

Annual General Meeting - Minutes

The Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Physics, East Anglia Branch, was held at 7:30pm on **Wednesday 13th June 2007** in **The Coleridge Room, Jesus College, Jesus Lane, Cambridge, CB5 8BJ**. Refreshments were available from 7:00pm.

2006-2007 committee present: John Clark, Chair (JDC), Jeanette Fine, Vice-Chair (JF), Tom Whyntie, Acting Hon. Secretary (TW), Mike Coleman (MC), Esther Haines (EH), Paul Millar (PM).

2006-2007 committee apologies: Bill Proud, Hon. Treasurer (BGP), Dennis Camerilli, Mike Carr, Harry Druiff, Lisa Jardine-Wright.

Total members present: 30 ± 3 (*quorum satisfied*)

A talk by Prof. Steiner (Biological and Soft Systems group, Cavendish Laboratory) "*Biomimetic Pattern Formation*", preceded the AGM itself. The committee would once again like to thank Prof. Steiner for an interesting and stimulating lecture.

1. ADDRESS FROM DR BOB KIRBY-HARRIS CPhys FInstP

Those present were addressed by the Chief Executive of the Institute of Physics, Dr Bob Kirby-Harris. This was mainly based around a presentation of the new "strategic vision" of the IOP, featuring terms including (but not limited to) "opportunities", "communications", and "impact". Achievements in the realms of membership, education and outreach were listed. In short, the IOP is doing pretty well – it is probably one of the best resourced physics societies in the world – and the local branches play an integral part in achieving the organisation's goals.

The floor was then opened for questions: The CUSP representative (see below) asked about the value of communication-based outreach activities such as podcasts. BKH responded by saying that while he personally may not be completely up-to-date with such technological wizardry, anything that brings physics to a wider audience through whatever medium they find most comfortable can only be a Good Thing.

JF asked about the IOP £1000 undergraduate bursary scheme with respect to Natural Sciences – apparently it is not available to students who do not take courses that can be identified solely as "physics". Students might therefore be put off from applying to universities where the Natural Sciences course is the only route into a pure physics degree. BKH stated that such "exceptions" had been noted by the IOP. TW pointed out that, for example, only a third of the first year of the Natural Sciences course at Cambridge is physics. The ineligibility could therefore be interpreted as justified; it is not uncommon for many students who start out thinking they wish to do physics to end up

THE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

switching to another discipline. It was also noted that in the second year specialisation is possible, and so the student in question would be eligible from thereon. Suggestions, such as awarding a third of the bursary, or forming a “Natural Sciences” bursary in conjunction with the Royal Society of Chemistry, etc. were mooted. BKH noted all of these comments for further consideration.

Dr Amyas Phillips (AP) asked about the influence the IOP had on low-level curriculum policy, with respect to engineering and its relationship with physics – e.g. links to an engineering GCSE/A level, for example. BKH responded by saying that exerting such an influence would require activity beyond the resources of the IOP, especially given the situation with physics in its own right.

Dr David Andrews (DA) asked about who would be best to speak to within the IOP about schools applying for specialist science status. BKH (among others) recommended the regional officer (EH) and the IOP Teacher Network representative in the area, Karen Fisher (fisherkl@slowglass.com). BKH drew attention to the IOP’s affiliated schools scheme.

2. “OPENING” SESSION

JDC presented the following:

- Chair’s Report – see Appendix A.
- Treasurer’s Report – see Appendix B.

Please note that all minuted comments, questions and responses for each report can be found in the relevant appendix.

3. ELECTION OF THE NEW COMMITTEE

JDC noted that JF, TW and BP would be standing down from their respective roles on the committee – JDC once again thanked them for their contribution to the running of the Branch this year (see Appendix A for full notes).

Elections were held for the following positions on the Committee of the East Anglia Branch of the Institute of Physics:

- **Chair** – Bill Proud
- **Vice Chair** – Paul Millar
- **Hon. Secretary** – Jeanette Fine
- **Hon. Treasurer** – David Andrews
- **Re-election of previous committee members**
- **Election of new committee members**

The elected officers are named above; full details of the re-elected and newly-elected committee, as well as relevant email contact details, can

THE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

be found in Appendix C. All candidates were elected without opposition.

PM proposed a vote of thanks for John Clark as outgoing chair, recognising his personal drive in shaping the branch throughout its start up phase and getting it to its current stable and established state. All present applauded John in appreciation of his considerable contribution and commitment to the branch.

4. **ADOPTION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION**

The new branch constitution (see Appendix D) was discussed. The major changes – to broaden the aims of the branch and to alter the term limits of officers and the committee – were noted. It was proposed (TW, MC) that the new constitution be adopted by the branch. The motion passed without opposition.

5. **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**

- *Paperclip Physics – the future (MC):*

A report on Paperclip Physics 2007 was presented by Mike Coleman. To summarise, this year's competition featured 31 Pupils from 7 schools, and featured presentations on refraction, radiation, resonance, fusion. The eventual winners were Bourne Grammar school and the runners up Norwich High School for girls B.

As for the future of Paperclip Physics – firstly, the official competition (i.e. through IOP central) is now being carried out via a website called SciCast (<http://www.planet-science.com/scicast/>). Schools will now submit presentations in the form of short science videos/podcasts. There will be regional and national finals, and then the national winners will face a larger SciCast-organised competition. Judges from the EA region will be needed (email the IOP central organiser, Caitlin Watson, Caitlin.Watson@iop.org for further information).

THE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

Secondly, a suggestion from Gerry Blake, a Paperclip Physics judge and former teacher, for a “Son¹ of Paperclip” event was briefly discussed. This suggested a June all-day event for year 9 (13-14 years old) teams featuring task involving helium balloons, a “wow” lecture and an “on-the-day” poster competition based on the task. It was noted that this would be very worthy of investigation for the next committee, but it was obviously too late to do anything for this year.

Please see Appendix A for the minutes of the official vote of thanks for MC for all of his hard work with the competition.

- *Cambridge University Physics Society – garden party (CD):*

Casper Drukier (CD) new Chair of the Cambridge University Physics Society, introduced himself and described the Society’s annual garden party, for which support to the tune of £300 was requested from the EA IOP as a way of strengthening the links between the student Physics Society and the local branch.

DA asked if the Physics Society was essentially asking for money for a “knees up”²; TW noted that the appropriate technical term was, in fact, “networking event”. CD explained that by supporting the garden was a way of showing appreciation to the students of Cambridge for their help in various outreach events, and PM added that such support was an excellent way of building and reinforcing these sorts of relationships. TW also noted that as every student who takes first year physics as part of the undergraduate Natural Sciences course at the University of Cambridge is signed up to the IOP as a student member, they were all *ipso facto* members of the local branch. It was proposed that the £300 was granted and the motion passed unanimously.

- *Cambridge University Science Productions – CERN/LHC Film:*

A team from Cambridge University Science Productions (CUSP) is going to CERN in August to make a film about the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). See Appendix C for the full proposal. Chloe Stockford (CS) from CUSP gave a presentation about the proposal to those present. The total required by the team for travel and accommodation was £690.83.

TW asked whether, given CUSP’s experience with filmmaking, they might be available to help in some way with the new incarnation of Paperclip Physics (see above), which involves teams from schools putting together a short film about science.

¹ Or daughter... however, “Offspring of Paperclip” would just be silly.

² This may have been paraphrased for official purposes.

THE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

CS stated that while actual filming would be difficult because of the age and status of those involved, there was certainly potential for some sort of working partnership. TW noted that the details could be finalised nearer the time, but that such an *entente* would certainly be a Good Thing.

PM asked why the 4th of August 2007 was chosen for filming. CS said that this was because it was the summer vacation and thus when most people involved were free. TW noted that the LHC was due to start running in November 2007; given the production time, this would allow the film to be released while the topic was “hot”.

MC asked about whether this was part of a “rolling programme” of films. CS replied that many films had already been published on the CUSP website, and that CUSP had been involved with the BA festival in a similar context (see Appendix D). DA asked if there were any audience figures available for these videos; CS replied that there were not, but that perhaps such data would not be useful as this was a unique project. It was also noted that the publicity available through the EA IOP newsletter/website would open up a new audience anyway.

It was proposed that the required funding, £690.83, should be given to support the project in return for suitable advertising/mentions of the Branch in the video/credits (DA, TW). The reference to the Paperclip Physics/SciCast project was also noted. The motion passed unanimously.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (OPEN SESSION)

DA, building on previous comments relating to the December Event, made a number of suggestions for next (academic) year’s event, the focus being on increasing attendance. A change of direction was proposed. Rather than appealing to the general public through TV-based “hooks”, schools could be involved from the outset in defining the content of the event. For example, the questions and demonstrations in the “Call My Bluff” part of the day could be thought up by groups/science clubs from schools (perhaps even a competition for the best?). This “buy-in” would then help guarantee a large attendance from associated parties – parents, school friends, etc.

DA then asked further about the links branch had with schools – i.e. through STEMNet, Science and Engineering Ambassadors, etc. It was noted that this was something that should be addressed, and that the Teachers’ Network (Karen Fisher – fisherkl@slowglass.com) would be a good place to start.

THE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

JF recommended that a committee meeting in July would be useful to discuss all of the above and start planning the December Event.

The meeting was brought to a close by JDC at about 10:34pm.