logo and pictures of the host city and university, as well as excursion destinations. Photos of past conferences or links to their websites are a good idea particularly for delegates who are new to ICPS.

\*Avoid both a too conservative layout and tone, but also a too casual tone when serious information is given.

\*Make sure delegates can easily contact organisers and that prompt responses are given. A delegates' forum is useful, but make sure it is moderated regularly and not filled with any inappropriate content or spam. Use of it should definitely be password protected, once delegates have registered.

\*Online registration is good if possible, however payment by credit/debit card may be an issue. Investigate different methods of payment, bank transfers or cheques may be easier. Putting some of the registration data online to indicate how many people have signed up from what countries may be useful, but remember to abide by any data protection laws that are in force. Do not allow access to personal information.

\*Check that the website is accessible and looks good in different browsers and conforms to standards.

## ACCOMMODATION

At first we wanted to use university accommodation, however the largest and most suitable UCL halls of residence were being refurbished this summer, and the other large ones were considered to be too far away from the university itself. It was also seen to be preferable to

accommodate as many delegates as possible, preferably all, together in one hall, so the smaller ones were also not considered. Eventually halls belonging to the University of London (which UCL belongs to) were investigated and some suitable ones nearby found. However these were rather expensive and not used in the end due to budget restraints.

Instead the Generator youth hostel near UCL was used to accommodate all delegates, which was a much cheaper option. Rooms accommodated four delegates each, which was more than at some previous conferences, but this was not seen as a problem (the university halls would have been single rooms for most delegates, explaining the higher cost). Delegates were all given individual access cards to the rooms, which was an advantage over having just one key for all. The accommodation also included breakfast, although space in the dining area was somewhat limited, causing some queuing at times. Dinners were also served at the Generator, although the same problem with limited space was encountered at times. Packed lunches were provided by the Generator as well. On several evenings partying continued at the Generator beyond the official social events planned. For this the space was sufficient.

Payment for all accommodation and meals was made in advance, with a deposit also being paid first. In the end we spent some of the money put aside for committee expenses to pay for a few organisers who were not from London to be accommodated a few nights before the conference, to make sure we could hold a pre-conference meeting with everyone there. Some helpers in particular however were able to stay with friends in London as well, at least during the period before the conference.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Investigate university accommodation as a first option, but also take into consideration nearby large youth hostels.

\*If possible, it is preferable to accommodate delegates in buildings close together. The accommodation itself should also be close to the host university and any venues used for social events.

\*Check if breakfast is included and what other facilities there are. Individual keys or access cards are very useful.

\*Give delegates the option of choosing with whom they want to share a room with, but make sure all those who want to share explicitly agree. Such requests are best put on the registration form.

#### MEALS AND CATERING

##### \*Regular Meals

As mentioned all regular lunches and dinners were provided by the Generator youth hostel. Originally meals were planned to be in the UCL refectory, however room bookings informed us (very late) that the refectory was being refurbished this summer and thus space would be very limited. Usually there are about 450 seats, but during this period there were less than 200, so it was decided not to have meals there. ULU was also investigated as an option, since there was more space, but due to poor communication and misunderstandings this was also not chosen. Additionally ULU may have been more expensive than the Generator for meals.

The lunches were packed and distributed usually in the mornings. This meant that time was saved since delegates didn't have to walk back to the Generator, and they were able to sit outside on sunny days. On the first day however there were communication problems between the committee and the Generator, such that the lunches had to be transported to UCL at the last minute. This resulted in a considerable delay and a long queue. On subsequent days the lunches were however collected from the Generator in the mornings as planned. For the excursions packed lunches were of course required anyway, although some excursion venues provided lunch themselves instead.

The quality of the food was generally alright, but nothing special. Vegetarian options were available but sometimes hardly more than a salad unfortunately. Other dietary requirements were mostly catered for without problems.

#### \*Other Catering

Refreshments were provided during lecture breaks at UCL, usually biscuits, tea and coffee. There was some confusion about the exact cost of this at one point, but this was not a major issue, although UCL catering proved to be rather expensive for what it was. Refreshments were also provided during the poster session and the IAPS AGM.

A welcome reception was held on the first day with wine, some again provided by UCL, but a lot of it organised by Laura Pickard (so that delegates could try English wine). The barbecue, along with desserts and drinks, was provided entirely by UCL catering. Again, the cost of this was felt to be quite high by several committee members, particularly for drinks. Since the events were held at UCL, there were regulations about bringing your alcohol, which was usually not permitted, except for a corkage fee per bottle. For the barbecue a considerable number of alcoholic drinks given out by the committee were however consumed, which caused some concern, although the organisers were not penalised for it. Staff costs for those serving the food and drinks were also incurred.

Unfortunately, since all the events were held at UCL, we had to use their own catering, so there were no cheaper options. Some of the catering costs were however covered by the sponsorship received from UCL.

#### \*National Party Arrangements

The National Party was held at UCL outside in the front quadrangle. For this event delegates were permitted to prepare and bring their own food and drinks, including alcohol. No UCL catering was used for this event. Costs only included the actual area hire and security staff costs.

It quickly became clear that we would not be able to use any UCL kitchens for the delegates to prepare food. Using those at ULU was investigated, but after an initially fairly positive response, we were also turned down there, again with not much time left before the conference. Therefore separate kitchens were hired in the end, which were unfortunately quite a walk away from UCL. Space was also rather limited, although in the end everyone did manage to prepare their food.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Investigate university canteens and refectories for meals, but also check any outside accommodation you may be using. Make sure there is sufficient space for the delegates to sit down and have their meals. If not all can be seated at the same time, make sure that queuing is kept to a minimum. Make sure dietary requirements, especially allergies, are catered for, including vegetarian options.

\*Packed lunches may be an idea to save time and to be able to eat outside, particularly on a sunny day. For excursions they are usually required, unless lunch can be obtained at the destination itself, which should be investigated.

\*Investigate both university and outside catering for all other events and refreshments. The university may however have regulations in place that only their catering can be used for events held there. Also check other regulations, particularly on bringing in your own alcohol and/or selling it to delegates. Corkage fees may apply. Check for other costs, such as for staff as well.

\*Try to locate kitchens for preparing National Party food well in advance and make sure they are not too far away from the venue used. Make sure there is enough space for everyone to cook their food in a reasonable amount of time.

## TIMETABLE AND GENERAL CONFERENCE CONTENT

A bid timetable had originally been produced, which was later amended considerably before the final version was ready. As already mentioned one day was eliminated following concerns about raising enough money to have a 7 day conference. This unfortunately meant leaving out some planned items such as a specifically British party and the conference dinner (which was too expensive anyway). It also meant slightly less free time during the conference, since all remaining items had to fit in 6 days, although this wasn't a major problem.

As usual most of the first and last days were kept free for arrival and departure, although a welcome reception was added after registration on the arrival day. Sunday was perhaps a bit heavily biased towards student lectures, with a total of 6.5 hours of lectures, although delegates could of course choose which ones and how many to attend. Ideally though a slightly better spread would have been desirable. Lectures on the weekend were also a minor issue, since not all lecture theatres were open and there were few administrative staff present to help with problems. Additionally it turned out that the computer rooms were closed on weekends, which we had not been informed of before the conference. Some additional staff costs also arose because of weekend access.

On the excursion day, breakfast was finished slightly earlier than usual, to ensure enough time for the excursions, some of which were to destinations up to 1.5-2hours away from London. Although the rain during the day did not affect the excursions in any way (logistically that is), it did mean the barbecue on the evening of that day had to be inside and was more of a buffet. This unfortunately also meant that the planned star observation was cancelled due to the cloud cover and rain. With hindsight it would have been good to be able to change certain items of the timetable at short notice depending on the weather, but this would have been quite challenging.

As opposed to some previous conferences it proved difficult to keep parties going till very late at night, since most venues had late licenses until at best 2am (on two days) or in some cases during the week until midnight. There was however the option of continuing to party at the

Generator later than this, and some delegates chose to sample London's nightclubs as well, of which there are of course a wide selection. On the night before the excursions an earlier midnight finish was deliberately chosen, to give delegates the chance of a good night's sleep (although they were of course free to party longer if they so wished).

Finally the IAPS AGM was scheduled in the afternoon, which meant that it overran massively as usual and had to finished before all points were covered, since the lecture theatre was closed. It was informally continued afterwards, but still several decisions had to be taken later at an EGM after the conference. It may have been a possibility to start the AGM in the morning, although this may have meant attendees missing out on other important events in the afternoon. Due to the time restrictions for a 6 day conference this was even more difficult to do.

Many events are of course standard at ICPS, such as student and guest lectures, excursions, city tours, poster sessions and a variety of parties, as well as the IAPS AGM. However, there were still several changes at this year's ICPS in contrast to previous conferences. These are highlighted separately in detail in the following sections.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Be aware that the timetable can change considerably throughout the organisation process.

\*Try to avoid too many lectures without a break and days with not enough free time (including meals etc.)

\*Be aware that weekend access to the university or other venues may be an issue. Arrange this well in advance and check what is available and what not. Check for additional weekend hire costs.

\*Leave sufficient time for city tours, excursions and the IAPS AGM, if possible. Try not to schedule anything requiring delegates to attend from the start, straight after these events.

\*Prepare wet weather alternatives for outdoor events. If possible, keep the option open of shifting outdoor events to a different day if it rains, although this may be logistically very difficult and in practice not desirable.

\*Check at which time events have to finish at night. Obtain late licenses if possible, or look into alternative venues for after the official social events. Remember though that delegates may have to get up early next morning. Particularly before the excursion day it may be advisable not to have a party going on too late.

\*Include the standard ICPS events in the timetable first, such as student and guest lectures, poster session, excursions, city tours, AGM, opening and closing ceremonies and the usual parties (as well as meals of course). See if you can think of slightly different elements to be included in these events or how to improve them. For empty slots, see if you can think of any new and different events from past years, particularly something unique to your city or country.

#### STUDENT LECTURES

The number of student lectures was increased for this conference, with up to 69 student lectures in three parallel sessions per timetabled slot. Single timetable slots were 2 or 2.5 hours in length. Apart from a few delegates who did not attend, all lectures slots were filled and the overall standard was very good. Only very few proposed lectures were turned down during the selection process. Once all the lecture slots were full, delegates were offered the chance to present a poster instead; the same was done if two delegates wanted to lecture on very similar topics and only one was accepted. Abstracts were submitted online and also copied into the handbook, along with a timetable of all lectures.

The use of three different lecture theatres which were not in the same building (see venue arrangements) did cause a bit of a rush at times between lectures, but it was not too unmanageable. Signs were put up to ensure that all delegates found their way between theatres. The lectures were 15 minutes in length with 5 minutes of questions afterwards and then 10 minutes of changeover before the next lecture, thus ensuring enough time for delegates to move from one lecture theatre to another. Delegates usually brought memory sticks, CDs or their own laptops with power point presentations on them, and usually the files were transferred to the laptops made available by the organisers. Some speakers also chose to use the black- or whiteboards. No major problems were encountered in any of the lectures.

The lectures were organised roughly by topic into the available timetable slots, such that all lectures in one session and in one lecture theatre would be on similar topics. This made it easier for delegates to choose which sessions to attend. Each timetabled lecture session of 2 or 2.5 hours was chaired by a member of the organising committee or helper, preferably someone who was knowledgeable in the topics covered. The chairs introduced the speakers and ensured that lectures were kept to the time limit, so that delegates could move between theatres if they so wished.

A vote was held on the final day to decide the best lecture and a prize (free subscription to Nature Physics) was given to the winning delegate.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Think about the timetabling of lecture slots; avoid too long sessions and too short changeovers between lectures. 15 or 20 mins is a good time for the duration of the lectures, with 5 mins of questions afterwards.

\*Choose lecture theatres that are close together if possible, but in any case leave enough time for delegates to change theatre during a session. Make sure the chairs of each session ensure that lectures start and finish on time to avoid overlapping of different timetabled slots in different theatres. Signs to direct delegates to the relevant locations are important.

\*Generally almost all proposed lectures can be accepted, except if they have clearly nothing to do with physics or astronomy, or if the abstracts are very poorly worded.

\*Put a lecture timetable and copies of all abstracts in the conference handbook.

\*Make sure all technical equipment, as well as whiteboard pens are available in the theatres. Test the data projectors, laptops etc. It is a good idea to transfer files to the laptops before the lecture slots and to test that they open correctly, in particular videos or animations.

\*It may be a good idea to group lectures into sessions covering similar topics. If possible choose people to chair the sessions who are knowledgeable in that area of physics, since they may want to ask questions, particularly if no one else in the audience does.

## GUEST LECTURES

The number of guest lectures was increased to 5 for this conference. We aimed for a good balance between topics and also the level of seriousness. The first and last speakers (Sir Arnold Wolfendale on Astronomer Royals and Peter Barham on the physics of Ice Cream) gave slightly lighter, albeit still scientific talks, while the other three speakers lectured on slightly more challenging topics (Richard Jones on Nanotechnology, Joanne Cole on Particle Physics and Andrew Fisher on Quantum Computing). One of the speakers (Andrew Fisher) was from UCL, three were from other areas of the UK and one (Joanne Cole) visited us from CERN. Transport costs were thus not too high. The only other costs incurred were a meal for each of the lecturers, which we felt was nice to offer.

It is important to contact potential guest lecturers well in advance of the conference, since diaries often fill up months in advance.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Aim for a good balance between different topics for the guest lecturers and different styles of lecturers.

\*Usually the only associated costs are travel to and from the conference, any offered meals and perhaps accommodation, should the lecturers wish to stay for one more day (which is nice to offer, but particularly if they are local they may prefer to only stay for their lecture).

\*Contact lecturers well in advance.

## POSTERS

A number of posters were also submitted and displayed in the main halls (Cloisters) at UCL during a 3-hour session. Presenters were expected to be near their posters for at least part of this time to answer any questions other delegates might have. Originally it was hoped to have posters up during the entire week, however we could not book the area for the whole time and there were concerns the posters might be taken down by UCL staff is just left there.

On the online submission form it was made clear that delegates should clearly mark whether they are submitting a lecture or poster, since this was not always clear in past years. The only other problem arising with a few posters was the printing and preparation.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Make sure delegates are required to mark clearly whether they are submitting a lecture or poster.

\*Reserve a large enough area for the posters to be in and suggest that presenters are near their posters for at least some of the time reserved for the session, in order to answer questions.

\*Decide whether just to have a single poster session during which all are displayed, or whether you want to have posters on display throughout the conference (or at least on several days), with a question session at some point. The latter approach gives delegates more time to look at the posters, however make sure it is alright to leave posters wherever they are displayed in that case.

## LAB TOURS AND ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

### \*Lab Tours

A few tours of some of the labs at UCL and the adjacent London Centre for Nanotechnology (LCN) were also organised for this conference. Unfortunately these didn't work so well, due to space restrictions and late planning. Many of the labs were contacted well in advance and were essentially happy for delegates to visit, but most could not fit more than a dozen people in them at once. This resulted in a rather complicated visits schedule. Another problem was that there was no indication of how many delegates would be interested in the lab tours in the first place, and on both days they were competing with other items – poster session, AGM and games in the park (to which some headed off early). The fact that the tours were split over two days and little information had been given, confused some delegates and hardly any turned up to the first session running simultaneously with the AGM. There were however some tours given during the second session and they went reasonably well, although only a small number of delegates turned up. With hindsight the tours should have been organised better, although they are a challenging item to include in the conference.

### \*Academic Presentations

It was suggested that perhaps the lab tour slots could be split between the actual lab visits and a presentation about the research carried out at UCL, such that delegates would not be left standing around while waiting for others to finish their visits. It proved difficult however to find staff willing to give short presentations about their research. In the end one of the UCL students on the committee, Mischa Stocklin, prepared some material for presentations on his own. However, given the low number of delegates actually turning up for lab tours, these presentations were not given.

On the other hand presentations by UCL's department of Space Science at MSSL (Mullard Space Science Laboratory) were given during the barbecue evening after the excursions. These were given by actual staff members on various topics and were attended by a significant number of delegates. There was also a display by MSSL during the poster session, including equipment and materials related to space science.

This would have been accompanied by observing stars from the roof of a nearby UCL building, but sadly it rained that evening, so this particular new event had to be cancelled. With hindsight it would have been good to keep more than one evening in mind for the stargazing, although this may have been difficult since the staff and equipment was brought from MSSL, which is far away from London.

No costs were involved with either the lab tours or presentations.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Tours of the labs of the host university and presentations about the research carried out there are generally a good idea, but can be difficult to organise. Presentations are easier, but make sure you give plenty of advance notice to staff members. The same counts for lab tours.

\*Space is usually very restricted in labs, so try to work out a way of delegates visiting some labs. This usually requires a rather tight schedule.

\*Gauge interest for the lab tours and perhaps get people to sign up beforehand. Either timetable the tours or presentations separately from anything, or if they do run concurrently with something else, make sure you know roughly how many delegates to expect.

\*Star observation could be an interesting event on some evening. For this make sure that ideally you can choose which night during the conference in case of clouds and that telescopes are readily available, as well as a safe location to place them and for delegates to observe.

## EXCURSIONS

A total of nine different excursions were planned with delegates choosing one destination. All excursions included at least one academic element, i.e. some place of scientific interest, but several also included some free time or visits to non-academic places. Some sites were within Greater London and could be reached by Tube or Commuter Train, while others were up to 1.5-2 hours drive away from London, including destinations near Cambridge and Oxford. Some included visits of large scale scientific facilities such as the Diamond synchrotron, the Vulcan laser at the Rutherford-Appleton Laboratories, the Joint European Torus (fusion experiments), the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory, the National Physical Laboratory and Herstmonceux, the former site of the Royal Observatory and the nearby Laser Ranging System which track satellites. Others included more museum like visits, such as Bletchley Park, where the German secret codes during World War II were cracked, the Thames Flood Barrier, Greenwich Observatory and the London Science Museum.

Preparations differed quite significantly for the different excursions, making it a challenging task. All venues were contacted well in advance and arrangements for the visits were made. Many had limits on the number of visitors and some had other restrictions, such as requiring passports and names in advance (high security sites). Costs varied between destinations; some were free to visit, others, mainly the museums, required paid entry. Some excursions also included entry to a nearby museum or park etc. One site also offered free lunch to all the visitors, which was greatly appreciated.

Transport to the various destinations also varied. For the ones further away a London coach company was used, who provided the service at a rather low cost. Unfortunately on the day there was a misunderstanding and most of the coaches did not turn up at the correct meeting point, which meant that we lost about half an hour. This was not made easier by the fact that it was raining, so delegates were left standing in the rain for a bit. In the end however the delay did not result in too much trouble, virtually all excursions running smoothly. Only one coach was also delayed on the way back, apparently getting lost somewhere.

The main organiser of the excursions, Jim Grozier, did not go on any of them on the day - although he had visited many of the locations beforehand, to investigate details – but stayed at UCL to coordinate all the excursions from a central location, staying in touch with the two excursion leaders in charge of each group. This proved to be very useful.

Delegates initially made their choice of excursion online during registration, from the information given on the website, although some late changes were made. Generally however the choosing process went smoothly as well.

Originally a large social excursion for all delegates to the Bristol Balloon Fiesta was also planned on the later eliminated 7<sup>th</sup> day of the conference. This is a rather special annual hot air ballooning event and there is also a Science Centre in Bristol. This excursion was later abandoned however not just because of the shortening of the number of days, but also the logistical difficulty of transporting about 350 delegates to the other side of the country. It was also felt that the London and South-East areas of Britain had plenty of scientific sites of interest to offer. Shorter excursions also reduced the cost involved.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Choose between either one large excursion for all delegates or a number of smaller ones where delegates go on one of them only. Both approaches can work. Also choose between excursions more focused on scientific visits and those more focused on social events or sites. If there are important places of scientific interest in or near to the host city, it is of course a great opportunity to visit these.

\*One large excursion can result in logistical problems due to the large number of people travelling, but many smaller excursions can also be difficult to coordinate. Both issues need to be approached carefully. Particularly with the latter option, an organiser who stays behind to coordinate matters from the university can be very useful. Note that the some venues however may not be able to accommodate a large number of delegates easily, which could be a problem if you have one large excursion.

\*Contact venues well in advance of the conference, especially academic sites which have a restricted number of visitors per year. Gather all the necessary information about what there is to visit, any restrictions (e.g. security, in some cases delegates of certain nationalities may have problems entering some sites) and documents required (e.g. passports), and any costs involved. Some sites may also have a canteen or may even offer free lunch to visitors, which should also be investigated. Get confirmations in writing from the venues to ensure visits and remain in contact as the conference gets closer. Visiting the venues yourself before the conference is not required, but can be helpful.

\*Arrange transport to destinations further away, almost certainly by coach. Arrange a clear pickup point for the coaches and make sure you have the number of either the driver or at least the company, should the coach fail to turn up on the day. Destinations in or very close to the host city may also be reached by public transport (perhaps organise tickets in advance) or even walking.

\*If having multiple excursion venues, make sure that delegates choose one in advance and are given plenty of information about the options available.

#### CITY TOURS

The city tours were organised as five separate tours with delegates choosing one route, although several overlapped in some parts. This was done because it was felt that one big city tour with about 350 delegates would be difficult to organise. Each of the five large groups of

delegates was further divided into smaller ones of about 25-30 each, so a manageable size. Some routes started at UCL, some started elsewhere and delegates took the bus to the relevant location. Bus saver tickets were purchased in advance and distributed to the delegates (two each for there and back). Between them the five routes covered most of London's important sights and all were themed in different ways, although the suggested names were chosen quite liberally. Some tour leaders also chose to make minor detours here and there to show delegates something that wasn't on the original tour. Tour leaders were also provided with some historical information on the sights that were passed, so they were able to tell the delegates a bit about what they were seeing.

Entries to museums and similar were not included in the tours, but delegates were of course free to wander off and explore London by themselves after or even during the tours in some cases.

Choices were originally made online at registration, but the information on the tours was limited at first, with a detailed map showing the routes becoming available later on. This meant that delegates were still able to change later on after arrival at the conference.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*One large city tour may be logistically difficult; it may be easier to have several tours with slightly different routes, so that everyone still gets to see most of the sights, but you don't have the problem of shepherding a very large group around. This is particularly true when using public transport, as large groups tend to get broken up and people left behind.

\*If using public transport buy tickets in advance and distribute to the delegates.

#### IAPS AGM

The actual agenda is of course put together by IAPS, but it was important to make sure to obtain this in advance so it could be put in the handbook. The AGM was timetabled to start at 2pm and the lecture theatre was available until 9pm, but as so often the session could not be finished in the time available. There was an informal continuation afterwards, but an EGM had to be held after the conference since only a president had been elected at the AGM. It was unfortunately difficult to give more time to the AGM considering the restraints of the timetable.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Put an agenda for the AGM in the handbook.

\*Try to timetable plenty of time for the session. Check when lecture theatres/rooms are closed. Avoid timetabling anything too important after the AGM, which could result in those attending missing the subsequent events.

\*Advise people that the AGM is technically separate from ICPS, so it is possible to attend it without going to the rest of the conference, although in practice few would choose to do this.

#### CEREMONIES AND PLENARIES

\*Opening and Closing Ceremonies

An opening and closing ceremony were held as usual, the former on the morning of the day after arrival and the latter just before the final dinner and farewell party. The opening ceremonies featured short welcoming speeches by the chair and vice-chair of the organising committee and a short overview of the week to come. It was kept deliberately short, since the first guest lecture followed it immediately afterwards. Originally we had planned for something more special during the opening ceremony, perhaps a performance or similar, but this unfortunately did not happen.

A formal welcome to UCL by its Provost Malcolm Grant was given the day before just after the end of official registration at the welcome reception in the Cloisters. He held a short welcoming speech of about 5 minutes and came to greet the organising committee personally as well. The wine reception was a new idea this year and was received well. It also provided a first opportunity for delegates to mingle and socialise. It was followed by dinner and the official welcome party in the evening.

The closing ceremony came after the last guest lecture (again a lighter one, as after the opening ceremony) and featured the usual thanks to the committee, helpers and sponsors, as well as a sort of farewell speech by the chair. A brief slideshow of some images taken during the week was also shown. The closing ceremony was followed by dinner and the farewell party in the evening, with delegates departing the next day.

#### \*Plenary Sessions

Originally some time had been kept free at the start of each day for a plenary session, basically to give an overview of the day's events and to make any important announcements, however there were no specific slots in the timetable for this in the end. Instead announcements were simply made at the start and end of guest lectures usually. There was also a noticeboard at the Generator displaying important information, including any notes to individual delegates. This information system worked quite well during the conference.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Don't make the opening and closing ceremonies too long, particularly if lectures follow/precede them respectively. Avoid very long speeches, but do include a welcome from the host university and the organising committee. A welcome reception is a possible option on the arrival day, before the official opening ceremony. Additional items during the opening ceremony could include a video presentation, a performance or similar. A slideshow or video of highlights of the conference could be shown at the closing ceremony. Remember to thank sponsors and helpers.

\*Important announcements are best made at the end of guest lectures (when those who came in late are also present). Noticeboards at the university and/or accommodation are also very useful for information and to pass messages on to delegates.

#### WELCOME, HOST COUNTRY, COSTUME AND FAREWELL PARTIES

##### \*Welcome Reception

On the arrival day, just after the official registration ended, a welcome reception with wine was held, including a short speech by the UCL Provost, Malcolm Grant. This was a new idea

and proved to be a good way of providing the first contact and socialising opportunity amongst delegates. Catering was provided (necessarily) by UCL and we were lucky to have the Provost come and talk to us briefly. Originally a more elaborate ice-breaker was planned in order to get delegates to mingle, however the reception was felt to be sufficient in the end, particularly since a fair number of delegates arrived later that day.

#### \*Parties

The welcome party in the evening was held at ULU until 2am (before the opening ceremony the next day as usual). Originally we had also planned to have a specifically British party evening on the later eliminated 7<sup>th</sup> evening in the timetable. Since we didn't want to leave out any of the other evening events, we instead incorporated a British element into the welcome party by hiring a Ceilidh band (Celtic music) to provide some typical entertainment of at least parts of the British Isles. As is tradition, much dancing was encouraged amongst delegates, who greatly enjoyed this. The evening was felt to be greatly enhanced by this new element.

The costume and farewell parties were also held at ULU, the former until 2am, the latter until midnight, with the night continuing at the Generator. The costume party is a fairly standard item at ICPS by now, so didn't require too much organisation. More than half of the delegates turned up in some sort of costume, some very elaborate. Almost all the organisers joined in as well as expected. For the costume party we had also prepared a large cake to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IAPS, which was shared out amongst delegates.

For all three parties held at ULU some decorations were put up, including flags of some of the participating countries. For the farewell party in particular free drink tokens were handed out amongst delegates (two each), for which they could purchase beer, wine or a soft drink. The money for this came mainly out of the surplus we had at the start of the conference. Free drinks were also offered at the party continuations at the Generator. Since the hostel had its own party area, it meant that delegates could continue partying after the official end time (2am on Fri/Sat and midnight on the other days) if they wanted. The farewell night at the Generator featured a karaoke session as well, which was quite amusing.

Generally there was not much cleaning up after most of the parties, with the venues doing most of this anyway. We were of course responsible for removing our own decorations though and anything we brought in ourselves.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*A welcome reception towards the end of registration on the arrival day is quite a good idea. Some snacks and refreshments, e.g. wine, can be offered, although if put before dinner, don't have too much food around. There could also be a welcoming speech before the official opening ceremony the next day.

\*Traditional elements from the host country and/or city can be incorporated into one or more parties – either on a separate evening if timetabling permits, or otherwise perhaps during the welcome party. Music and dance is an obvious choice, but other events are possible.

\*The idea of the welcome reception and party is also to get delegates to get to know each other, particularly between national groups. This is much easier to do in an informal atmosphere, than during the ceremony or academic program of the following days. Organisers

should make an effort to mingle with delegates as well and encourage participation and socialising.

\*If allowed and possible, some decorations can be put up in the chosen party venue, specific to ICPS. Check with venues if you are allowed to bring in your own equipment, instruments, bands etc.

\*Free drinks are a budget item worth looking into, particularly if you have surplus money before or during the conference.

\*If parties have to finish early because of lack of late licenses of venues, check if there are any party areas at the accommodation for example, where delegates can go if they so wish.

\*Other events or party elements can be included, although don't force delegates to participate in too many things. Some may prefer just sitting around and chatting, or dancing casually. For the costume party, delegates should be encouraged but not required to dress up. It's a good idea for organisers to dress up though.

\*Remember that there may be delegates who do not drink alcohol.

## NATIONAL PARTY

The National Party is of course also a fixed element of ICPS and was held on the third night in the large outside area in front of the main UCL buildings, until shortly after midnight. We were of course lucky that it was a mild evening without rain.

Desks and boards were set up in a semi-circle, allowing each delegation to set up a little stall with their own food and drinks, and perhaps flags, posters or images of their country on the boards behind them. Unfortunately we didn't have quite enough boards for all delegations, but this wasn't a major issue. Delegations were free to decorate their stall as they wished and lay out their food. Delegates could then wander around sampling what was on offer. Some additional drinks were also provided by the organisers and we made sure that the British stall had some more food than usual as well, since there was no dinner scheduled for this evening, so the delegates were fed entirely by what everyone brought and cooked. Originally we wanted to obtain flags for all participating countries, but since many bring their own anyway, this idea was abandoned later on (we were also not exactly sure of which countries would participate).

Unfortunately we were not allowed to use the UCL kitchens for preparing the food, nor the ones at ULU, after some initial hope. This meant that we had to hire separate kitchens quite a walk away from UCL, which meant some difficulties in getting the cooked food to the party, but delegates were able to cope quite well. The kitchens were also quite small, so we had to come up with a schedule of when which delegations were allowed time for cooking and preparing. Delegations had to book one or two half hour slots in advance to use the kitchens. Cooking equipment and containers to carry the food in were provided. Of course many also brought biscuits, desserts and other ready-made foods.

The stalls all faced the main UCL building with steps in front of it, which served as a stage for some of the performances of the delegations. Technical equipment, including microphones and speakers, was hired and set up on the 'stage'. This also provided some music for the evening. A number of performances were given by various delegations, consisting usually of

songs and/or dancing, although some chose something slightly different, such as the British delegation performing a Monty Python skit. The only slight problem was that not all delegates, particularly those behind the stalls, were always aware of the performances, so missed some of them. Furthermore, it being a large open space, the sound quality was of course very different than it would have been in an inside venue.

Originally there had been restrictions placed on the party by UCL, in that we would not be allowed to hand out our own alcohol, other than small amounts brought by the individual delegations. However, this was later relaxed and we were able to hand out drinks. There were no objections to the food and drinks on the stalls themselves. In the end no other regulations applied, other than us paying for two security staff for the evening. Clearing up after the party was however also our own responsibility, which included removing all stalls and equipment, as well as all rubbish (within reason). Although the event was scheduled to finish at midnight, the security staff had no objections to letting us go on slightly later and of course giving us time until just after 1am to finish clearing up.

### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Choose a large enough venue for the National Party, with enough space for a reasonably sized stall for each delegation. Make sure there are enough tables and boards for each delegation. Remember that even delegates who have not arrived as part of a large group may want to put something on display. If you choose an outdoor venue, remember to have a backup in case it rains.

\*Providing flags for all countries is a nice idea but may be impractical, if you are not sure what nationalities will be represented.

\*Locate kitchens for preparing food well in advance of the conference, and as close as possible to the party venue. Investigate into kitchens in university canteens, at the accommodation or of course at the venue itself. Check the size of the kitchens, if too small, work out a schedule of who cooks when. Delegates may need to book cooking time.

\*Choose whether or not to have a full dinner on the National Party evening. Remember that if you choose to have one, delegates may eat less of the food on offer afterwards, however if you do not have a dinner, it is a good idea to have some extra food at the organisers' stall, to avoid people not being fed.

\*Check for any regulations that the venue has, particularly in terms of bringing in your own food and drink, especially alcoholic beverages. If allowed, having an extra supply of drinks is also a good idea, since not all delegations bring some.

\*Decide whether you want to have performances during or after most of the food and drink sharing, and make sure there is a suitable area available, with sound and music equipment. If delegates are still likely to be at the stalls during the performances, make sure they can all see the stage and are aware of what is happening. A performance schedule is helpful although not absolutely necessary. Ideally, check with delegations at the start of the evening (or perhaps even earlier during the conference) whether they plan to perform anything and what it will be. This will help your preparations as well.

\*Remember that depending on the venue, you may need to help clear up after the party. If so, have some large bin bags with you to collect rubbish.

## BARBECUE/BUFFET

A new item for this year's ICPS was also a barbecue planned on one evening in the same outdoor space at UCL where the National Party had been held. However this ended up being more of an indoor buffet, since unfortunately it was raining that evening and we had to move indoors. UCL catering provided burgers and salads nonetheless, as well as desserts. The change from a normal sit down dinner was greatly appreciated by most delegates, although there weren't quite enough seating opportunities. We were however able to use an adjacent room with seating as well. Special dietary requirements were also catered for.

This barbecue/buffet evening was scheduled after the excursions, since we knew that delegates would arrive back at different times, and it was felt that such an arrangement was better than a normal dinner. There were also presentations by the UCL space science department going on during the buffet (see above), but unfortunately we were not able to observe any stars due to the cloud cover.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*A barbecue or buffet might be a nice alternative to a standard dinner on some evening. If choosing an outdoor barbecue, make sure you have a wet weather alternative. Remember to cater for special dietary requirements, in particular vegetarians.

## SPORTS AND GAMES

Instead of a specific sports tournament, usually football, as has been organised in the past, one evening of this year's conference was spent in Hyde Park, with a variety of games available, and also a yoga session. Delegates were free to arrive and leave at any time, or indeed to spend their time otherwise if they so wished, i.e. exploring London.

The organisers chose a specific area in the large park, where we gathered, although this should have been communicated to the delegates more clearly. Some did not find us easily. A map of the park with our location in the handbook may have been a good idea with hindsight.

We brought along a fair quantity of drinks and sports equipment for a variety of games, including football, rounders and Frisbee, which quite a few delegates used. The games were however not specifically organised and there was no tournament, so it was left up to the delegates and/or organisers to spontaneously arrange something. The only arranged item was a yoga session (through a contact of one of the organisers who offered to do this for us), which some delegates participated in. Others also simply preferred to sit and chat, since it was a fairly nice evening (although a bit chilly later at night).

The more informal approach to this evening worked quite well we felt and also gave delegates some free time if they wanted it. Another reason for this event was also the fact that it was timetabled after the AGM, which traditionally overruns, so we didn't want to schedule anything which many delegates might miss out on. It should also be noted that there was a normal dinner scheduled that evening, although delegates were also free to head to the park before dinner if they so wished and get food elsewhere, which some chose to do (including the organisers who arrived there early with the equipment and drinks).

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Decide whether to have an organised sports tournament or a more informal approach, where delegates can go to a nearby park for example and some games will be on offer. Of course, there is no obligation to take part in a tournament if you want to organise one.

\*Check if there are any regulations in parks or open spaces which may affect events.

## CONFERENCE HANDBOOK

The task of putting together the conference handbook was given to a specific committee member, Nick Powell, who collected all the various information from the other members, regarding all aspects of the conference. This of course included vital information about the conference, including a timetable on the back cover, where it can easily be looked at. A more detailed timetable was put inside the booklet, including also a timetable for the student lectures, including abstracts for all of them. Abstracts for the guest lectures and posters were also given.

The handbook started off with some welcoming words both from the committee chair and on behalf of IAPS by Laura Pickard, as well as from the handbook editor, Nick. Information about the national party and the excursions was also included, such as the procedures concerning food preparation in the kitchens and transport arrangements for the excursions. Other information was provided on computer and internet access, meals and accommodation.

Information on the conference proceedings was supplemented by general information about London, including nearby facilities to UCL, public transport, supermarkets, parks and emergency numbers. Suggested sightseeing destinations, museums and entertainment areas and venues were also included. Since it was IAPS 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, a short history of the organisation and how ICPS started was also included.

The handbook concluded with the agenda for the IAPS AGM, a list of all the participants and contact details for the committee. Sponsors were mentioned on the inside front and back covers in colour. The inside pages of the handbook were in black and white to keep the costs down.

The handbook was seen to be very useful, since it contained all the necessary information in one place and was easy to carry around.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Nominate one particular committee member as the handbook editor who collects information from all the other members to put together in the book and is in charge of getting it printed.

\*Include a timetable and details of all planned events. A timetable on the back cover is a good idea, with a more detailed version inside. Also include a timetable for the student lectures, with the lecture theatres and sessions clearly marked. Include abstracts for all lectures, including guest lectures.

\*Include important information about the conference, including any regulations or rules that delegates should be aware of. Also provide important information about the host university, accommodation and other venues where events take place.

\*Include information on the host city, including things to do and see, and facilities such as shops, public transport etc.

\*Include a list of participants at the conference and contact details for the committee, particularly during the conference. Include procedures in case of an emergency.

\*Remember to mention sponsors prominently, preferably on the inside covers and in colour. You may want to print only the covers in colour and the rest in black and white to save money.

\*Useful phrases in the local language can be extremely useful, particularly if the conference is held in a non-English speaking country (it is of course assumed that delegates have at least a basic understanding of English, since the conference is conducted in that language).

\*The handbook can of course also contain fun items and more lighthearted things, including jokes. Don't make it too dry and factual. Photos can be a nice idea, although remember that colour printing is more expensive, otherwise have them in black and white.

## ACCESSORIES/SUNDRIES

### \*Conference Shirt

Since both the original and final versions of the ICPS 2007 logo were blue, we decided to have blue t-shirts as well, but two different shades (dark and light) for organisers and delegates, so that we could still be recognized easily. We chose to only include a large version of the logo on the t-shirt without any other logos or writing.

### \*Conference Bag and Inserts

We chose to have our own specifically designed conference bags, namely backpacks, in the same dark blue colour as the organisers' t-shirts and with ICPS 2007 on it. The bags and shirts were handed out at registration, with the former containing the conference handbook, the conference ID badge (with lanyard), a conference pen (again specifically designed with ICPS 2007), a London booklet with information on events and sightseeing, the latest copy of Physics World (published by the IoP), the meal vouchers for lunches and dinners throughout the week, login and password for wireless internet access during the conference, two condoms (no ICPS logo) and some other promotional material.

Originally it was expected to have more sponsorship material in the bags, but most of the sponsors didn't request to insert anything (and all but one or two were trusts and organisations rather than companies anyway). If anything this was probably appreciated by delegates. We also looked into other accessories originally, including umbrellas, but it was felt this was not necessary. There were indeed discussions about how useful the bag itself would be, since most delegates would be expected to bring one of their own, however it was still thought to be a good idea.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Different colours for organisers' and delegates' shirts are a good idea, so you can recognize organisers during the conference when they are wearing the shirts. Remember that you will

probably want a few spare ones for the organisers, so that you don't have to wash your one shirt every day or two.

\*Remember to ask delegates (and organisers of course) for their shirt sizes on the registration form and to have some spares of each size.

\*Avoid excessive amounts of logos, particularly sponsors' logos, on the shirts, although those of the host university, IAPS and any other organisation helping with the conference could be included.

\*Decide whether you want to have conference bags. If you don't, remember that there will be other items like the handbook, meal vouchers etc. to hand out and lots of loose items are more likely to get lost. Information about the host city is quite useful for handing out at the start of the conference, e.g. many cities have booklets telling you what is going on during each week or month.

\*Avoid handing out too much sponsorship and other promotional material at the start of the conference, but obviously make sure you fulfil any sponsors' requests for advertising.

## ADVERTISING THE CONFERENCE

There are of course a lot of students around who have been to previous ICPS conferences and know what it's about. For such potential delegates, it suffices to make sure you have a good website online with updated information. Unfortunately this was not necessarily the case with ICPS 2007, however we still managed to get the most important information across to delegates and make the conference sound as good as it eventually turned out to be. The website is of course also important in attracting new students who have not previously been to any ICPS conference and who may not even have heard of it before.

We also advertised through the existing IAPS list of National and Local Committees. One important thing we wanted to do however was to attract students from countries that rarely or never take part in ICPS. For this purpose we planned to contact some physics departments in such countries and to use any personal contacts we may have there. We also sent out copies of the ICPS poster we had prepared advertising the conference.

Although there were a few delegates from countries that do not regularly participate or from which usually only a few delegates if any turn up (Australia, China, France, Germany, Ghana, Iran, Malaysia, Malta, Switzerland, Taiwan), our plan to achieve a higher participation from such nations didn't work too well. The countries mentioned above only had one or two delegates each attending, and some were part of the organising committee or helpers team and already studied in Britain (Australia and Switzerland for example). There were additionally advertising efforts made by the committee in countries including France, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Nigeria, however only two students each from Spain and Germany attended in the end. In most cases there was no response from the contacted departments, including for example Switzerland, despite there being well established physics societies at several universities. In Japan there was initially interest in sponsoring a number of places for students to attend the conference, however this did not work out in the end. There was also considerable interest from Nigeria, however none of the potential delegates turned up (in this case visas are an issue).

A further issue was that although some new countries and cities had joined IAPS recently (Belgium, Iceland, Ukraine), contact details were not readily available from IAPS, so no specific effort was made to advertise to these groups.

It was also felt that the advertising could have started a bit sooner (much was done in March – May 2007, so rather late), although part of the problem was the website not being online until March and then being updated rather slowly. In addition some universities were contacted at the start of the year and there was still no response, so perhaps the timing of the advertising did not make too much of a difference.

It should be said of course, that despite a bit of disappointment about the lack of response from some countries, we were still very happy to welcome delegates from as far away as Ghana and Malaysia for the first time ever, so there was definitely some considerable success. It should also be noted that every new group would of course also have taken places away from established large delegations, so the more countries participate, the less places there are per country. Considering that we had a total of 366 places at ICPS 2007, making it one of the largest ones in history, and that essentially all places were filled, we achieved a good balance between different nations, both old and new. In order to recruit students from other countries in the future, it may become necessary to have an even larger conference, which may be difficult anyway.

Finally it should be pointed out that there was not much advertising done within the UK, to avoid having too many students from within the country taking up places. However a number of conference helpers were recruited from the UK, who attended the conference, and there were a number of other UK delegates who did not count as official helpers, who also joined us.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Start advertising the conference well in advance of when it happens. Make sure your website is up to date and contains all the necessary information about the conference. Make it sound good.

\*Advertise through the IAPS members list and check that any recent additions to it also receive the advertising.

\*If you want to make an effort to invite students from countries that don't regularly send large delegations to ICPS, first of all check if you have any personal contacts at universities in those countries, which is the easiest approach. Otherwise you can contact existing physics societies or departments directly. You can of course suggest to IAPS to contact any well established physics societies not already part of the organisation, with a view to getting them interested in joining IAPS itself.

\*Creating a poster to advertise the conference is a good idea. Make sure you have an electronic high resolution version to send via e-mail, since this is easier than sending actual copies in the post.

\*Remember that the number of places at the conference is limited and that you are likely to get a lot of interest from universities and countries that turn up regularly anyway, so don't forget these.

## DELEGATE REGISTRATION AND CONTACTS

### \*Registration

Early registration for ICPS 2007 started in March and continued through until early June. Before March delegates were able to send us an e-mail and register their interest although no places were allocated yet. Late registration continued until July 25<sup>th</sup>, although all spaces were filled well before this date anyway. The registration fee was set at £100 for early and £120 for late registration, with a refund of 80% being available if anyone cancelled before July 25<sup>th</sup>, but no refund after that date. The fees were a bit higher than in recent years, but this was thought to be reasonable both by the organising committee and IAPS, since London is a more expensive place to host the conference. For what delegates were offered, the registration fee was still very good value for money. Participants who were not members of IAPS were required to pay the respective membership fee as well.

Delegates registered online through the ICPS website, with a facility set up by the IoP. There were no major problems with this, although the registration page was taken from the standard IoP conferences package and so was not quite tailored enough to ICPS. Some required fields included rather strange options (a variety of academic titles and countries that no longer exist), but this wasn't too much of an issue. One slight problem was that delegates were registered only by the country they study in, not nationality, which was not asked for. It would have been good to know both, particularly for the list in the handbook and the national party. It also meant that the ID badges given to delegates stated the country they studied in rather than their nationality in most cases.

It was originally discussed whether to have limits on the number of delegates from a specific country or university, since we knew that interest from some places would be very high and we were trying to invite students from new countries as well. In the end however imposing such limits was seen to be very difficult and the idea abandoned. However, we did try to monitor the registrations to check the numbers from each country. Since we originally opened only 320 places (due to being unsure of whether we had enough money to increase the number of places, although it should have been clear to us that we did, see above), we had a waiting list for people who registered afterwards. In the end we were able to open up another 42 places, for which we did take geographical location into account when choosing delegates from the waiting list. Those from undersubscribed countries were given preference, although within each country, the order was the same as they had registered in.

A further waiting list was still kept afterwards, in case delegates cancelled, although there were not many such cases. Unfortunately there were a number who did not turn up at all without cancelling. Although this didn't result in any financial loss to us (since they had paid their conference fees and no refunds were given), it did of course mean that some other delegates were not able to attend, but even so we were not far away from the maximum of 366 delegates.

Delegates were also able to submit abstracts for posters and lectures online, as well as choosing their excursion destination and city tour. Unfortunately the system let people choose more than one option, which should have been avoided, however only very few delegates made this mistake, so it was not a major issue.

### \*Delegate communication

Contact and communication with the registered delegates and those asking us questions was satisfactory but not as good as we would have wanted. It was originally planned to have individual e-mail addresses for all the main committee members, as well as a main contact, so that questions and comments could be sent to the relevant person efficiently. Unfortunately the individual e-mail addresses were never given to us by the IoP and the only contact given was the generic address with an IoP domain. This meant that we did not at first have direct access to this e-mail, although messages were forwarded to the chair, vice-chair, IAPS liaison committee member and one or two other members as appropriate, usually fairly rapidly. Originally, responses often had to be relayed back to the IoP before sending, so this was clearly not the most efficient way of communicating with delegates. Some delays in answering queries were inevitable as witnessed by some delegates. After an initial period of this forwarding of e-mails however, several committee members were given direct access to the e-mail address, so communication improved significantly thereafter. The absence of a forum for delegates to talk to us and others coming to London also did not help matters.

The fact that the registration was dealt with by the IoP also meant that we did not have immediate access to the database of registered delegates, abstracts and other submitted information. This was not too much of a problem, particularly nearer the conference, since updates were sent fairly regularly and a number of committee members were granted access to the online abstract database eventually. However, some delays were again experienced, especially with getting updates for delegate numbers and how many had paid.

All delegates were sent confirmation letters by post after registering online, as well as an electronic confirmation of course. The hard copy letters were sent by the IoP at their own initiative, adding a small additional expense, but this was a minor issue. The confirmation letters also served as proof of attendance for anyone who needed a visa to enter the UK. Originally we planned to give more assistance to those requiring visas, however in the end not much more than sending out letters was done. For the most part this was simply due to the fact that we were of course not really able to do very much, as such matters are dealt with by the respective embassies. However a link to online information on obtaining visas was provided in the FAQ document on the website. Sadly there are nationalities for which it is very difficult to obtain visas for events such as ICPS, regardless of where they are being held (e.g. Nigeria); this is unlikely to change much in the near future.

To help delegates coming from less wealthy non-European countries, particularly since we were making an effort to get more students from such areas, it was decided to have up to 5 free places, for which we would waive the registration fee. Initially delegates still had to either pay or guarantee the registration fee (e.g. by having their university promise us the money), but if they then registered and attended the conference, they would be given a full refund of the conference fee (this method protected us from financial losses due to delegates who applied for the free places but did not get visas or simply failed to turn up). Delegates also still had to pay their flights and were required to give a lecture or prepare a poster to take advantage of the waived fees. In the end one of these places was taken by a delegate from Ghana, however he did not turn up to the conference. Even with offering waived registration fees, there were still problems with delegates obtaining visas, paying for flights etc, which was why the free places weren't filled.

Finally we sent out some general information to all expected delegates before the conference, including particularly directions to UCL upon arriving in London and other important reminders.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Start registration for the conference no later than in March of the relevant year it's happening in. Decide on deadlines and fees for early and late registration. Decide whether you will give refunds for cancellations, how much and until when delegates may cancel. It is a good idea to set a deadline for this earlier than just before the conference to avoid too many financial risks caused by many people cancelling in the last minute. Make sure to check whether registered delegates are members of IAPS or not (in which case they will have to pay membership fees as well).

\*Online registration is the easiest, although be aware that online payment by debit/credit card may be difficult to arrange if you do not have the backing of a large organisation who will help you with financial matters. Payment by bank transfer for large groups or by cheque may be simpler. However an online form for the basic details is still useful. It is also a good idea to impose some sort of deadline by which delegates should pay for their requested place (to avoid having people register but not pay for ages), after which they lose it. Send reminders to delegates who haven't paid yet.

\*Remember to ask for the basic details such as name, contact details, university, whether member of IAPS or not, etc. on the registration form. It is useful to know both the country in which the delegates study in and their nationality. Decide which one to put on the conference ID badges. Remember to ask for t-shirt size, as well as any choices they might have to make for excursions or other events. Remind delegates to tell you about any special dietary requirements (vegetarianism, allergies) or any other special requirements or circumstances. Also give delegates the opportunity to request to share a room with specific other delegates (unless you have single rooms of course).

\*Be aware of any data protection laws in your country. It is a good idea to have a list of participants e.g. in the handbook or some statistical information on the website. Delegates may also wish to contact each other before or after the conference, so e-mail addresses can be useful. However, the best approach is to ask delegates if they are happy being named and having their details shared with other delegates first. Don't share any personal information with anyone else without permission of the delegates.

\*Decide whether you want to have any limits on the number of delegates from each country, city or region. This may be hard to enforce and you may choose not to. It is however a good idea to monitor the registration data to check trends.

\*Keep a waiting list once all places are filled in case any delegates cancel. Decide if you will accept additional delegates simply in the order they registered (make sure you can record this somehow), or if you are going to give preference to undersubscribed countries. Be aware that you might not be able to replace any very late cancellations.

\*Make sure there is an easy way for delegates to submit lecture and poster abstracts, either online or by e-mail. Ask delegates to mark clearly whether it is a lecture or poster they are submitting. Make sure to send confirmations to delegates when their lectures or posters are accepted for presentation. Inform them about rules, e.g. length of lecture, format of poster etc.

\*Make sure you have at least one contact e-mail address which is checked regularly, for delegates to ask questions. You may choose to have several different ones for different committee members, but if so, make sure it is clear who replies to what, to avoid confusion.

The best idea may be a single address to which several people have access and where they can also see replies by other committee members. Make sure you have constant access to the e-mail. A FAQ document on your website avoids delegates asking basic questions too often.

\*Make sure you have constant access to the registration data submitted by delegates and are in a position to e-mail delegates if necessary. Make sure you have access to submitted abstracts as well.

\*A forum for delegates to communicate with each other and the organisers may be the best idea. To avoid spam and inappropriate messages it is a good idea to allow access only to registered delegates, perhaps only those who have been verified and have paid (you may get joke registrations without payment). Such a forum where everyone can see questions, comments and replies can be very useful and automatically keeps a history of messages. It is however still a good idea to have an e-mail contact as well, if delegates want to send a message privately (although this could be built into the forum as well).

\*Make sure that delegates are sent confirmation of registration and payment (ideally separately) by e-mail (or at least an online confirmation screen after registering). You may also choose to send hard copy confirmation letters by post. These may be required by any delegates who need to apply for visas.

\*Advise any delegates who may need visas to apply well in advance (at least 6 months before the conference) and ideally not to pay until they have obtained the visas. Provide links to any online information about visas for your country and if you can to the embassy sites as well. Be prepared to answer questions about visas, but remind delegates that you cannot provide much help in actually getting visas for them; they need to do this themselves. However do provide any assistance you can. Highlight the academic nature of the conference in confirmation or support letters sent to such delegates; they are unlikely to get visas just to go and party. Remind delegates that they may lose their money if they don't get a visa and don't cancel their registration in time. Also check to see if there are a lot of registrations by people who you suspect may not get visas taking up spaces and decide how you want to deal with that.

\*Consider offering a small number of free or sponsored places for delegates from less wealthy or very distant areas. You may choose to either reduce or completely waive the registration fee, or to provide them with travel bursaries, i.e. pay some or all of the cost of their flights. Decide which rules determine whether or not a delegate is eligible for such a place (i.e. GNP of the country, geographical distance from host country, giving a lecture or preparing a poster). You may choose to ask them to pay initially and refund them once they have attended, to avoid losing money if the sponsored delegates do not turn up (they could ask their university departments to guarantee you the money should they not turn up).

\*Send out an e-mail to all registered delegates before the conference with the final important information, including in particular detailed directions to the host university and/or wherever registration takes place. Remind delegates of important things they need to bring as well, e.g. obviously passports, but also items for the national party, agm, lectures, posters, etc. The information should of course also go on the website and can be posted in the forum if you have one (although e-mail is still a good idea, in this way delegates can also print out the information if they want to).

CONFERENCE HELPERS

Shortly before the conference the number of full members of the organising committee was 10 including the student liaison officer at the IoP. To ensure that the conference ran smoothly it was decided to recruit another 10-15 helpers from across the UK, who at the same time would of course also make up the UK contingent at the conference. Many of the designated helpers came from Sheffield and London, particularly UCL of course, since the majority of the committee came from those two universities. Most of the UK participants helped in some way or another, although not all were officially helpers. Some helpers also attended a few final committee meetings prior to the conference and had helped out earlier during the organisation process. Finally there were also some who helped before the conference (e.g. providing contacts, helping to organise certain events) without being officially on the committee, but not during ICPS, due to unavailability.

The main tasks for these helpers were to provide assistance for the large events, particularly in terms of setting up venues and equipment and helping to clear up afterwards (parties in particular), provide information and assistance to delegates, e.g. providing directions to lecture theatres etc., as well as in some cases being additional city tour and excursion guides. For the excursions we required two leaders per group, so a total of 18, plus one or two who stayed behind at UCL to coordinate the day, so this was the main reason for having at least 20 committee organisers plus helpers in total. The same was true of the city tours, for which about 20 tour guides were needed. Additional helpers were also required for the registration process (particularly since late arrivals registered during the welcome party, which of course also required organisers to be there) and allocating delegates to their rooms, chairing student lecture sessions, and the lab tours at UCL. Having additional helpers also proved very useful in cases where simultaneous events occurred, obviously the excursions, but also the AGM and preparations for the evening in the park, the academic presentations and the barbecue (and late arrivals from the excursions), welcome reception/party and late registration and poster session and lab tours.

The helpers were fully briefed on the tasks expected of them a few days before the conference, with a meeting at UCL. This was particularly important for those students not from the host university, so that they could see where all the facilities were and orientate themselves, although the UCL helpers and organising committee (who had been to UCL several times of course during the organisation process) were often turned to for specific directions to places or other specific information about UCL or London.

## TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Depending on the committee size you are likely to need some helpers during the conference as well, particularly for events such as the excursions and parties, as well as directing and informing delegates. As with committee members these can be recruited either just from the host university or from across the entire country. Since they are not involved in much of the organisation process and do not need to attend all the committee meetings, it is easier to have helpers from different universities than regular committee members, however remember that at least some helpers may need knowledge of the host university, e.g. for providing directions.

\*Make sure you tell the helpers what is expected of them and make sure you can rely on them fulfilling their tasks. It is a good idea to meet with all helpers a few days before the conference at the host university and go through all the jobs that need doing (also for the benefit of the committee of course). Visit all the venues once if possible, so that everyone

knows where they are. This also provides an opportunity for you to check that all preparations are going well.

## DURING THE CONFERENCE

As mentioned above we had a final meeting of the whole committee and helpers just before the conference, to make sure everyone knew what their tasks were and to check that there were no problems. This also included staff from the IoP who briefed us on some matters they had been working on, especially the registration process on the arrival day, as well as safety and emergency procedures.

Throughout the conference we used a room at UCL as an office, where we stored all equipment and documents. The whiteboard in the room was also used as a noticeboard for the committee to leave messages. During the day delegates were able to go to the office and talk to a committee member, particularly between events (during guest lectures and major events most would usually attend so there may not have been anyone in the office). In the evenings access to the department was only granted to committee members with special electronic cards, so delegates would only be able to get to the office with a committee member (although the office was just past the main door, so we easily heard if delegates knocked, which proved quite useful during the two evening events held at UCL, the national party and the barbecue). The 10 main committee members all had access cards to the department of physics at UCL, although there was only one key to the actual office, so it required some coordination to check who had the key. Sadly there was also a theft to be reported from the office, someone stealing two of our laptops, presumably while the office was left unlocked, although we were not able to find out exactly what had happened. Some of the contingency money was used to replace the two stolen laptops.

On the day of arrival registration was carried out at UCL until 5pm, by several committee members, who were also responsible for handing out the conference bags with all content, shirts, and ID badges. Room allocations were handled both at UCL and at the Generator itself. Delegates who arrived after the end of the welcome reception at UCL were registered at the Generator, where they received their conference packs and room allocations. Two committee members or helpers were at the Generator in shifts until 2am to make sure late arriving delegates were greeted and registered. There were some issues with allocating delegates to rooms, since the lists we had were ordered by room rather than for example alphabetically by delegate name. Some delegates who arrived after the first day were asked to come directly to the conference office or to otherwise contact a committee member to get registered.

We made sure that there was always a visible presence of organisers and/or helpers during the conference. This was helped by us having different coloured t-shirts that we wore at all times, thus delegates were able to spot us easily. We also made sure that delegates could contact us either at the office or otherwise on two special mobile phone numbers specifically obtained for the conference. The phones were kept either at the office if someone was there, or if not two committee members would take them along to events. The internal landline phone in the office was used for communication between organisers, particularly between staff at the IoP and us. Finally a number of committee members stayed at the Generator together with the delegates and one twin room was designated as a night office where delegates could go in case of an emergency.

Important announcements were made at the start and end of guest lectures in particular (when all delegates were expected to attend), but there was also a noticeboard at the Generator where messages to delegates could be posted.

During the conference and in the few days of preparation before it started, the organisers had access to two cars, which proved very useful to transport items which would have been difficult to get on public transport, including the celebratory cake for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IAPS and a large amount of drinks for the parties, as well as equipment for the various events.

Delegates were informed of safety and emergency procedures, and organisers, including IoP and UCL staff, ensured that all events were conducted in a safe way. In an emergency delegates would have contacted both the organisers and if required the emergency services (police, ambulance). The only two incidents to report from the conference were the theft of two laptops from the committee office (which was also reported to the police) and an injury at the farewell party when a delegate broke his arm (during an arm wrestling competition, so through no fault of the organisers). The latter was reported to the hospital down the road, but unfortunately the ambulance took very long to arrive at ULU (this is because of the UK system; since health care is provided for free to all, priority must be given to very serious incidents). However both the staff at ULU and ICPS organisers attended to the person in question and were in contact with the hospital as well. The person was conscious at all times (otherwise the ambulance would have come immediately). There were some minor issues with vacating the venue, since delegates were asked to use the back entrance, so as not to block access via the main entrance should the ambulance arrive. Delegates were also kept away from the particular area where the injured person was sitting. This meant that some were not able to collect coats and other personal belongings which they had left in that area and since most were not aware of what had happened, this caused some confusion amongst delegates, who had to be assured that all belongings would be brought to the Generator afterwards from where they could be collected. However, although care was taken of the injured person, the situation regarding the other delegates could have been handled better, particularly since it was clear that there was no panic and the condition of the injured person was stable.

Signs were put up to all the different lecture theatres and organisers were available to give directions to delegates, particularly during the first days of the conference and of course upon arrival. A number of conference helpers ensured that delegates would find their way from UCL to the Generator on the first day, as well as to ULU for the welcome party afterwards. It was at first suggested to have some helpers at the London airports as well to welcome delegates, however this idea was abandoned, both due to the logistical difficulty of doing this (limited number of delegates and no less than 5 different airports, as well as an international train station), but also because it was felt that delegates should be able to get to UCL quite easily by themselves, given the detailed directions on the website and in pre-conference communications. We felt it might even be slightly condescending towards delegates if it looks as though we do not trust them to be able to make their way across London (which sure enough all managed fine).

All delegates were issued user names and passwords for the internet service at UCL, both at provided computer terminals and wireless, so that they could access internet and e-mail. Unfortunately there were significant problems with this since one of the three computer rooms was closed throughout the conference and the other two were closed during the weekend. We had not been informed about either fact by UCL before the conference and had expected access to these computers during working hours. In addition there was confusion about which

wireless network to use (it was not the standard network used by UCL students, but the visitors one, which was not entirely clear at the start of the conference). To make matters worse there was also an additional common password for the network, which we had not been told originally. Delegates who had brought their own laptops were eventually able to connect to the wireless service when all problems were resolved, but obviously this particular aspect of the conference should have worked better.

The organisers and helpers divided the task of taking photos and videos of the events amongst themselves. Several had brought cameras, so we could take pictures of all events, including those that ran simultaneously (e.g. excursions and city tours). We also had a video camera with which we filmed various events throughout the week. Of course many delegates had also brought cameras, so after the conference we were able to put together several photo albums and a short film and slideshow documenting the conference. We also put together a slideshow of photos taken during the week for the closing ceremony, which we thought was a nice idea.

Finally, it was important for us all to be aware of the amount of work each of us had to do and the amount of time we spent doing things for the conference. Given the number of events and full timetable, it was important that tasks were delegated and spread out evenly amongst committee organisers and helpers, to avoid individual members getting too stressed or not being able to cope with the work. For many tasks we made sure to take shifts or involve several organisers, e.g. registration, lecture chairing, etc. We also had to consider that those of us who were based in London did not stay at the Generator, and so had to include travel time in the mornings and evenings from where we lived. Including voluntary partying until late on many evenings, it did mean rather little sleep for many of the organisers, so we did have to be careful not to overdo it. Looking back however we all greatly enjoyed organising ICPS 2007 and especially the conference itself, despite the lack of rest.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Have a final committee meeting with all helpers attending just before the conference to make sure everyone knows what they are doing and to check that there are no problems. Plan ahead with as much as possible.

\*It is useful to have a designated 'office' space or similar for the committee during the conference, where material and equipment can be stored safely, and where the committee can meet and discuss. Delegates may also be made aware of such an area where they can approach committee members. Make sure you can lock such a room or area and keep valuables safe. Make sure you can communicate easily between members of the committee and helpers during the conference – make a note of each others phone numbers. Make sure you have access to all important areas of the venues you are holding the conference at, even outside of working hours.

\*Make sure enough organisers are present to deal with registration on the first day, given that large groups of delegates can arrive at the same time. Have conference packs, bags and shirts ready, as well as ID badges for the delegates. Make sure you don't have to spend a long time looking for these. You may want to deal with room allocations separately. An alphabetical list of all delegates together with allocated rooms is a good idea. Decide whether you want to have registration at the host university or at the accommodation. Unless you have an event such a welcome reception at the university, it may be easier to have registration at the accommodation, but make sure you have enough space as well. Make sure you have organisers around to deal with people arriving late on the first day, or on subsequent days.

\*Make sure that delegates know who the organisers and helpers are, and that there are always some around during the conference. Wearing different coloured shirts to the delegates is a good idea, which makes you stand out. It is also a good idea for at least some organisers to stay at the same accommodation as the delegates, not only in case of emergencies, but also so that things can get started quickly in the mornings.

\*Investigate the possibility of having one or two conference mobiles with numbers that can be given to delegates in case they want to contact an organiser. Avoid giving out personal numbers for this purpose; it is better to get separate numbers. Make sure someone always has the phone(s) with them. This is also very useful should there be an emergency.

\*The best time for making important announcements is at the end of guest lectures when all delegates are expected to be there. It is however also a good idea to have a message board or similar at the accommodation and/or university, where important information can be posted.

\*Make sure both organisers and delegates know safety and emergency procedures. Ensure that delegates know the emergency numbers for police, ambulance, fire brigade etc in your country. Tell them to contact the organisers as well if an emergency occurs. Make sure that organisers can deal with any common emergency situations that could arise during conference events (e.g. injuries, fire), and be aware of the responsibility. Keep valuables safe throughout the conference and tell this to delegates as well. It is a good idea for delegates not to wear ID badges outside of the conference venues, so they are not easily spotted as tourists in the city.

\*Make sure organisers and helpers know the location of the various venues where events are held and can direct delegates if necessary. Knowledge of the host city is also valuable if delegates ask about important sights, shops etc. Put up signs to lecture theatres and party venues if necessary. It is of course particularly important to help delegates find their way during the first days of the conference. Make sure to send out directions to the host university and/or wherever registration takes place before the conference, preferably by e-mail.

\*It may be a good idea to have access to one or two cars, since transporting some items, such as heavy equipment or large quantities of something, may be difficult using public transport.

\*You may consider welcoming and picking up delegates from the airport or train station when they arrive, particularly if it is not easy to get to the university by public transport. However, decide whether you have enough helpers to do this and if it is necessary. You could also organise your own transport (coaches) to pick up delegates, but this is probably not necessary in most cases. Include details of public transport in the information about the conference, particularly the handbook.

\*It may be a good idea to provide internet access to delegates on the university network during the conference. Make sure to arrange this well in advance and check regulations. Check that you can log in and use the service yourself before the conference. Also check if computer rooms are open on weekends. Access to a wireless network is also very useful for delegates who bring their own laptops.

\*Remember to take photos and perhaps video footage of the conference. You could prepare a slideshow of photos or video for the closing ceremony, or otherwise for after the conference. At least you should have the option of putting photos of the conference online without having to rely on delegates taking pictures.

\*Be sure to spread out the work and don't let one or two people do everything – this will result in them getting very stressed and tired. Any event which requires organisers to be around for a long time, e.g. registration, student lectures, etc, should be scheduled into shifts. Take it in turns to do things. Factor in travel to and from the university and other venues if you are not staying in the delegate accommodation. Make sure you get enough rest, but be prepared to be up for much of the time and work long hours (of course some of this time will be parties, so not necessarily too stressful). Do your best to ensure that everything runs smoothly and the conference is a success, and the reward of having a great ICPS will easily balance out the hard work and stress. Remember to enjoy the conference as well!

## DEBRIEF AND CONFERENCE REPORT

On the day of departure after the conference a dinner was organised for all committee members and main helpers, which was paid for with the left over money from the budgeted amount for committee expenses. This was a good occasion to celebrate the success of the conference and to reward ourselves for the hard work done. Although the evening was very nice indeed there were some concerns about the choice of restaurant (made by the IoP), which was very expensive (ca. £100 per person). Some committee members felt that it was not right to spend so much money on a committee dinner, despite the money coming exclusively from the amount set aside for committee meetings, travel and other expenses, which had not been planned to be spent otherwise. Considering the fairly large surplus of money left over, it was perhaps not unreasonable to celebrate the successful conference, although it did mean that the total amount spent on the committee was almost £4000. However, the main issues here were probably the budget problems mentioned above, which led to the large surplus in the first place. It should also be noted that the IoP did not agree to give any surplus money to IAPS after the conference, so the extra money would have been kept by the IoP anyway, however one could argue that better use could have been made of it, if the amount of surplus had been realised sooner.

A final debrief committee meeting was planned for some time after the conference, to review ICPS 2007 and determine what had worked and what had not. This was also planned to be the occasion to present the final financial summaries and make sure all invoices had been paid. We chose not to have this meeting straight after the conference, since we felt it was important to have time to stand back for a while and think first. If we had organised the meeting for the day after the conference, we may not have come to objective conclusions about how the conference was run, since nobody really wanted to talk about anything negative straight after the conference, which in the end was definitely an overall success. However, we also felt that it was important to be honest with ourselves and point out anything that did not work so well, in particular to help improve ICPS in the future.

Sadly, postponing the meeting has meant that in the end we did not have one at all, due to unavailability of committee members. This was of course the same problem as always, since members came from across the UK. It was therefore decided to discuss the conference via e-mail and the organisers' forum, and for some of the committee members to work on the final report to IAPS. Unfortunately only some of the organisers joined in this discussion, with little or no response from other members, so not all opinions were included in the report at first. Two preliminary versions, one by Jim Grozier, which is a more narrative account detailing how the conference went, which is probably suitable for future organisers to read and any who are interested in ICPS 2007, and one by Mischa Stocklin, which is a more factual account of what happened (suitable probably mainly for IAPS as a conference report), were

however circulated amongst committee members and comments and corrections were gathered together, before preparing the final versions. Both versions include tips for future organisers on what is recommended and what to avoid. This last aspect was seen to be particularly important to ensure continual improvement of ICPS conferences in the future.

Regrettably the financial summary of ICPS 2007, put together by the IoP, was not yet available at the time of writing this report, although it is expected to be finished by the end of 2007. Part of the problem is that some payments, particularly incoming sponsorship by the Ogden Trust, were made very late, months after the conference, which was not a very satisfactory situation. The reasons are probably mainly bureaucratic with payments taking a long time to be dealt with. The delay in providing the financial information was of course not ideal, since it made it more difficult to write the report and once the summary is provided, it will be more of a problem correcting any mistakes that might appear, given the long time elapsed since the conference. It was however confirmed to us by the IoP that the conference did not make a loss and that there were no major financial issues. Basic figures were also available and did correspond to the final budget prepared before the conference.

Finally we created a variety of places for delegates and organisers to post photos of the conference online, including a Facebook group for ICPS 2007, which also makes it easier for delegates to stay in touch with each other after the conference. A short video presentation of the conference was put together by Laura Pickard, including photos of the event, which we hope to make available to all delegates soon. We were and still are hoping to send out feedback questionnaires to all delegates as well, to give them a further opportunity to let us know how successful different aspects of the conference were in their opinion, and for any suggestions or other comments.

We hope that many of this year's organisers will be able to attend the next ICPS 2008 in Poland, and that the experiences we have gained from organising ICPS 2007 will prove useful to future organisers.

#### TIPS FOR FUTURE ORGANISERS

\*Remember to have a final committee meeting after the conference to discuss how everything went and to prepare the final report and financial summaries. It is a good idea not to have this meeting straight after the conference, as you may firstly be too tired, and secondly may not have had time to stand back and objectively look at how the conference went. However, don't delay this meeting for too long to avoid it not happening at all. Organising a debrief via e-mail is much harder.

\*Be honest in the evaluation of the conference; mention both positive and negative aspects. In particular think about what advice could be useful for future organisers and perhaps put together a list of tips like this one. Don't be too negative however, particularly if the conference was a success on the whole. Decide on the format of the report; remember that on one hand IAPS will expect a report on how the conference went, but future organisers or anyone else who is interested may want to read something lighter or just a list of things to do and to avoid.

\*It is a good idea to have several people write different sections of the report as it can be a lot of work for one person. Collect opinions and comments from all committee members. Input from helpers can also be very useful. An overall editor is however also a good idea to avoid the report not flowing well.

\*Prepare a financial summary of all income and expenditure soon after the conference and make sure all outstanding payments (both incoming and outgoing) have been made. Chase up anything outstanding or anything you believe could be a mistake.

\*It is a nice idea to provide online areas for delegates and organisers to upload photos and perhaps video clips of the conference. If you wish, you can also make your own video presentation and/or slideshow of the conference to distribute to delegates. It is also nice for delegates to be able to stay in touch with each other – if you have a forum, this can be used for that purpose, as well as online facilities such as Facebook. You can also share e-mail addresses of delegates around, but make sure you obtain permission from delegates first (it may be easier to ask any delegates who do not wish to share their information to say so, rather than asking for individual permission from all). Encourage participants of your conference to attend future ICPS in future years as well!

\*It may be a good idea to ask delegates for feedback about the conference afterwards; a simple questionnaire could for example be sent out. This can provide valuable suggestions and comments for future organisers.

\*Treat yourself to a social event for the committee and helpers after the conference to reward yourselves (but don't spend too much money on it)!