

THE ACTUARIAL MEETINGS IN CANCUN

March 2002 saw over 1000 actuaries meeting in Cancun, Mexico. Together with accompanying persons, there were well over 1500 visitors. They were there for the 27th International Congress of Actuaries. The meetings, including the social events, were spread over a week. In conjunction with the ICA meeting, the 33rd Astin Colloquium was held and was the only Astin meeting in 2002. In addition the 12th Afir Colloquium and the first Health Symposium were also held in Cancun that week. The Afir meeting covered the first 2 days and Astin the last 2 days. Most actuaries stayed for all the sections. On the Wednesday, there was a joint social event to see the equinox at Chichen Itza. The sun stubbornly stayed behind the clouds until just before we had to leave when the sun emerged and “the serpent descended”. All very spectacular and a clear demonstration on the mathematical and astronomical skills developed many years ago without the aids available to us today.

In turn, there were many papers that advanced present day actuarial thought with some interesting individual Astin papers including Speakers Corner and the inevitable session on DFA though this was more of an introduction to existing practice rather than breaking new ground. The keynote address was given by Nikolaus von Bomhard from Germany. This was a thought provoking view of Property Casualty Insurance in the 21st century. It emphasised the changes that were coming, the need for new approaches and the emphasis on relevant expertise including financial and actuarial. The Astin formal meeting included the agm & committee meeting.

Much of the attraction of the programme was the ability to pick up themes that were being developed in other area and see their relevance to the non-life field. A good example of this was the session on Genetics which was a joint Astin ICA session. This covered some interesting work covered by the Australians. Another example was some of the work in credit risk which has interest to non-life actuaries not only as an illustration of some of the techniques involved but also shows how credit risk impinges on insurance e.g. the reinsurance recoverable issue. This was an interesting feature not normally present in an Astin meeting.

The scientific programme was overseen by Oliva Sanchez who deserves much praise for the way she organised the wide mix of interesting papers to stimulate a wide variety of actuarial interests. The Congress President Luis Herta should also be congratulated for supervising a very successful event that does credit to the Mexican actuarial profession and provided a stimulating experience for those that attended it.

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