



REPORT FROM THE BRITISH BRANCH MEETING

Cambridge, UK, 7–8 September 2011

The 2011 British Branch meeting was hosted by the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge on Wednesday and Thursday 7 and 8 September. For many of the 100 attendees it was an excellent opportunity to visit BAS for the first time and we were welcomed to the institute and introduced to a little of its history by the director, Nick Owens.

Over the two days, we were treated to 36 excellent presentations organised within five sessions. I had felt honoured to be given the first presentation of nine in the opening session on 'Greenland', but then I realised the order was simply alphabetical. The pressure then was to keep to the very tight time schedule of 10 minutes per talk. I am pleased to say I managed this challenge, along with every single one of the speakers in all of the sessions, in spite of Martyn Tranter's scepticism that only the 'young' ones would manage such self-control. The second session of the day, 'Antarctica and Climate Influences on Glaciers', began after lunch and another nine presentations took us through to the poster session at 4 pm.

The 29 poster presenters spent the next 2 hours fielding lively questions, the postgraduates keeping an eye out for John Glen as he wandered round with his notepad, until the lights were switched off and participants were forced reluctantly to make their way to the bar at Selwyn College. Conference dinner was provided in the Dining Hall of Selwyn College, an excellent three-course meal with plenty of wine, efficient service and live entertainment provided by British Branch president Pete Nienow and honoured guest Professor Doug MacAyeal from Chicago. Pete used his speech to exhort the British glaciological community to stand up for itself in supporting grant proposals in order to ensure the continuity of successful research and the futures of the next generation of glaciologists.

Doug's inspiring after-dinner speech was marred only by the disturbing suggestion that he, Magnús and Richard Hindmarsh intended to avail themselves of the nudist beach facility at the ice-core conference in October 2012 in Presqu'île-de-Giens, Côte d'Azur. The next day, Doug was to chair the final session, give another speech at the close of the meeting, and take his place on the mentoring panel of the APECS meeting, which followed the conference and where he claimed to hate public speaking!



IGS President Doug MacAyeal 'not enjoying public speaking'.

The first session at 9 am on Thursday – 'Iceland and models' – was impressively full, and concluded with the first talk of session 4 on 'Methods and Measurements', after which we enjoyed a welcome coffee break before the British Branch AGM.

At the AGM the accounts were approved and it was confirmed that in 2012 the branch conference



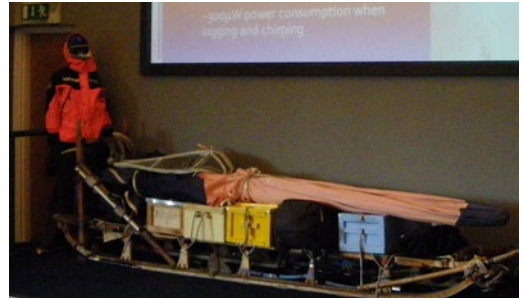
The IGS staff attended the dinner en masse – from the left Christine Butler (Production Manager), Rowena Baxter (Reference Manager), Trevor Margereson (retiring Membership Secretary); opposite, Ann Leeding (Publishing Assistant), Craig Baxter (Production Assistant and social networking supremo).



The morning after the night before – an impressive turnout.

would be held in Aberdeen. John Woodward will continue to act as branch Treasurer, Rob Bingham was elected as Secretary, Ed King as Vice President and Jemma Wadham steps up as President. After the AGM Magnús revealed details of the proposal to introduce an online-only IGS subscription, and gave a boost to the IGS membership drive by threatening to go through with the nudist beach visit if the number of IGS members had failed to reach 1000 by then.

The five remaining talks of session 4 took us to another sandwich lunch in the library and session 5 on 'Permafrost (but mostly Greenland again!)'. At 2.30 pm we all waited, on the edge of our seats, while John Glen talked us through the difficult process of deciding which students were to be honoured with prizes. After a couple of skilful feints, John announced that Anne Goldsack (Swansea University) and Andrew Fitzpatrick



One poor BAS employee got 'trapped' at the meeting

(Aberystwyth University) had won the John Glen prizes for best oral presentation and best poster, respectively.

The last British Branch meeting to have been held at BAS was in 2001; it was in the wake of 9/11 and a minute's silence was held. Ten years later another interesting and motivating British Branch meeting came to a close. Many thanks to David Vaughan, Andy Smith, Gill Alexander, Glenda Harden, Nick Barrand, Gisela Hiess, Carlos Martin and Rosie Williams at BAS for organising a busy and enjoyable two days, and to all those who presented their work and participated in the meeting.

Suzanne Bevan