In this issue you will find Mike McCabe’s report of the third International Conference on the Teaching of Mathematics (ICTM3) which was held recently in Istanbul. Well, this is another one - but much shorter! Mike - a typical, reasonably diligent(!), delegate - has given a very good overall impression of the conference and his thumbnail sketches of various sessions give an excellent flavour of the meeting. I have my own, similar, recollections of innovative approaches presented with keen enthusiasm that led to real debate. Only in a few sessions did I find myself succumbing to that peculiarly odd conference anxiety - should I have chosen more wisely among the “parallels”?

As a general comment I would like to record the relatively high profile of our Network at ICTM3. Of course such comments must come with a caveat: I am an agent of the Network and am therefore far from being a disinterested, unbiased observer. Nonetheless, I still think it is worth noting how frequently the work of the Network was represented at this major international meeting. The discussion that was part of the opening plenary included a major reference to the work of the Network (not from me!); discounting my own session, I am aware of some seven or eight other presentations that contained similar references; and a major plenary workshop on professional development highlighted Network activity in this area, notably the event for new lecturers.

One feature of Turkish is that the eight vowels can be divided into two groups, the un-dotted and the dotted vowels. As one well-known for pushing the “just-in-time” philosophy to extreme limits, I found myself developing a keen eye for the un-dotted Turkish “i”. Presentations that had been hastily assembled with minutes to go on the local machines were easy to spot – the un-dotted “i” was a dead give-away! Moreover, as the Turkish keyboard locates the un-dotted “i” exactly where our dotted version occurs, much innocent amusement was possible observing novice emailers struggle to connect with the ether. Problem-solving skills were sorely tested!

No report on ICTM3 would be complete without remarking on the marvellous work done by the organisers. There are always minor niggles – the decisions on parallel sessions will never please everyone and it is never easy to fly the flag of scholarship at a large intercontinental hotel. That said, the abiding impression is of a very successful, inclusive, international gathering that fostered genuine interaction among a great diversity of workers in a stunning setting. This rarely happens by accident and in this case it stands as testimony to the efforts of Deborah Hughes Hallett and her colleagues, especially the local organisers. Everyone presenting a session enjoyed the support of an excellent technical team; I personally have never experienced better. Doug Quinney from Keele managed the electronic submission of papers with a smooth and unflappable efficiency and the resulting CD, available at registration, was invaluable in planning a route through the parallel sessions.

Overall – an excellent, thought-provoking conference.