

Proposal for holding the 2010 IMC in Armagh, Northern Ireland

The Local Organising Committee (aac@arm.ac.uk), 2009 June 11th

1 Who we are

At the time of writing this document, the local organising committee is comprised of Apostolos “Tolis” Christou (chairman), David Asher, Geert Barentsen and Miruna Popescu. Christou, Asher and Barentsen have attended a good number of past IMCs. Geert Barentsen has served as LOC member in 2005. Christou has organised and chaired meteor workshops in Graz, Austria (2005), Armagh (2007) and Cologne, Germany (2008) with financial support from the EuroPlaNet consortium under the EU 6th Framework. Asher is convener of a meteor session at EPSC 2009 in Potsdam this coming September. Popescu has been on the LOC for events at Armagh Observatory in recent years, including the Solar Physics Summer School (2007), the Schools Conferences (2007, 2009) and many other outreach activities for International Heliophysical Year 2007/2008 and International Year of Astronomy 2009 in Ireland. We also have offers of help during the event itself from a number of Observatory students.

2 Rationale: Why an IMC in Armagh?

The Armagh Observatory (see <http://www.arm.ac.uk>) has a long tradition in meteor research since the time of Ernst Julius Öpik, through to the solar system group of the present day, and the Observatory’s meteor work is well known. So we believe an Armagh IMC would be an attractive option for the meteor community. We consider moreover, based on our extensive involvement with the IMO, that the IMO does great work for the advancement of meteor science and we would like to participate in this by hosting an IMC.

3 The Time

We propose to hold the 2010 IMC during the period of 16th-19th September (Thu-Sun). The phases of the Moon during that period would be much the same as those during the 2009 IMC. These dates are subject to being shifted by a week to avoid a clash with the European Planetary Science Congress 2010, once the date of the latter is known (which it should be by roughly July 2009).

4 The Location

Armagh is a small town of circa 20,000 principally served by three major airports: Belfast International (BFS; also known as “Aldergrove”; 45 min by car), Belfast City (BHD; also known as “George Best Airport”; 60-70 min by car) and Dublin International (DUB; 90 min by car). Many low cost flights are available to these Airports.

A reasonable amount of public transport is available from Belfast or Dublin to Armagh. Regular bus services exist between Armagh and Belfast or Dublin. Train services also connect major population centres with nearby towns such as Portadown or Newry from which one can catch a taxi or bus to Armagh. There is no train station in Armagh itself.

Taxis between Armagh and the airports can alternatively be used, especially if bus/train is difficult (e.g. fewer services on Sunday). Suitable taxi sharing, which we can coordinate when we know participants’ airport arrival times, can reduce the cost to e.g. £15–20 (Belfast–Armagh one way) or £25–30 (Dublin–Armagh one way) which would be comparable to public transport. We do not offer to cover any of these costs unless our various applications for sponsorship are successful.

Belfast and Armagh are in the UK, and therefore in the EU but are *not* part of the Schengen treaty so a valid passport will be required in all cases. No visas are required for nationals of EU countries. Dublin is in the Republic of Ireland which is not covered by a UK visa. Participants arriving at Dublin International Airport would need to obtain separate visas for the RoI and the UK. However, since many low cost flights are available to BFS and BHD this should not be a problem for participants needing visas.

5 Conference Venue

The conference will be held at the Armagh City Youth Hostel (ACYH; Fig. 1; <http://www.hini.org.uk/hostels/armagh.cfm>) located near the city centre. As an Enhanced Option, ACYH will still be used for accommodation but alternative con-

Table 1: Accommodation & Subsistence Budget – Basic Option

Item	Case of 63 participants	Case of 80 participants
Accommodation	£2500 (Youth Hostel accommodation costed for 63 people plus conf. venue, kitchen and dining area)	£4030 (Additional B&B accommodation for 17) people at £30/night
Food, incl. coffee breaks, at £20/day/person	£3780	£4800
T-shirts	£630	£800
Miscellaneous	£1000	£1100
Total	£7910	£10730
Required Reg. Fee	£126	£135
(in Euros)*	145	155
(in Euros) [†]	176	189

* assuming an exchange rate of £1 = 1.153 Euros, current as of 8th Jun 2009

[†] assuming a “worst case” exchange rate of £1 = 1.4 Euros

Proceedings excluded from calculation

ference venues are available for an additional cost of £600–£1000 including space for posters to be displayed from Friday morning until Saturday noontime.

In the Basic Option, the proposed lecture venue is shown in panel (a) of Fig. 1. It can hold up to 96 people and in our opinion the available space is adequate. The room does not have a separate stage, which is not a problem for lectures, but means that for performances there would be less space than at many past IMCs. However, the Observatory grounds during the evening of a barbecue could be a good option if there is an “Astroshow”.

6 Accommodation & Subsistence

Up to 63 individuals can be accommodated in the ACYH itself, 2–6 people/room (Panel (d) of Fig. 1). A further 17 can be accommodated in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) type accommodation within 15 min walk of the conference venue. The LOC will cover these costs. In case of more participants than the total number of 80 indicated above, those registering later or those preferring more expensive options can be accommodated in a number of nearby hotels at prices of \geq £50 per night. In case of more than 63 participants, we can commit to covering costs up to £30 per night (i.e. B&B covered by LOC; for hotels excess over £30 paid by participants).

We will provide breakfast for all those staying at the ACYH (Panels (b) and (c) of Fig. 1) where there is sufficient space for accommodating the 63 residents in two rows of tables along the length of the room. Breakfast is included in B&B type accommodation, as the name implies. We will provide sandwich-type lunches (good quantity, not just a snack) at the Conference venue (ACYH). At the present time, we expect that cooked dinners will be provided at the ACYH through hired caterers. We will accommodate all conference participants during these lunch and dinner buffet meals by combining the breakfast area with the conference room and rearranging chairs within the lecture room to clear its central portion for the food. As an alternative, some good deals offered by restaurants may turn out to be a better possibility. In the Enhanced Option of the lecture venue being elsewhere (Sec. 5), the need for rearranging chairs etc. is removed.

7 Excursion

The basic excursion option would be a tour of the Armagh Observatory. However, a nicer option would be to see the Observatory during a barbecue evening event, and for the excursion itself to hire two coaches and drivers to visit at least one location on the North coast (eg The Giant’s Causeway) and possibly more (choice includes Dunluce Castle, Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, Bushmills whiskey Distillery). This latter (nicer) option requires a time allocation of \sim 8 hours and a budget allocation of £1000.



Figure 1: The lecture venue (a), breakfast room (b), and kitchen area (c) within the Armagh City Youth Hostel (ACYH), our proposed venue for IMC 2010. Panel (d) shows an example of twin bedroom accommodation within the ACYH. There is also a room (e) which can serve for smaller meetings/discussions.

Table 2: Enhanced Options if funding applications successful

Item	Cost	Likelihood
North coast excursion	£1000	likely
Guest speaker(s)	some hundreds	likely
Separate lecture venue	£600–1000	fairly likely
Help with travel from/to airports for all participants	£40/participant	possible
Support to attend conference for those unable to afford	up to thousands	conceivable

8 Sponsorship

We shall apply to various sources for sponsorship. For example, it may be possible to co-host a workshop where travel and accommodation expenses for several speakers can be reimbursed through the EuroPLaNet FP7 Research Infrastructure. As a last resort the Armagh Observatory will cover excess costs we may incur up to £3000. Depending on our success in obtaining funding other than the registration fees of the participants, we may be able to go beyond the budget seen in Table 1 and provide some or all of the Enhanced Options in Table 2.