

The 2001 International Meteor Conference

Cerkno, Slovenia, September 20–23, 2001

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This year's *International Meteor Conference (IMC)* took place in the town of Cerkno in Slovenia and was the meeting place of international meteor observers from all over the world. The term "international" is well-chosen, because observers from many different nationalities attended the *IMC*. There were meteor workers from Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the Ukraine, Yugoslavia, and, of course, Slovenia. In this respect, the *IMC* 2001 was a complete success.

The first evening was used for arrival and for check-in. The ensuing dinner was a welcome opportunity to talk to one another about various matters. During some time, about 25 participants were missing, because the shuttle bus to take them from the airport to the *IMC* did not show up. The mistake was corrected, luckily, and, later in the evening, they reached the meeting place.

On the next day, the *IMC* was officially opened by Mihaela Triglav, by Bojan Jenko and Domink S. Černjak from the Ministry of Education of Slovenia, and by *IMO* Council Member Marc Gyssens, who acted on behalf of *IMO* President Jürgen Rendtel who could not make it to the *IMC*. The program was filled to full capacity, and the coffee breaks and lunch were a period of welcome rest for the participants, as well as an opportunity to exchange ideas. A lecture well-worth to highlight was given by Jérémie Vaubaillon, who presented his first results of his program for "Leonid Observations and Dust Cloud Simulation." Furthermore, David Asher gave a short summary about this year's Leonids and what we can expect. He said, *You can sleep if you like, because you won't wake up with "Nothing will happen" because there will happen something* at the beginning of his lecture. The Polish observers presented their results of different September streams, including some which do not appear in the *IMO Working List*. First results were presented by Nikola Biliškov, who investigated the impact structure on Krk Island, Croatia. This investigation triggered off a discussion among our meteorite crater experts. One of the last lectures that day was given by Cathy Hall. She gave a slide presentation of the meteor roots of Canadian observers, and showed in particular how she got into meteors. Dinner was again used for discussion.

During dinner, two people were missed that were supposed to come—Daniel Fischer and *IMO* Council Member and Video Commission Director Sirko Molau. Sirko had a good reason for not being there: he was simply not allowed into the country by the Slovenian authorities. Why? Because both his identity card and his passport had expired! Surely, Sirko will double-check his documents the next time he travels! After dinner, Rainer Arlt's workshop "VMDB and analysis" took place. The main topic was that the *VMDB* desperately needs more hands to deal with the large amount of data. Rainer is searching for help to feed the computer with the data and to develop a new form for the *VMDB*. After 12 hours of lectures, all participants relaxed with beer or wine, although some of them preferred their bed.

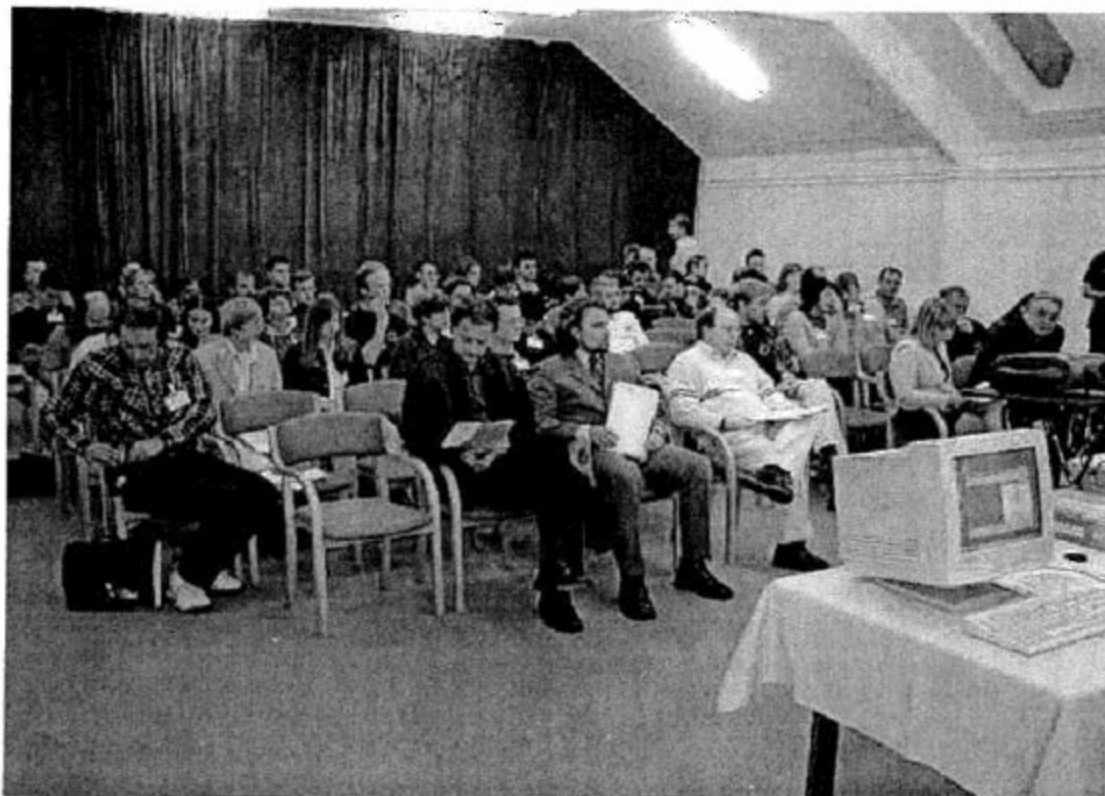


Figure 1 – The lecture room during the official opening. In the middle of the picture, the representatives of the Slovenian authorities can be seen.



Figure 2 – The Triglav sisters: Gabrijele to the left; Mihaela to the right.

The next day started with breakfast at 8 a.m. After that, there were again a lot of lectures. Juan Martín Semegone from Argentina held an interesting lecture on his group's devoted radio set-up. Having already built a receiver specifically optimized for radio meteor observations, they are now in the process of building an equally devoted receiver to perform high quality radio observations. Peter Zimmikoval from Slovakia presented a "TV spectrum of a meteor" and Felix Bettonvil from the Netherlands thought about some possibilities a meteor observer can consider when he or she is tormented by city lights. These possibilities included going into local politics, giving up your hobby altogether, or becoming a video meteor observer. Felix decided to become a video meteor observer, and showed his first results.

Next point on the program was the *IMO* General Assembly. During this meeting, acting President Marc Gyssens emphasized again the need for more people to take part in *WGN* by writing articles or participating in the editing process, and also for more people to help with the *VMDB*. Furthermore, Marc recalled last year's efforts with regard to the Leonids.

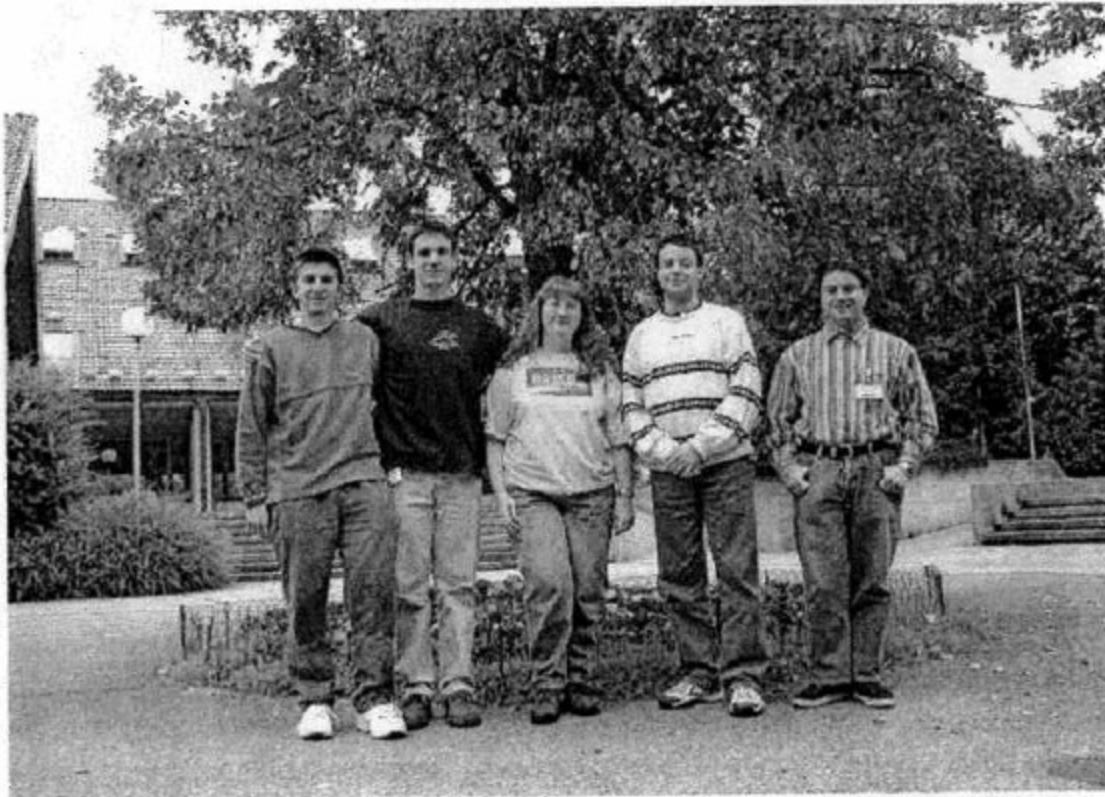


Figure 3 – Jure Zakrajšek, Jure Atanačkov, Javor Kac, and Mirko Kokole, all from Slovenia, surrounding Cathy Hall, from Canada.

The *Fireball Data Center (FIDAC)* needs help as well, because there is a lot of data, and it is just too much for one person to deal with. André Knöfel considers lowering the cut-off magnitude for a fireball from -3 to, e.g., -5 . This is definitely worth considering.

The next topic at the General Assembly were the finances, which are healthy. The membership fee for 2002 will be 20 EUR, but people paying before January 1, 2002, can still take advantage of the old rates!

This issue of *WGN* will contain a ballot form for the next *IMO* Council elections. Except for André Knöfel, all present Council members are re-eligible. Particularly well-received were the first-term candidacies of Mihaela Triglav and David Asher.

At the end of the meeting, the location of the 2002 *IMC* was discussed. There is a choice between Poland and Jordan. More details of the proposals are awaited by the end of October, after which the Council will make a decision.

After lunch, the traditional excursion led all participants to the famous Postojna Caves, which are not that far from Cerklje. This cave system consists of 7 caves and is 21 kilometers long. We visited the Postojna Caves and went 4 kilometers into them, the first 2 kilometers with a special train and the rest on foot. All participants were impressed by such beauty. It was one of the best excursions since years. After one and a half hour in the caves with faint light and 10°C , we drove back to Cerklje.

The breathtaking excursion was followed by a breathtaking dinner. Then the Romanian observers gave their traditional astropoetry performance, directed by Andrei Dorian Gheorghe. As always, the show was well-liked among the participants. Afterwards, Mihaela treated us to wine, and, realizing that this was our last evening together, there were a lot of discussions and laughter and picture-taking.

In the morning of the following day, the Romanian observers presented their "Meteor Art at *IMC*'s before the third Millennium." After some microphone breakdowns, the *IMC* was successfully closed by Marc Gyssens with the words *see you next year*.

Altogether, the *IMC* was a great success this year with around 70 participants from all over the world. I want to emphasize that the organizing committee consisting of Mihaela and Gabrijela Triglav, Jure Zakrajšek, Jure Atanačkov, Javor Kac, Nico Štritof, Urška Pajer, and Stane Slavec did a great job, and they tried to make everything as comfortable as possible for the participants. Thank you very much. See you next year at the *IMC* 2002.

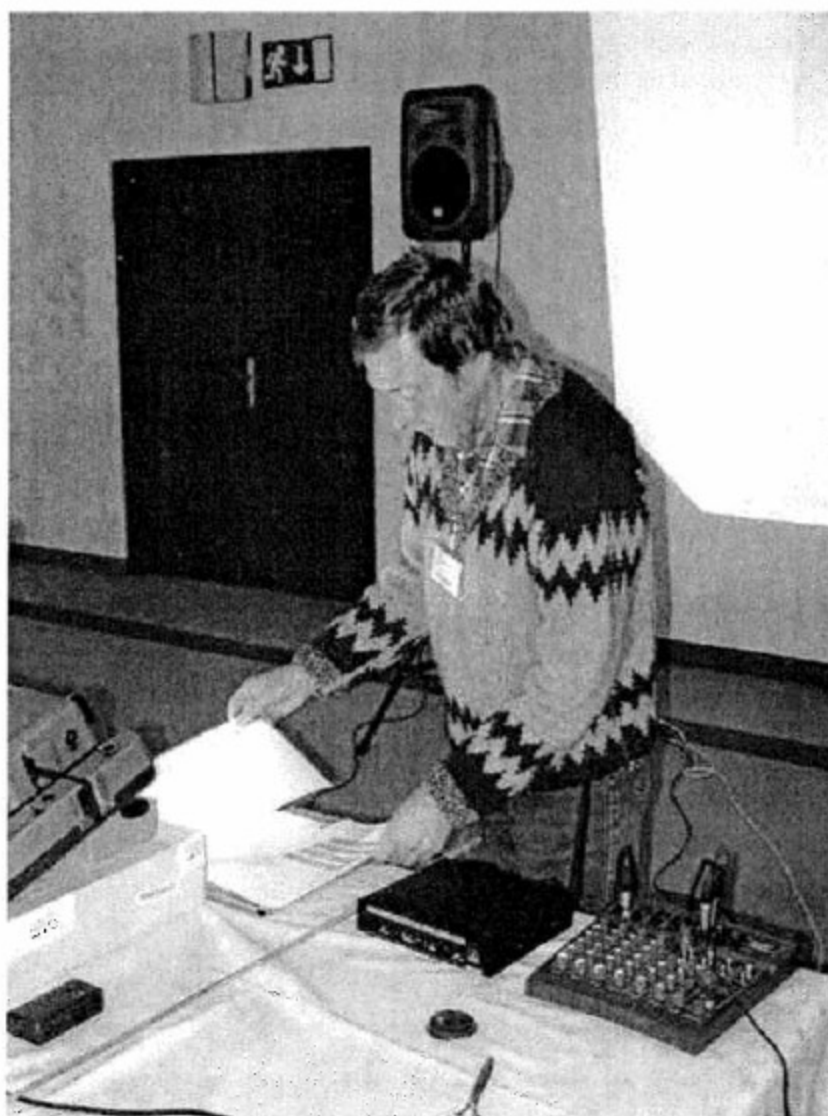


Figure 4 – Peter Zimnikoval (Slovakia) during a lecture.



Figure 5 – Vladimir Smirnov (the Ukraine) during his talk.



Figure 6 – Close-up of Juan Martín Semegone (Argentina) during a coffee break.

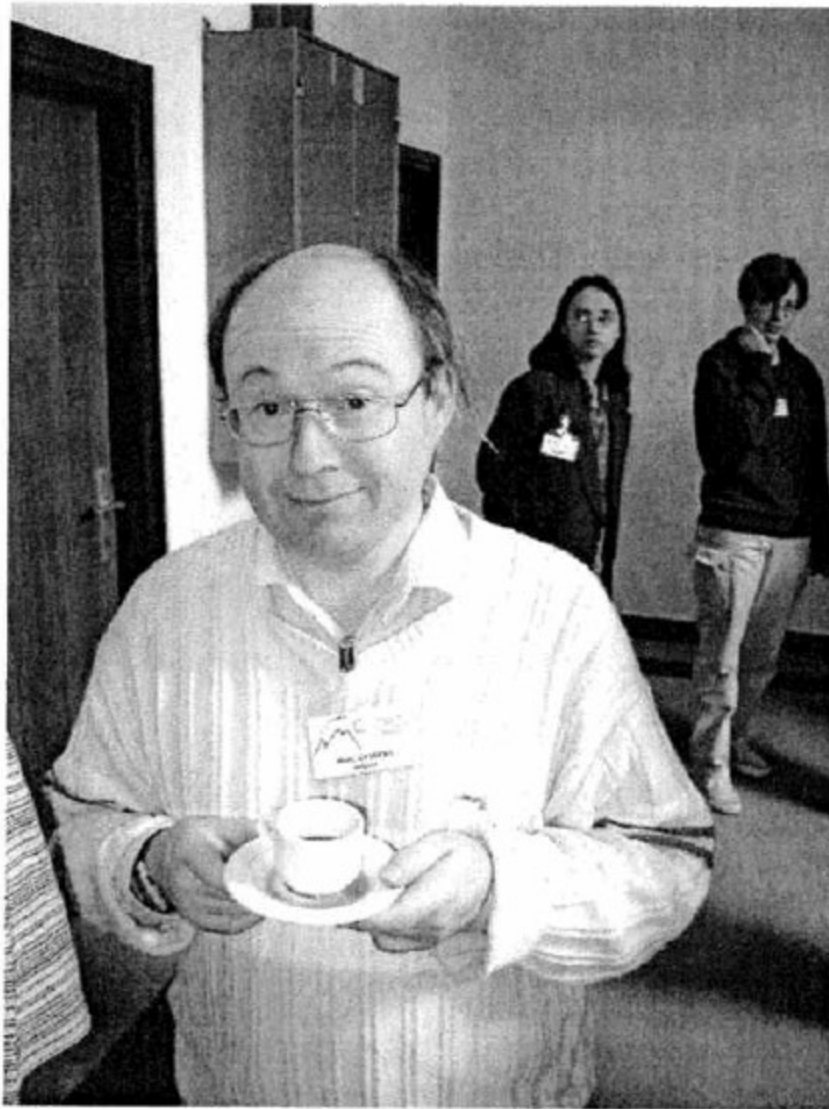


Figure 7 – WGN Editor-in-Chief Marc Gyssens (Belgium) desperately tries to keep the coffee in his cup!

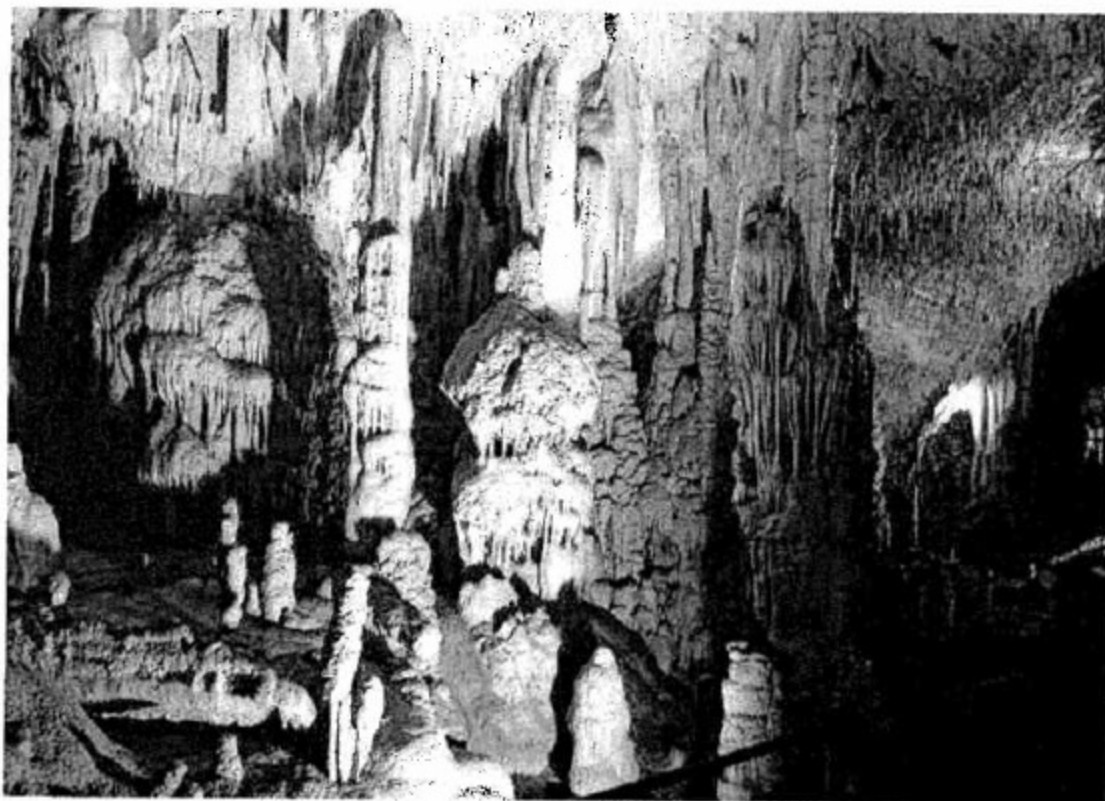


Figure 8 – The amazing Postojna Caves.



Figure 9 – David Asher (Armagh Observatory, Northern Ireland), Dragana Okolić (Yugoslavia), Felix Bettonvil (the Netherlands), and Irena Živković (Yugoslavia), at the entrance of the Postojna Caves.



Figure 10 –The blissful smile of Cis Verbeek (Belgium) at the get-together in the bar during the last evening says it all!



Figure 11 -Tired, but satisfied: Javor Kac (Slovenia).

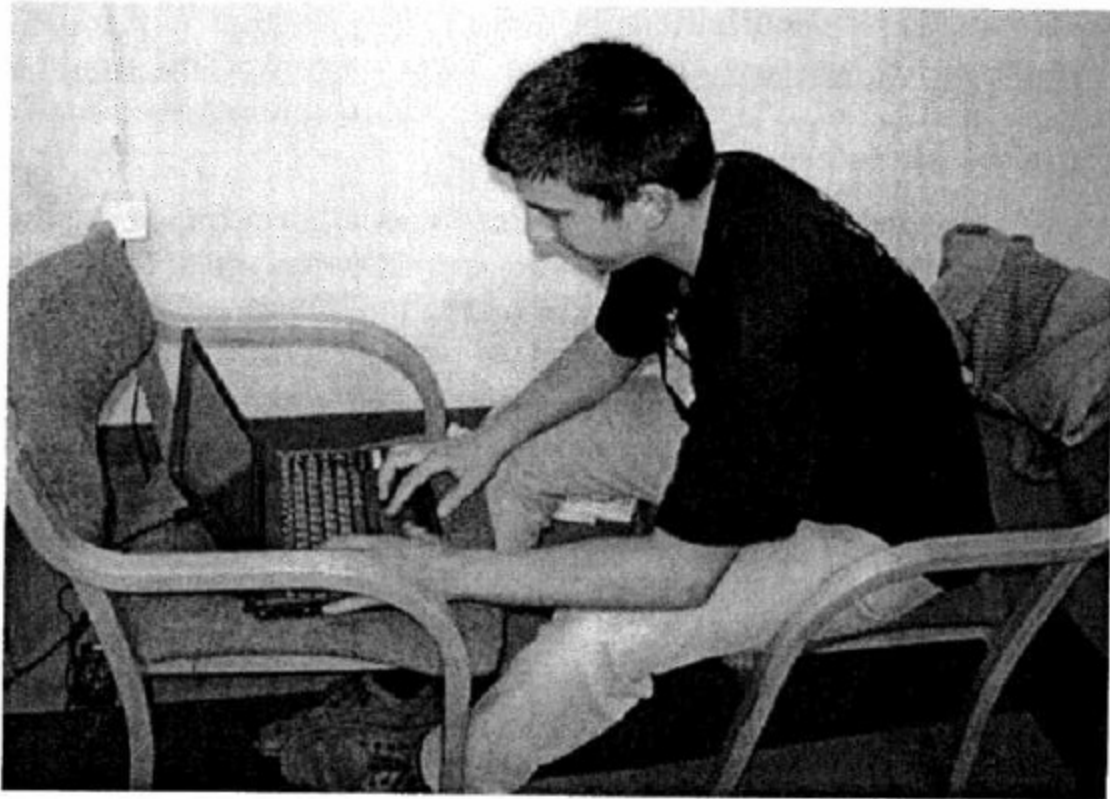


Figure 12 -No rest for the wicked: Jure Zakrajšek is working around the clock on his laptop to get the pictures processed and the web page updated!