

Minutes of the Eighth Annual General Meeting of the International Association of Broadcast Meteorology

Held on Wednesday 27th June 2002, in Williamsburg USA during the AMS 31st Conference on Broadcast Meteorology.

The meeting was held in the Williamsburg Lodge and Conference Centre, Williamsburg, Virginia at 1630.

In attendance:

John Teather, Paul Gross, Gerald Fleming, Inge Niedek, Bill Giles, Steve Swienckowski, Lea Saukensoun, Jim Jagers, David Briane, Andrew Lane, Claire Martin, Joe Witte, Tomas Molina.

- 1. Apologies for absence were received** from Dieter Walsh, Monica Lopez, Jofre Janue, Enric Agud, Evelyn Cusak, Michael Walsh, Joan Blackburn.....
- 2. Minutes of the Seventh Annual General meeting, held in Minneapolis on Friday 29th June 2001**
These were approved as a true record.
- 3. There were no matters arising.**
- 4. Report of the outgoing Chairman, Gerald Fleming.**

As I complete the first year of my second term as Chairman of this diverse and rapidly-growing Association, I want to look back to our beginnings, if only to emphasise how far we have come.

The International Association of Broadcast Meteorology began with a meeting of 25 or so weather broadcasters from around Europe who came together in the unlikely setting of San Augustin on the island of Gran Canaria, in 1994. In the early years the Association was primarily an opportunity of maintaining and strengthening contact with friends and colleagues in the weather broadcasting business who had been meeting annually in Paris at the Festival International de Meteo (FIM). Through those first years we worked with and through FIM, and became introduced to the World Meteorological Organisation, culminating in our accession to observer status with that organisation in 1998.

I was followed as Chair by Ms Inge Niedek, and she steered the organisation through a period of significant development, during which the Association developed a respected voice on behalf of weather broadcasters in many fora. When I came back into the Chair last year, it was to a different, more dynamic, more professional organisation. My challenge is to build upon and to sustain this development.

I would like to consider our progress within six different areas over the past year, these are:

- 1. Visibility of the IABM*
- 2. Links with WMO*
- 3. Membership and membership services*
- 4. Data exchange issues*
- 5. Training*
- 6. Certification.*

1. Visibility of the IABM.

On behalf of the Association I attended the ECAM / EMS (European Conference of Applications of Meteorology, European Meteorological Society) meeting in Budapest in the autumn last year. While this conference does not have a particular focus on the broadcasting part of our business, it does concern itself with the commercial exploitation of meteorology in Europe, and in particular it is probably the only forum where private and public sectors can come together to meet as equal partners. The papers presented and discussions held at the conference provided much material of interest for our newsletter and website. I have recently been invited, on behalf of the IABM, to join the organising committee for the next ECAM/EMS, scheduled to be held in Rome in September 2003.

2. Links with WMO

Some of you who attended the AMS Broadcasters Conference in Orlando will recall that the Director of the NWS, General JJ Kelly, was critical of the IABM for not taking up its allotted seats at the WMO Congress held earlier that year. It was a reasonable criticism - observer status represents a great opportunity to have a voice at the highest levels within meteorology, but the exploitation of this opportunity requires significant resources, as it means having representatives attend a variety of meetings and committees, and also having members of the Association contribute at different levels to the work of WMO. Over the past year or two the Association has been plugged into the Public Weather Services programme of WMO, especially through the work of members Claire Martin, Sam Muchemi and Ivan Cacic. We have also raised our voices - sometimes controversially - at Executive Council, and at the Commission for Basic Systems.

3. Membership and membership services.

In response to the wishes of members we have not only retained our "paper-based" newsletter but have significantly developed and improved it over the past year, with a re-launch under the title "Up Front". Our previous Editor, Richard Chapman, did sterling work on the newsletter, and this has been carried on by our Secretary, John Teather, who has now taken on the responsibility of editing both our newsletter and our website. In addition to upgrading the production of the newsletter, John has attempted to source a greater variety of articles, and for the first time we are on course to produce our target of four newsletters per year.

In a similar manner the content of the website is now updated more frequently, to keep it current and always interesting. An example at present is the link - provided by our Japanese colleague Michihiko Tonouchi - to websites carrying detailed forecast information relating to the World Cup.

4. Data Issues

From the time that the IABM was formed the issue of the pricing of weather data in Europe has never been far from the surface. Over the past years the Association has raised some hackles with its approach to this issue, but it has also started to see some results.

At a committee meeting last November, a new statement was developed on the position of the IABM with respect to ECOMET. Following this development, myself and Tomas Molina had a meeting in Brussels with the Chairman, Chief Executive and other members of the Board of that organisation; a follow-up meeting was held in Geneva earlier this month at which the Association was represented by Tomas, John Teather and Inge Niedek.

In our statement, we have changed the focus of our position somewhat to concentrate more clearly on the impact which European data policies are having on broadcasting. In this we are making it clear that we are not attempting to represent the entire private sector of meteorology; rather we are concentrating on what exactly we, as broadcasters, need to do our work. We are trying to get the importance of these needs across to the decision makers.

To some extent our work in this area is becoming more low-key. We detect that there is an acknowledgement among many in European Met Services that matters must change; we feel

that we should encourage this thinking and help Met Service to move in the direction of easier, faster and more affordable access to weather data.

5. Training

Last week I had a meeting with the Regional Presidents of WMO as part of a continuing dialogue with that organisation on the importance of broadcast training for meteorologists, especially in the developing countries. The concept which we have is that the IABM would help to source and provide expertise for training courses which would be organised and run through existing WMO programmes.

6. Certification

The idea of certification is linked to that of training. The IABM concept is that we could develop a template for certification which could then be adapted for local use from one country to another. It is our view that the National Meteorological Societies would actually take charge and run the certification schemes in each country, as they would need to be adapted and made culturally appropriate from one location to another. It would be our hope that such a scheme would attract the support of WMO, so that the certificates themselves and the successful candidates might carry a WMO "Seal of Approval" which would be portable from one country to another.

I would now like to look ahead to some of the major challenges facing your association in the years ahead.

We have entered into a commitment with WMO and the AMS to co-host a conference on Broadcast Meteorology in Geneva in 2004. This will be a major conference - the first attempt to organise a global conference in our field. There will be a lot of hard work to make it happen.

We will need to continue to work on gaining new members; on promoting training; on advocacy for our profession at the highest levels. We need to keep working on the data issues in Europe; keeping open the channels of communication that have developed between ourselves and the European Met Services. We need to further improve our own channels of communication with our members; our website and Up Front.

Funding this level of activity is not going to be easy. There is no question of increasing our membership fee; what we do need to do is to improve our efficiency of fee collection. This is a time-consuming task, and traditionally we have not been very good at collecting all the monies due.

Your Association has no paid officials, and runs entirely on the voluntary efforts of the committee. Most of us use our own home PC's to progress Association business, and piggy-back on resources available to us through our employers. There will come a time, hopefully, when the IABM will outgrow these voluntary efforts, and we will need to professionalise further. For the moment, however, the burden falls primarily on your committee, and I would like to thank them for their co-operation and work throughout the past year. Special words of thanks go to those upon whom the greatest burden of work has fallen; John as Secretary, Inge and Dieter as Vice-Chairs, and Tomas as Membership Secretary. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with you all.

5. Report of the outgoing Honorary Secretary, John Teather.

John Teather noted that the Chairman had already reported on areas of the Honorary Secretary's areas of responsibility. There was no more that he wished to add.

6. Report of the outgoing Treasurer, Gerald Fleming.

A financial report was tabled and considered. The need to improve on the collection of subscriptions was reported. John Teather stated that shortly he would be offering a secure collection method via the web site.

7. Election of Directors and Officers.

The following officers were elected:

Chairman	Gerald Fleming
Secretary	John Teather
Treasurer	Gerald Fleming
Vice-Chairmen	Inge Niedek, Dieter Walch
Membership Secretary	Tomas Moina
Publications Secretary	Bill Giles
Ordinary Directors	Phillippe Jeanerot; Paul Gross

8. Resolutions - none were received.

9. Any other business.

David Braine asked when an AGM is to be held in Europe. He was disappointed at the number attending the AGM. Members noted the difficulty with choosing a venue to suit everyone. David Braine stated that there were many English members unable to attend. GF promised to look at the idea of holding the AGM for 2003 during the Royal Met Societies 3rd Conference in Norwich in September 2003.