Opening words

These proceedings will surprise you. They're not done in Computer Modern! Go look! We don't often have the opportunity to see so much "sample" material done in Lucida! Anyone who's done this sort of work on a large collection of papers can appreciate the difficulties this can mean. Sebastian Rahtz and Mimi Burbank, the co-editors, deserve a solid round of applause for their work.

The conference where it all took place? Very interesting, very nice, very surprising (aren't they all, each in their own way?). For me, this was the first time since Cork (1990) that I'd attended a meeting in Europe. Past European meetings (Prague being the latest one) have clearly created a large group of colleagues and friends over the years. And it was evident at Aston.

It was a great pleasure to meet so many people who had been only names and e-mail addresses. And the pleasure was not just mine — it seemed that once again, the meeting was mainly about people meeting people: seeing people from past meetings, renewing friendships, making new ones, exchanging information and macros and ideas. It was a dynamic meeting and the participants were the highlight.

But of course there were the presentations too! Papers and panels and workshops, then the coffee chats and lunch discussions and dinner meetings — and then there were those late hours spent over at that pub on campus, the Sacks of Potatoes. I always leave a TUG meeting with a sore throat!

The papers here are all well worth your time to sit down and read, a bit at a time. For a view of paragraphs that you'll never forget, may I suggest you turn to the paper by Bogusław Jackowski and Marek Ryćko, "TEX from \indent to \par."

Of particular interest to those concerned about the future of TEX (and we all are, to varying degrees) are two papers, one by Joachim Lammarsch, one from Phil Taylor, which provide some background on NTS (New Typesetting System), seen by many as the next evolution or generation of typesetting for us as TEX users. It's not a question of agreeing with these positions, or that these are the only positions. It *is* a question of having some information which can be discussed and considered by the wider TEX-using community.

And there were special moments as well: the trip to Stratford, to attend a performance of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, was preceded by a special visit to the Royal Shakespeare Library. The curator was rather bemused by this group of some 30 people who were ooh-ing and aah-ing over the characters and design and colour rather than the content. The play itself was simply staggering in its length (3 3/4 hours) and its impact, especially as I was sitting only seven rows from the stage.

I met many of the editors of other newsletters and publications (Karel Horák, Włodek Bzyl, Tomasz Plata-Przechlewski). I met a fellow from Slovenia (Borut Žnidar); in my ignorance, I asked how he could do any computer work with the war around. His reply: "We haven't had war for two years now." Reality is a very hard wall indeed sometimes. Attendees were from everywhere: from Norway to Israel, from Japan to Ukraine.

And I met Yuri Melnichuk, from Lviv, Ukraine. Malcolm Clark has written about his visit to that city in TTN 2,3. At Aston, I encountered a man who was dynamic and almost bursting with enthusiasm not just for TEX, but for the people he'd met at the meeting, the TEX community at large, and the developing group of TEX users back in Ukraine. He was extremely keen on talking about how this potential user group (a meeting at the end of September of their computer society was to see the formal establishment of a Ukrainian user group) could interact and connect with TUG; he had spent a great deal of time thinking of the issue, and had written his ideas down. We were even corresponding via e-mail on the 12th of August. And so it was a total shock to read in my mail on the 15th of August: Yuri had died of a heart attack on the 13th. Malcolm has written a notice, which you will find elsewhere in these proceedings.

What will come of the efforts he had made to start a user group? We don't know. Yannis Haralambous was going to visit Lviv (originally at Yuri's request) to help set up TEX for Ukrainian users, but this has now fallen through. I hope very much that Yuri's enthusiasm will continue, and maybe we'll be able to report good news on this front in TTN or *TUGboat*.

I hope that you enjoy these proceedings, that you will find some new ideas, new macros, new approaches which will intrigue you, and perhaps become part of your own TEX practices. And who knows: *you* may come to next year's meeting in Santa Barbara with some ideas of your own! Enjoy the papers. And think about putting a circle on your calendars for TUG'94! It'll be our 15th anniversary meeting — a significant milestone.

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