

Welcome to the second issue of the International Polar Year (IPY) International Programme Office (IPO) bi-monthly newsletter. IPY is co-sponsored by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). The aim of this newsletter is to provide you with updates on IPY IPO activities throughout IPY and alert you to any new developments or events.



School children celebrating IPY in Oslo, March 1, 2007 © Lise Åserud, Scanpix

IPY Opening Ceremony

On 1st March 2007, the official Opening Ceremony for the International Polar Year took place at the Palais de la découverte in Paris. The event was a great success, attracting press interest from across the globe. David Carlson gave a colourful presentation on some of the key science within IPY with examples shown from several endorsed IPY projects. HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco introduced Vladimir Kotlyakov, a distinguished polar scientist who also took part in IGY, and Adrienne Smith, a young IPY polar researcher who then proceeded to cut an IPY cake to mark the beginning of IPY.

The ceremony closed with a buffet where guests were able to meet with Joint Committee members, IPY project scientists, teachers, IPY Youth Steering Committee representatives, members from the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists and the Polar Artist Groups, surrounded by beautiful sea ice imagery provided by the IPY project TARA.

More than 20 national IPY launch events took place both prior to and after the Opening Ceremony in Paris. These included launching of balloons, school children gathering in Oslo, exhibit openings, issuance of IPY stamps, dog sled races, and many other fun and serious activities to name but a

few! Many schools also took part in the IPY celebrations by carrying out the various ice experiments listed on the IPY website as well as launching hundreds of virtual balloons. You can see the full list of events at <http://www.ipy.org/index.php?/ipy/detail/launch/> or download the webcasts from the Arctic Portal website at <http://www.arcticportal.org>.



Tara Sea Imagery. Photo: © Palais de la découverte

If your National Committee has any events or activities it would like to advertise in forthcoming IPY IPO newsletters, please send details to the office at ipyipo@bas.ac.uk.



Recent Meetings

The IPO had a booth at the American Geophysical Union (AGU) in San Francisco, December 2006. This was very successful thanks to the many materials sent from various IPY national committees, youth committees, sub-committees and IPY projects. There was a whole day of IPY related talks and several poster sessions, including a highly popular IPY Education and Outreach session.

The second Heads of the Arctic and Antarctic IPY Secretariats (HAIS) meeting took place in Copenhagen, 1st and 2nd of February, 2007 at the Danish Polar Centre. The main topics of discussion were IPY legacy, IPY data and funding issues. A report from this meeting can be found on the website at <http://classic.ipy.org/national/>.

The fifth session of the IPY Joint Committee (JC) took place at the ICSU building in Paris on 28th February and 2nd March, 2007. The JC discussed at length how they could help maintain the momentum and visibility of IPY throughout the IPY years. The Sub-committee for Data Policy and Management also met, prior to the JC meeting as did an ad hoc Education and Outreach group, who met on the 2nd March.

Both Cynan Ellis-Evans and David Carlson attended the Arctic Science Summit Week, 2007 which was held at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. A panel moderated by Jackie Grebmeier discussed new International Science Partnerships and set the tone for the Science Day with early references to the need for extensive long term monitoring programmes in the Arctic – even from funding agency representatives. This was followed by an excellent set of talks on monitoring different Arctic environments and it was quickly realised that the focus was the need for Sustained (S) Arctic Observing Networks (AON). There were several presentations highlighting Pacific and Asian efforts contributing to Arctic IPY.

David Carlson finished several weeks of IPY travel in Malaysia, where he joined the 3rd Malaysian International Seminar on Antarctica and a Forum on 'Understanding the Implications of Rapid Warming in the Polar Regions on Earth Systems' organised by the ICSU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and by SCAR. These events, hosted by the Biotechnology Research Institute of the University of Malaysia Sabah, brought together students and researchers from the Malaysia Antarctica Research Programme as well as researchers and educators from Australia, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Korea, and the UK. Many of the talks during the Seminar focussed on the use of new genetic

characterization techniques to understand the structure and function of polar microbial systems. A display of fireworks over the ocean after the Seminar banquet seemed to present a colourful end to a month of IPY celebration events.

Other News

Bulgaria announced a new IPY National Committee, which was established on 1st September 2006. On the 21st February, 2007, the Bulgarian IPY Committee celebrated the launch of IPY with a written declaration which was accepted by the Bulgarian Parliament.



© Bulgarian IPY National Committee

Special Requests

Please send copies of IPY National Launch Event memorabilia (programmes, pictures etc) to the IPO at your earliest convenience. These will then be added to the IPO archives.

An IPY Teachers Discussion group has recently been established, which is for teachers and educators interested in developing educational material and ideas related to the International Polar Year. If you are interested in this, please sign up at http://groups.google.co.uk/group/IPY_teachers?hl=en

We are also looking for people who might like to contribute to the IPY web-blog. If this is something that appeals to you, then please contact Rhian Salmon at ipy.ras@gmail.com for further information.

Upcoming events...

Senior Arctic Officials Meeting, Tromsø, Norway, 12th-13th April, 2007

European Geosciences Union – 15th – 20th April, 2007, Vienna, Austria

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), New Delhi, India, 30th April – 11th May, 2007

