

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The 17th Polar Libraries Colloquy and the 24th IAMSLIC conference were held jointly in Reykjavik, Iceland, 20-25 September 1998. This was the first joint conference of these organizations and the first time they held their meetings in Iceland. These two rather small organizations have been aware of each other for some time, and felt given their similar interests and overlap in membership that a joint conference was appropriate.

Informal discussion about having a joint conference sometime in the future started around 1990 among some members of both organizations. A good opportunity arose when it was obvious that both the PLC and the IAMSLIC conferences would be held in Europe in 1998. An offer for the IAMSLIC conference in 1998 came from Iceland at the 1995 conference in Southampton and at the same time discussions on the PLC conference site had been going on for a while. When Greenland withdrew from hosting the 1998 conference, Iceland was the obvious choice. At the PLC conference in Alaska in 1996, a formal offer came from Iceland for a joint IAMSLIC/PLC conference in 1998 and was accepted. At the 1996 IAMSLIC conference in Monterey, this idea was introduced and accepted as well. The hosts in Iceland were the Marine Research Institute and the Icelandic Institute of Natural History.

This first joint conference turned out to be a success with 116 participants from 21 countries, not counting accompanying persons. The meetings went on for four days with a one-day break for an excursion on the Golden Circle that took the participants to historical sites, a hot spring area and some other remarkable places. Other social events included receptions at the Reykjavik City Hall, the U.S. Embassy and the National and University Library, not to mention visits to the Nordic House, the Arni Magnusson Institute, and the library of the Central Bank of Iceland. The conference was held at Hotel Saga, which provided excellent facilities and food. The modern technology for presenting papers never failed, thanks to the technicians of the hotel.

A two-day pre-conference study tour was planned to Akureyri in which 50 people participated. On the first day the participants visited fish processing plants in the fishing village Dalvik and Hrisey, a small island in Eyjafjordur. The second day was spent on campus at the University of Akureyri where a number of talks and presentations of interest to the participants were given as well as an introduction to the newly founded Vilhjalmur Stefansson Arctic Institute.

During the stay in Akureyri the participants were engaged in various social activities, the highlights being a reception in the Icelandic tradition in the wood Kjarnaskogur, with

cured shark, dried fish and brennivín and a spectacular show of fireworks by the harbor. The trip to Akureyri was by plane but the group went back to Reykjavik by bus with an expert guide to assure that the trip would be informative and pleasant.

The organizing committee has received many letters of thanks from participants who have expressed their gratitude for the successful conference where they had the opportunity to meet colleagues with another perspective on library work. Most of the participants expressed their interest that another joint conference would be arranged in the future

The organizing committee consisted of Palina Hedinsdóttir, Icelandic Institute of Natural History, who led the group, Eiríkur Thor Einarsson, Marine Research Institute, who was responsible for information on the Internet, Guðrun Pálsdóttir from the Agricultural Research Institute and Steinunn Ingólfssdóttir, Hvanneyri Agricultural College. Pauline Simpson from the National Oceanographic Library, Southampton was the program convenor for IAMSLIC and Martha Andrews was a general coordinator between PLC and IAMSLIC. Sigrún Magnúsdóttir, head librarian, and Astrid Magnúsdóttir, librarian, University of Akureyri, arranged the pre-conference study tour to Akureyri.

This conference could not have been held without combined effort of many people. The Iceland Tourist Bureau took care of hotel bookings, registrations, bookkeeping and transportation. The steering committee members of both organizations were very helpful during the planning and contributed to the conference in many ways. The many Icelandic and foreign companies which supported the conference are listed below. We want to thank them all for their generous support.

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