

Division VII: Galactic System

PRESIDENT: Patricia Whitelock

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ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: Ortwin Gerhard, Mirek Giersz,
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1. Activities of the Division

The interests of Division VII encompass the Milky Way Galaxy and it comprises two commissions: 33–Structure and Dynamics of the Galactic System and 37–Star Clusters and Association.

During the period under review the Division was approached about the possibility of starting a Working Group on the Galactic Centre, which is already the subject of a newsletter and discussion groups operating outside the IAU. This created a lively debate within the organizing committee, but resulted in an even division between those for and those against. The objectors position could be summarized as first, “*if the Galactic Centre, why not the halo? Are we going to have a working group on every part of the Galaxy?*” Secondly, there were some doubts about the viability of getting all the major players involved. Eventually the discussion was taken to other Divisions with the alternative suggestion of a Working Group on Galactic Centres. While that extra ‘s’ made a big difference, there was no consensus about this option either.

There can be no doubt that the Galactic Centre is currently the subject of intense theoretical and observational interest. There are a variety of groups using very different observational techniques to study it and its environs; why not bring them together under the auspices of the IAU? The organizing committee eventually decided to dedicate their scientific session at the Prague IAU to recent results on the Galactic Centre and, if the level of interest were appropriate, to forward the recommendation for a Working Group on Galactic Centres to the IAU Executive at that time.