

Chairman's Message

Conference proceedings (We won 6-4!)

First, the big news: the inaugural RSPSoc football match was won by the Chairman's 11! Well, sort of... The Society's recent Annual Conference in Leicester kicked off with a Chairman's 11 v Students' 11 football match. Perhaps more spirited than skilful, this was hugely enjoyed by the dozen or so participants, with many other RSPSoc members later regretting their absence and promising to play next year.

The conference itself was a very great success. The technical content was particularly high, with keynote addresses from such disciplinary heavyweights as Mark Doherty from the European Space Agency and Chris Justice from the University of Maryland, and also included a panel discussion on New Dimensions in Earth Observation featuring the UK's leading experts from both academia and industry. The commercial side of the conference was strong, with special demonstration events and a bustling exhibition. The National Space Centre was a superb venue for the Annual Dinner, and other social events included an obligatory Leicester curry night. Conference participants were clearly well-satisfied with their experience and enormous thanks go to Kevin Tansey for his effort and attention to detail in organising an event of the highest quality.

The AGM took place during the conference and featured an invitation from the Society's Treasurer for ideas on how best to spend a generous £30k bequest received recently from a founding member. Please do send suggestions to Bob Taft. Some new faces have joined RSPSoc Council with the election of Fakhar Khalid (Greenwich University) and Chris Mewse (GetMapping), plus the appointment of Rob Parker (Durham University) as shadow student representative and promotion of Bob Brewin to full student rep. Many thanks to the departing Jane Drummond and Jonathan Shears for their great contributions to Council over the last few years. Thanks too to Roger Hore in the RSPSoc Office who is leaving us at the end of September for a new post at the Cartographic Society. Roger's has been a particularly lively presence in the Nottingham office and will be missed. Finally, a warm welcome to our new President, Professor Paul Curran, Vice-Chancellor of Bournemouth University and an experienced and active member of the discipline and our Society. I look forward to a productive time ahead, with RSPSoc set to benefit substantially from Paul's enthusiasm and leadership.

Chairman's half hour – where members can quiz the Chairman on any RSPSoc issue – passed quickly, with the new Newsletter first receiving a series of plaudits (where's the constructive criticism!?) and then a more lengthy discussion on a proposed 'New Professional' membership category. The main idea here is to retain former student members in the Society by offering a stepping-stone membership option between the student and full member categories. The proposal's reception was generally favourable, though few students were present to offer their views. It's not too late to voice your opinion, so please do get in touch.

To Cork in Ireland then, for next year's Annual Conference. Judging by her RSPSoc 2010 preview, Fiona Cawkwell might just prove to be the most enthusiastic conference organiser yet seen, and I'm delighted to say that football plans are well underway. The Chairman's 11 will return to defend its title, and maybe next year we'll even have 11 players!

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