

PREFACE

The XXIVth General Assembly of the IAU was held at the University of Manchester in Manchester, United Kingdom, from August 7 to 18, 2000, at the invitation of the Royal Society and the British astronomical community. Nearly 1,800 participants from 75 countries took part in the scientific programme as well as excursions to Jodrell Bank Observatory and various tourist attractions. The Local Organising Committee, led by Rodney Davies and Dennis Walsh, was much smaller than the one three years earlier in Kyoto but managed beautifully to have the event run smoothly and pleasantly. Substantial financial support for the participants was received from AAS, ESA, ESO, and the RAS, and is gratefully acknowledged here.

A rich scientific programme, organised by Dr. Johannes Andersen, IAU General Secretary 1997-2000, was offered during the two weeks. This included five Symposia, 14 Joint Discussions and one Special Session (Astronomy for Developing Countries), in addition to a great number of Division, Commission, and Working Group meetings that often included some science presentations beside the necessary business. There were three Invited Discourses and four well-attended lectures on various astronomical topics under the Public Understanding of Science programme, a public outreach activity organised for the LOC by Dr. Patrick Moore. Proceedings of Symposia will appear in the regular *IAU Symposium Series* as IAU Symposia Nos. 201-205, and condensed proceedings or summaries of the other scientific events of the General Assembly are in press as *Highlights of Astronomy*, Vol. 12.

The present Volume XXIVB of the *Transactions of the International Astronomical Union* contains the records of the organisational and administrative business carried out at the XXIVth General Assembly. Chapter I contains the addresses given at the Inaugural Ceremony on August 9, Chapter II records the results and decisions of the two Working Sessions of the General Assembly on August 9 and 16, and Chapter III contains the addresses given at the Closing Ceremony on August 16.

The Report of the Resolutions Committee and the Resolutions approved by the General Assembly are presented in Chapter IV. Chapters V and VI feature the Reports of the Executive Committee and of the Divisions, Commissions and Working Groups, respectively. Chapter VII contains the Statutes, Bye-Laws and Working Rules as modified and approved by the General Assembly and the Executive Committee, while Chapter VIII provides a revised edition of the *Rules for Scientific Meetings* as a guide to potential organisers of meetings sponsored or co-sponsored by the IAU. Finally, Chapter IX provides details on the Membership: The Adhering Bodies representing our Full and Associate Member Countries, and the names of the Individual Members listed by Commission membership and member country as well as in alphabetical order. The list of addresses of Individual Members is also printed in a separate volume, and it is accessible on-line from the IAU WWW page (<http://www.iau.org>).

All contributions to this volume are gratefully acknowledged. I want to thank in particular the Division and Commission Presidents for having provided their contributions in the required Latex format in a timely fashion, and the Resolutions Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Jean Kovalevsky, for preparing the Resolutions of the General Assembly. My very warmest thanks go to our Secretariat staff, Monique Léger-Orine and Jodi Greenberg, who struggled devotedly and impeccably with the editing and indeed carried the major share of the burden.

Paris, March 2001, Hans Rickman, General Secretary