

Report from the Chair – David Jenkins

27th October 2009

I have had the pleasure of being the Chair of the Yorkshire Branch for the last six months and hope you will allow me to continue in this post. It has been an interesting period for the world economy the last year or so, and in this context, it is worth relaying to you the fact that the IoP's income has been very hard hit in the current recession as a lot of it comes from publishing and is paid in dollars. They are trying their best to cut costs and cut member services the least. We hope that our level of budget will be allowed to stay where it is now for next year but we are unlikely to get any increases for some time.

Another interesting issue to report on is that the IoP is trying to encourage more inclusion of different regions and localities. In the future, six members together will be able to set up their own branch if they so wish and bid to the IoP for funding. I welcome this initiative which devolves more opportunities to the members, and so I encourage people to think about this. Another option is to set up a centre in your locality where you run lectures and activities. Our number of centres is currently growing. We have recently found a new organiser of lectures in Leeds, John Sutcliffe, who has already put together an extensive programme of lectures there. We also have interest in setting up a programme of lectures in Doncaster, and we will support an initiative to have a programme of lectures in Harrogate, organised by pupils and staff from Harrogate Grammar School.

We have been involved in a wide range of outreach activities to schools and the general public. We took "Physics-in-the-Field" to the Bradford Mela which was extremely well-attended. We have also brought these activities to a number of other events such as the Dark Sky Yorkshire events celebrating the International Year of Astronomy, for example, one held at Yorkshire Sculpture Park on Saturday 24th October. We should thank our regional officer, Alex Brabbs who does a lot of work behind the scenes in supporting these successful events.

Our annual schools event "World of Physics" continues to be very successful, held this year at the University of York. We have also run a continuous professional development event for teachers at the University of York on 4th July, which was organised by Dave Hutchings, our education representative.

The highlight of the summer was the unveiling of two blue plaques by the IoP President Dame Jocelyn Bell-Burnell on 16th July 2009. The first plaque was for Thomas Cooke the famous telescope maker who hailed from Allerthorpe, a village to the east of York. The second was to the very famous and distinguished astronomer and physicist, Fred Hoyle at Bingley Grammar School.

The present committee are very keen to bring new people on-board who can initiate activities in different localities, or bring their own particular interests. Without new people coming along, things will become stale and we need new ideas and

enthusiasm. Please feel free to contact us about volunteering your services to help our branch and its committee.