

ITRA Congress Progress Report – May 2014

The Faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic University of Portugal, Braga, looks forward to warmly welcoming toy researchers from around the world to *The 7th World Congress of the International Toy Research Association*, to be held 23rd – 25th July 2014. The theme of the conference is “*Toys as Language and Communication*.” The Faculty are honoured to host the congress and to contribute to both the development of toy research and the role of toys in developing human language and communication systems. The congress will stand as a milestone in the history of the Faculty of Philosophy, here in Braga.



The three day event offers informative lectures, workshops and poster presentations, cultural visits to Braga and the surrounding area and other social events. The congress will serve as an opportunity to hear about the latest toy research, exchange ideas and meet interesting fellow researchers from around the world. Tasty buffet lunches and relaxing coffee breaks will be served outside in the faculty’s tree-lined yard and the Braga weather promises to be warm and sunny. Catering will be provided by a famous Ponte de Lima guesthouse.

The first day of the congress will include a small welcome cocktail, hosted by the municipality at the picturesque city hall (this is yet to be confirmed). On day two, the highlight of the social program, will include a trip to the charming Ponte de Lima, visit their toy museum, enjoy a pleasant dinner at a traditional Portuguese restaurant, entertained by a local folklore music group – and for the brave, the opportunity to dance to a number of time-honoured Portuguese songs, and much more!

Regarding accommodation, there are still a wide variety of hotel rooms available. Delegates, on a tight budget, are able to make use of a special arrangement with the university to use student’s college rooms at minimal cost. The student halls are located about a ten minute walk from the congress facilities.

The Braga municipality has graciously agreed to sponsor the congress by granting delegates a free pass on the local buses – which includes routes up into the surrounding hills, the Bom Jesus do Monte sanctuary, the Monastery of São Martinho de Tibães (an interesting Benedictine monastery) and around Braga - just for the pleasure of sightseeing.

Back at the congress, the reception desk will be staffed by a group of enthusiastic student volunteers who have secured sponsorship for cute t-shirts (so that delegates can be identified in and around Braga – if they so wish). At the end of the congress, any remaining t-shirts will be sold as souvenirs (the proceeds shared amongst the volunteer staff as a means of thanks for their efforts). Other small surprises are in the pipeline, however these will only be revealed to those who attend the congress.

A number of delegates will be invited to attend the Braga FNAC bookshop forum, to assist in presenting the photo essay “*Braga a brincar / Braga at play*”, a bilingual publication which is sponsored by the Fundação Bracara Augusta. Author of the book?.. to be revealed (sorry!).

So, everyone welcome!

Luisa Magalhães

