

# Inside Inlogov

**inlogov**  
INSTITUTE OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT STUDIES

News from the Institute of Local Government Studies March 2007

## Meetings

### Departmental Meetings

30 April and 18 July 2007

### Postgraduate teaching committee

2 pm on 27 March 2007

### Undergraduate teaching committee

16 May 2 pm

### Undergraduate Staff/Student Liaison Meeting

1 May at noon

### School Futures and School Committee

20 March 1 pm and 3 pm

### School Summer Celebration

6 July starting approx 5 pm

### Provisional date for Degree ceremony

13 July

## New Kid on the Block

Liberal Democrat MP Lorely Burt visited INLOGOV on 16<sup>th</sup> February and delighted staff and students with an informative talk about her experiences as a new Member of Parliament.



## Unitary Status

As the debate accelerates on councils bidding for unitary status, the Audit Commission recently commissioned Philip Whiteman to undertake a review of guidance produced during the Banham reforms of the 90s. The purpose of the commission was to establish whether the old guidance could be revised for the contemporary context. Philip recommended that this was not advisable due to significant shifts within central and local government policies since that time.

## European Public Sector Award

**(EPSA)** Tony Bovaird has been invited to address the Kick-Off event for this competition to benchmark the performance of European administrative bodies. Dr Wolfgang Schauble, Federal Minister of the Interior has agreed to give the main speech at the reception.

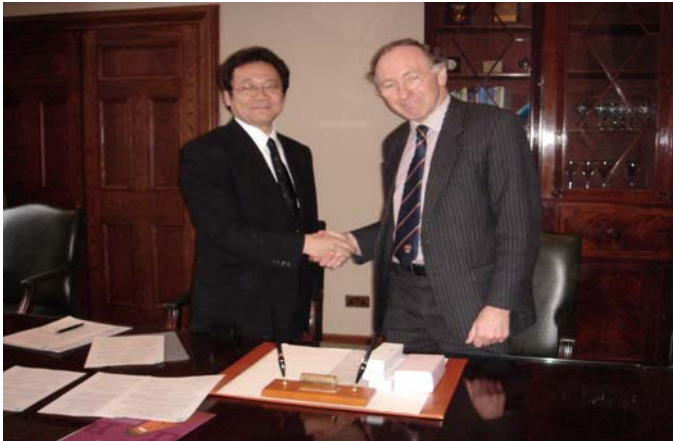


Dr Wolfgang Schauble

## Channel 4 - Dispatches

Peter Watt was interviewed for the 19 March programme about government spending and government budgets given to local authorities for schemes relating to domestic violence and support for victims.

## Japanese Links



Seen above is Professor Toshihiko Ishihara with Professor Michael Clarke (Vice Principal of University of Birmingham) who have just signed a collaborative agreement between INLOGOV and the Institute for Business Accounting at Kwansai Gakuin University in Japan. The University has also conferred the title 'Visiting Professor' on Toshihiko Ishihara and the title of Honorary Senior Research Fellow' on Associate Professor Akinari Takehisa, also of Kwansai Gakuin University. It is hoped that the partnership will lead to more staff and student exchanges, research, publication and teaching collaborations to build on the synergies between the respective institutes.

Professor Yoshitaka Ichikawa is to be a study visitor at INLOGOV for 12 months from the beginning of April. He is a Professor of Political Science from Doshisha University studying local government, particularly central-local relations. Mike Smith will act as his academic link.

Visitors from Meiji University in January thanked INLOGOV for hosting their visit and sent this picture as a memory of the occasion.



Professor Mariko Mishimura and colleagues dining with Martin Willis and Ken Spencer

## Chinese developments

During the visit by John Raine and Annie Rubienska (IDD) to Guangzhou in South China (see last month) discussions were held about a possible four week management training programme to be provided in Birmingham this summer, in conjunction with Birmingham City Council (which is now a 'Sister City' to Guangzhou). Discussions continue.



Pearl River, Gaungzhou

## Globe Trotting

The beginning of February saw Alan Lawton suffering temperatures of minus 30 degrees in Ottawa. The local population did not appear affected as they skated merrily about their business along the canal. Alan was invited to speak at the International Congress on Ethics, an international gathering of some 150 practitioners and scholars from around the world, all engaged in questions of organisational ethics in both public and private sector organisations. The Canadians have their own scandals to report but their government departments and large corporations take ethics seriously and there is much that we could learn from them.





Ottawa coat of arms

Alan was also invited to speak at the World Cities Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity Conference in Amsterdam at the end of February, hosted by the city of Amsterdam and the free University of Amsterdam. A select group of 30 practitioners and scholars representing Amsterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, Hong Kong, London, New York and Sydney had two days intensive debate on local integrity systems. Alan spoke on the UK system and how it applies to London. The event was deemed a great success and a follow up edited book is planned, along with future meetings.

Later this month Chris Game will present a paper on partnerships in UK local government at the national conference of ASPA, the American Society for Public Administration in Washington DC. There is no direct UK equivalent of ASPA, a 9000 member association whose annual conference genuinely spans the worlds of practice and academia.



Berlin

Steven Van De Walle spoke about 'Procedures vs. outcomes in quality management' at the 2007 workshop of the German 'Gesellschaft

fur Programmeforschung' on 'Better quality through result-orientation - change of paradigm in the evaluation of policies?' in Berlin on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

Chris Game has also had a paper accepted for presentation later in the year at the Chicago conference on 'Britain after Blair', organised by the British Politics Group of the American Political Science Association.

## Out and about in the UK

Every month INLOGOV staff visit many authorities delivering courses and offering advice on topical issues but Alan Lawton has delivered a programme on a topic not previously offered on an in-agency basis.

**Oswestry Borough Council takes Ethics Seriously.** Alan Lawton has just completed three days training with the members, senior officers and the Standards Committee of the Council. Both the Leader and the Chief Executive attended and even reference to Kant, Aristotle and Thucydides was not enough to put them off. We questioned what makes an issue an ethical issue, how can conduct be regulated, what is the role of ethical leadership and how does ethics feed into performance. Big questions and all leading to lively discussion.



Oswestry Coat of Arms

Andrew Coulson and Simon Baddeley have just completed a scrutiny training programme for Norfolk CC that involved a session with the whole Executive, and one with scrutiny chairs and vice chairs, as well as three sessions for officers and two for members.

## New Research

Jon Bloomfield along with Carolyn Moore from the European Research Institute is preparing an extensive report for the Committee of the Regions on Information and Communication within the EU: the role of local and regional authorities. The report will analyse responses to a questionnaire - responses already received from 23 member states - with a sample of phone interviews and seek to assess the contribution which the local and regional sphere can make to a more interactive governance process within the EU.

INLOGOV is engaged in a collaborative research initiative with APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) and CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies). This broad initiative covers three areas of research: governance, neighbourhoods and service delivery; the economic footprint of local government and; the value of public employment. INLOGOV is contributing currently to discuss of the value of public employment and will lead on the area of governance, neighbourhoods and service delivery. Steven Griggs, Mike Smith, Sophia Bokhari and Lynne Wilson will lead the research.

## Goodbye

INLOGOV is sorry to say goodbye to Navdeep Mathur who returned to India to recover from illness and whose slow recovery has prevented him from returning to the UK. Navdeep promises to visit once he is recovered and would welcome emails on [navdeepem@gmail.com](mailto:navdeepem@gmail.com).



Navdeep Mathur

## An Elected Mayor for Birmingham?

If Birmingham does ever get an elected executive mayor some of our Kazakhstan students can say they were there at the very start of the campaign - and prove it. On Valentine's evening, forsaking the kinds of activities most of their fellow students were probably up to, several of them attended the Birmingham Mail's Big Debate in the City Council Chamber (see the row next to the back, left of centre). Intended to test out the possible backing for a mayoral referendum, the debate was opened by Middlesbrough Mayor, Ray Mallon, with Chris Game as one of the other platform speakers. In the electronic vote closing the debate 70% of the audience, including possibly some overseas non-registered electors, supported the idea of a referendum.



The Big Debate

## International Research Prize

Dr Alistair Clark, former Research Fellow at INLOGOV, will have the quality of his research recognised internationally at the forthcoming Political Studies Association Conference. Alistair will be awarded the PSA's 2006 Arthur McDougall Fund Prize for Elections, Electoral Systems and Representation for his PhD thesis 'Local Parties, Participation and Campaigning in Post-Devolution Scotland'. The finishing touches to the thesis were completed while Alistair was at INLOGOV and he is grateful to colleagues there for discussions around the themes in his thesis.

## A Grand Day Out

Eileen Dunstan accompanied a group of MSc students to the House of Commons earlier this month. The purpose of their visit was to observe a sitting of the Public Accounts

Committee which was considering central government's use of Consultants. Before the committee meeting they met up with Lorely Burt in Portcullis House for a brief Q and A session.



Lorely Burt with Napoleon Esemudje, Kris Njoku and Amir Hussain

## External Roles

John Raine will be chairing an Accreditation Panel for the Association of MBAs (AMBA) at Sheffield University Business School on 8-9 March.

Sir Michael Lyons has become a non executive director of the SQW group.

Andrew Coulson has been attending a series of working lunches at the House of Commons arranged by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on Health Scrutiny.