

Report of the International Hand Therapy Congress in Edinburgh June 27.- 30. 2004

Nicole Grünert-Plüss, Switzerland, Delegate IFSHT

Approximately 350 people from 32 different countries attended the 6th IFSHT Congress. The Congress was held at the Heriott-Watt University just outside the city of Edinburgh. The university facilities were ideal for the conference. The EFSHT council meeting was held on Saturday. The IFSHT council meeting on Sunday was followed by a buffet reception for all participants in the vendor exhibit hall. It was a great opportunity to get re-acquainted with familiar faces.

Annette Leveridge, President of the IFSHT, opened the Congress officially on Monday. Her opening speech emphasized that effective communication was the key to success for the International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy. Effective communication is crucial for the relationship between the National Societies as well as within Societies. Her motto during her term as president as well as during the Congress was "Keep in touch". The Internet facilitates communication these days, but it does not guarantee a considerate and constructive dialog. Communication is influenced by the participants abilities to "work as a team". This teamwork ability is a decisive factor towards reaching a goal. Her speech was followed by the opening remarks of Roma Bhopal, who as the Congress president, welcomed everyone to Scotland.

The first lecture of the Congress was given by Professor Nichola Rumsey on the aesthetic implications of a hand injury with regards to body (schema) perception (alt.?). This lecture was quite interesting and enlightening. Thereafter there were many presentations that covered a broad spectrum of topics such as pain, the stiff hand, the rheumatic hand, extensor tendons and electrotherapy, Dupuytren's disease and athletic injuries to name a few. Often three forums were convened simultaneously, this presented participants with a real dilemma, especially when all three topics were of interest.

The IFSHT is planning to post the abstracts on their website at www.ifsht.org. The richly informative program was enhanced by the many vendors that were present with their newest products. It is always a pleasure to exchange ideas and expand one's horizons through the many conversations that take place with fellow Hand Therapists at such a Congress. A highlight of the Congress was a traditional Scottish dinner in Edinburgh with Ceilidh dancing. It was obvious there, that not only Hand Therapy but also friendship was a unifying factor among the participants.

As a reminder for those that have not yet planned their future vacations:

2005 EFSHT/FESSH meeting in Göteborg www.congrex.com/handcongress2005

2007 IFSHT/IFSSH meeting in Sydney www.hands2007.com

2010 IFSHT/IFSSH meeting in Korea