

## **Post face**

### **Reasons for InterCeltic colloquiums on hydrology and management of water resources**

After a very successful Fourth Colloquium in Portugal inspired by João Paulo Lobo Ferreira, as a result of the concept thought out by Pierre Hubert, Secretary to IAHS and Alain Jigorel of INSA who organized its triumphant launch at Rennes in 1996, we look forward to the Fifth Colloquium in Dundee in 2008. The idea of bringing the Celtic World into focus has enabled the InterCeltic Colloquia to be held in Brittany (Rennes), Wales (Aberystwyth), Ireland (Galway) and now Portugal (Guimarães). This brings together many Celts, as both English and French speaking participants. Often the conferences are joined by many other Nationalities. An international conference is brought to regions which might not normally host a major IAHS or IUGG Symposium because of their more limited facilities and challenging travel arrangements. In addition, it also allows researchers and students to present at international conferences in either English or French. It is a magnificent platform of common communication as Celts which encourages contact between English and French researchers that might otherwise not occur. The papers are always of a very high standard and the local participants meet others from the Hydrological World, which is of eventual benefit to their participation in larger international gatherings. In the past the younger researchers and students would have been restricted to local or national conferences, where only the languages of the country are used.

Because of the conference's size it is possible to have single sessions so there is no need to choose which session to attend. This allows researchers to look beyond their inevitably narrow fields and to see what is being achieved elsewhere, which is to the mutual benefit of all. The cultural side of the conference is not forgotten but this may be combined with technical visits to give an added interest. Certainly one can combine culture and hydrology very conveniently within the normal conference activities. As someone who has presented at all the InterCeltic Colloquia, I have always found the standard of the papers very high. It has been worth me travelling all the way from South Africa to participate—and it is not so difficult to penetrate the Celtic World. Dundee may be a little more challenging but I have found a convenient airport with connections to the rest of the world. At the first conference in Brittany there were instantaneous translations in English and French, while at the later conferences often the French participants have presented in French with English PowerPoint presentations, which has helped the non French speakers.

It is very enjoyable to be off the usual conference circuit. Guimarães is outstanding as a walled city and World Heritage site. The conference allows much to be seen of the local area, such as cross-sections of Brittany, Aberystwyth, and the outstanding “Turlochs”—ephemeral lochs of the area south of Galway. It is also good to hear the

Celtic languages spoken, although I personally am relieved when an English translation is provided, but then my opportunities for communicating in French are equally limited. A three year cycle for these conferences seems to also fit in well with other IAHS activities. I always look forward to sampling the cultural and culinary delights of the region. In Brittany there was a Celtic Evening, in Aberystwyth, a 60 strong male voice choir, in Galway a harpist, in Guimarães, in the Palace of the Duques de Bragança, the university students and Professor of Civil Engineering gave us “Fado”. In Portugal a staple diet of 365 ways of preparing “cod” was very informative and enjoyable. I also enjoyed the seafood in Galway. In Dundee will it be whiskey, thick cut Dundee marmalade, and smokies (smoked herring)? I am already thinking of a suitable “Celtic” paper. The challenge has been passed to Dundee for early July 2008. “Lang may your lummies reek”.

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\* It has recently come to light that in Roman times many Celts “romanized” their names—I think this is what occurred here, as we seem to originate from the southeast of England.

