

## Environmental Physics Group

### Chair's Report: AGM 2009

Welcome to the Chair's report. Once again, I'm pleased to be able to start this report by saying that the previous year was another excellent one for the Group. I see the primary role of the committee as being to organise events for our members and the wider community who have an interest in environmental physics. Although 2007 was a hard one to follow, in terms of the number and quality of events, I think the programme in 2008 was also of genuinely high merit, with a series of meetings of differing format and in a variety of locations that I hope the community finds relevant and accessible. Of particular note I think, was the achievement of organising a meeting in response to significant environmental events (earthquakes in February & May), within a relatively short timescale, despite the requirement for us now to have planned and budgeted for the current year's activities before the end of September in the previous year.

#### Group Meetings & Visits

Thanks to all who contributed to the programme of events in 2008, including speakers, organisers and those who supported with their attendance. We had hoped to organise meetings in all corners of the British Isles during the year, but unfortunately Wales missed out in the end. Nevertheless, we did achieve a good spread.

**Table 1: 2008 Meetings**

Date	Title	Type	Venue	Joint with ...
04/02/08	<i>Severe weather</i>	Eve	Southampton	South Central Branch
28/02/08	<i>Climate Change – the physical basis</i>	Eve	Dublin	Irish Branch
29/02/08	<i>Condensation Physics</i>	Day	Dublin	Irish Branch & Aerosol Society
14/05/08	<i>Member's Meeting</i>	½ day	London	
14/05/08	<i>Windscale fire 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary</i>	Eve	London	
29/08/08	<i>Optical Environmental Sensing VI</i>	½ Day	Edinburgh	Optical Group
28/10/08	<i>Earthquakes: Bumps in Britain, Catastrophe in China</i>	Eve	Sheffield	Yorkshire Branch

The Group also supported several other events, including the Applied Physics & Technology Division's meeting on Sustainable Energy in October.

#### Events in 2009

Events for the current year include:

*Environmental Physics Day*, London, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009

*Environmental Electrostatics III*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009

*Computing & the Environment*, London, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009

### **Other Proposed Events**

Ice in the Environment

Media reporting of environmental news stories.

Meeting on health / air quality

Low NO<sub>x</sub> combustion, with the Combustion Physics Group, Spring 2010.

### **Essay Competition**

The 4<sup>th</sup> EPG essay competition was launched in the autumn of 2008 and once again there was a good number of high quality entries. The winner was Chris Knight of the University of Manchester, who wrote an excellent, topical piece on the subject of geo-engineering. Ruth Mitchell, of the University of Lancaster was the runner-up, with her entry on 'magnetic trees', which contained some excellent examples of the application of physics to an environmental problem. Sophie Mead's essay on solar power was highly commended and was a notable achievement, as she is only 14 years old. The winners each received a certificate and shared prize money of £450. Publication of the winning essays is now being sought.

### **Other Activities & News**

The Environmental Physics Group submitted a response to the 'Wakeham' Review of UK Physics in 2008. The theme of broadening physics to include important strategic areas, including health, energy and the environment, came through very strongly in the Review and in our view was one of its key strengths. We also welcomed the recognition at the highest level that high quality physics in these important fields is often conducted outside of university physics departments and felt it was valuable that the implications of this for recruitment into physics undergraduate courses from school and from undergraduate physics into these specialisms was also recognised. In terms of addressing these issues, the recommendation to broaden the base of physics to include (or reclaim) the more applied aspects of physics was especially welcome.

Two Newsletters were published by the Group during the year (thanks to Karen Aplin); as before, this (along with the web-pages) is the key means by which the Group's activities are publicised and contributions from members are always welcome. MyIOP was also launched in 2008, but we have yet to see how useful this will prove to be for our members.

### **Thanks**

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the EPG committee, who give up a great deal of time and effort to further the aims of the Group. This year, three of our 'elder statesmen' are stepping down from the committee and I would particularly like to express my gratitude to John Garland, Derek Rose and Alastair McCartney for their considerable contribution to the work of the Group, going back (in at least one case) to its formation almost 20 years ago. My thanks go also to Pat Goodman, whose term as Secretary comes to an end this year.

Peter Hodgson (Chair)

March 2009