MEETINGS SECRETARY REPORT

BAAL 2008, Swansea (11-13 September)

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The conference theme of BAAL 2008 was “Taking the measure of applied linguistics”. Circa 300 delegates attended the conference. Plenary speakers were Paul Meara (Swansea University), Ben Rampton (King’s College London), and Alison Wray (Cardiff University).

Very many thanks and congratulations to Tess Fitzpatrick and other staff and students at Swansea University for a highly successful conference. Delegate feedback forms and emails abound in comments such as “very friendly and well-organised conference – inspiring sessions – excellent – wonderful – amazing – great experience – excellent venue – the student helpers were wonderful – many thanks to all the helpers and organisers – well done LOC!”

84% of delegates who filled in forms rated the presentation facilities ‘good’ and ‘very good’. The work and friendliness of the local organisers and staff at Swansea University conference services received particularly high praise generating comments such as “smooth and efficient registration – prompt replies from organisers – helpful and friendly staff”.

Almost all delegates who filled in forms rated the programme and the balance of SIG tracks and colloquia with individual papers “good” or “very good”.

The conference organisers raised the profile of posters at their conference by organising a much larger poster presentation session this year than usual. There was a prize for best poster displayed at the conference which went to Hilary Nesi from Coventry University for her poster “A multidimensional analysis of student writing across levels and disciplines”.

There were two proposed colloquia: “Classrooms as cultural context: the legitimacy of educational exchange” and “Communication, discourses and interculturality”. Six SIG tracks were organised: Corpus Linguistics, Language Learning and Teaching, Gender and Language, Psycholinguistics, Language in Africa, and UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum.

Cambridge University Press organised a drinks reception before dinner on Thursday night, and Multilingual Matters organised a reception on Friday night. The BAAL book prize was announced before the BAAL Gala dinner on Friday night. Alastair Pennycook received the prize for his book *Global Englishes and transcultural flows* published by Routledge. The BAAL Gala dinner was followed by a very entertaining and successful ceilidh. The conference closed the following day with a tribute to John Holmes, the last of the three plenaries, and closing remarks by several representatives of BAAL and Swansea University.

Papers Submitted and Accepted

As table 1 and figure 1 show, the number of papers submitted was about the same as in 2006 and has fallen from last year which saw an unusually high number of paper submissions. 298 abstracts were submitted to the conference organisers, and 208 were accepted this year. The number of accepted papers has increased sharply compared to last year (40%) and is back to the usual 65-75% acceptance rate. The number of posters has increased. SIG track submissions have increased, and colloquia submissions have fallen.

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Sub. – Submitted; Acc. – Accepted

Table 1: Abstracts submitted and accepted by category

![Figure 1: Total abstracts submitted and accepted](image)
Scholarships

BAAL gives two international scholarships (one of which is the Chris Brumfit award) and ten UK student scholarships.

There were 29 applications for the ten UK student scholarships; nine were accepted.

The International Scholarship went to a scholar from Russia, Svetlana Gorokhova, and a scholar from Iran, Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini, was awarded the Chris Brumfit award. There were 38 applications.