<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>IEEE POCO 2015 brings fun and education to Glasgow [Conference Reports]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Corcoran, Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Date</td>
<td>2015-12-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to publisher's version</td>
<td><a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.1109/MCE.2015.2484538">https://dx.doi.org/10.1109/MCE.2015.2484538</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item record</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10379/16691">http://hdl.handle.net/10379/16691</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOI</td>
<td><a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/MCE.2015.2484538">http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/MCE.2015.2484538</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IEEE POCO 2015 – Glasgow, Scotland

What is POCO?
In July 2015, IEEE Meetings, Conferences & Events (MCE) held the Panel of Conference Organizers (POCO), an annual event which convenes the conference community. Over 190 attendees from more than 31 countries had the opportunity to network, share ideas and collaborate.

Attendees included over 60 contacts from the local IEEE UK&I Section with more than 50 IEEE leaders representing Section/Council Presidents, VP Conferences, and Regional Directors. Attendees took part in thought-provoking and insightful sessions that provided a real value to conference leaders.

For 2015, MCE focused on elevating the discussions, providing real-time problem solving and demonstrating the importance of a “fun factor” at POCO while also creating a more systematic training and education program outside of POCO to meet the ongoing needs of our global organizer community.

Figure 1: What is POCO? (a) The POCO venue before getting started – an excellent atmospheric staging of a conference that engaged with and encouraged audience participation throughout; (b) A view on one of the conference panel sessions with delegates in the foreground.

Host City: Glasgow, Scotland
The city of Glasgow was an excellent host for IEEE POCO 2015. The Glasgow City Marketing Bureau partnered with IEEE for this event and they were actively involved in assisting with the planning and program development. In particular they helped add a uniquely Scottish flavor to the conference.

You may remember seeing them at 2014 POCO in Singapore. Not only were they attending as exhibitors, but they were gaining valuable insight into the conference, and planning new approaches to infuse the City of Glasgow into enhancing the program.

Glasgow was a great choice for IEEE POCO. Getting around the city was easy by foot and by public transport. There was a great choice of accommodation in the city center area to suit all budgets with more than 20 museums and art galleries, most offering free admission for those who stayed after the conference. Glasgow definitely offers the perfect base to explore Scotland and you can find out more from: http://conference.peoplemakeglasgow.com/
Off to a ‘Good Start’
POCO was held in Glasgow, Scotland and as they say in Gaelic “a good start is half the work”. So the first day at POCO 2015 was important. It began with a warm welcome from Fred Schindler, Chair of IEEE Conferences Committee who welcomed delegates and outlined the day’s program of events (Figure 4).

The focus of the day was organizer education, and the IEEE MCE team delivered a series of sessions on the current practices for managing an IEEE conference – from forming your executive committee, to submitting the application, to managing your finances and running the event. The agenda also included information on IEEE MCE’s new audience development program; and a special session from IEEE General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, Eileen Lach, discussing legal issues and topics organizers may face, such as governmental inquiries, risks, Intellectual Property, and emergency management. The day concluded with the Portland Pints and Pours happy hour, where attendees could network with delegates and share their personal experiences of volunteering on conferences.

Fig 4: Fred Schindler with a wee dram in his hand (well it is Glasgow!).
Summary of the Main Training Sessions - Day One

Audience Development
POCO 2015 introduced a new program to the IEEE MCE line of services. In a presentation by Lea Miller, Audience Development Specialist, attendees learned ways to reach new audiences by increasing overall registration and attendance. This creative approach incorporates new social media ideas, coordinating with local associations, and universities as well as local business to provide new avenues and connection points. Marketing, such as website development, and media relations coordination are all options available within this program to help develop a conference to reach the desired audiences.

Managing Your Conference Finances
The presentation is an introduction to the numerous aspects of financial management and compliance that an IEEE Conference Treasurer must be mindful of. Topics overviewed included budgeting, banking, insurance, contracts, transaction processing, financial reporting, tax collection/reporting, conference closings and audits.

How-To: Conference Application and MOU
This education session was intended to provide participants with a thorough understanding of the types of conference sponsorship available to an IEEE organization unit; the responsibilities associated with each; and useful information for use in creating new partnerships. It also summarized key points regarding the memorandum of understanding and recently introduced enhancements to this core document.

Best Practices in Strategic Event Management
There is a lot to do when it comes to planning your conference, but by collecting your event history and following a detailed timeline, you can keep organized and in control. This session walked through the steps of event planning, highlighting tips and tricks, as well as giving an overview of the resources available through IEEE to assist and support conference managers. For more information and assistance with these services please email ieee-mce@ieee.org with your query.

IEEE Conference Publications Practicum
This session covered the lifecycle of a conference publication. Participants were provided with instructions on submitting a collection of conference publication for possible submission into IEEE Xplore, as well as best practices to ensure quality of submissions to your conference and how to manage the publication output to help establish and build your conference and its reputation within your relevant technical or professional community.

POCO Day 2: Excellence in Scholarly Conferences
In true Scottish form, the day began with bagpipers and ended with a whisky tasting. The focus of the day was excellence in scholarly conference publishing and the conversation revolved around peer review, best practices for research, and cultural sensitivities in global conference publishing.
Highlights of the day included Dr. Donald Samulack, President of the U.S. Operations for Cactus Communications and Editage, giving an insider’s perspective on the Asian publishing environment and the dangers of predatory publishing (Figure 6); and a panel on “Technology as the Author” looking at the evolution of artificial intelligence and if this could lead to valid computer-authored papers.

Afternoon focus groups explored new formats, and various panel discussions contributed to the conversation of the day.
Main Training Sessions & Highlights of Day Two

Competing for Audience in Academic Publishing
IEEE is currently in a challenging space, with many different types of events competing for our audience. We know that face-to-face connection is highly valued and IEEE conferences provide opportunities to build communities around a topic area. We can match topics to cities and build up strong annual events in communities, and focus on underserved communities, and curate our content to create translational events for new audiences. Above all, we should be open to trying creative things to invigorate our events (Figure 7).

![Fig 7: There was certainly a lot going on at POCO, even the odd sword-fight!](image)

The Perfect Peer Review
This session examined the following questions and wrapped with examples of new types of conferences and events that are being trialed to provide a new voice for IEEE:

1) Do conferences matter? Are they still relevant?
2) Do they matter to IEEE and our attendees?
3) How is the conference footprint changing?
4) What is the role and value of curation in content and conferences as a vehicle for establishing a voice?

![Fig 8a & 8b: POCO featured a number of breakout sessions and roundtable discussions with active audience participation a highlight of the conference.](image)

Reproducible Research
Sometimes referred to as the "basis of science," reproducible research allows for verification, experimentation and collaboration in defining quality for scientific research. This thought process encompasses the idea that the quality goes
beyond the paper submission, but that all pieces of the scientific process should be examined. This talk explored the evolution of scholarly conference products and the implications for IEEE from practical, ethical and cultural viewpoints.

**Industry Standards for Conference Quality**
A panel of experts in conference quality discussed the work IEEE has done in collaboration with IET and Elsevier on conference paper quality. This was the focus of a recent whitepaper produced by the three organizations. The team shared ideas for standards that could be applied across the industry.

![CE Society President Sharon Peng and society conference organizer Charlotte Kobert at POCO.](image)

**POCO Day 3: Innovation Infusion**
The final day of POCO focused on innovation in IEEE events. Our morning keynote by Chad Kaydo, founder of The X Letter, took a look at how the events industry is changing through technology tools, culture and social sharing.

**Chad Kaydo’s Big Ideas:**

Shared Visual Storytelling – Let people be passionate about your event
- Use crowd sourced photo sharing
- Engage your community with special access to promotions, opportunities and bragging rights
- A ‘Social Good’ component is increasingly important, but be authentic & that it adds value to the event

Tech Trends Affecting Events
- Virtual reality incorporation
- Social matchmaking and facilitated networking
- IoT combined with wearables, beacons, and biometric feedback can provide info on attendee experience, ease credentialing, and help with event safety
Next up on day 3 was a session on IEEE Collabratec, and how this new tool can be used to build a community around your conference. John Keaton, Strategy and Future Studies Director at IEEE, gave us insight on the research that has been conducted on the future of information.

Finally, the event closed with a full group rapid visioning session, using the Appreciative Inquiry methodology to bring out great ideas from some of our best minds on how we can continue to strengthen the conference industry.

POCO 2015 was inspiring, invigorating, insightful and fun. Look forward to experiencing more adventures at POCO 2016 in Montreal, Canada with MCE from 28-30 July.

To request an invitation, or for more information on co-location opportunities for IEEE meetings at POCO, contact ieee-mce@ieee.org.

POCO 2016 will be in Montreal Canada – in preparation a large Canadian presence was evident in Glasgow!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig 12: For once your Editor gets in the picture with Prof Tom Brazil from University College Dublin, and yes that is a wee dram of whiskey! Well it was Glasgow.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The POCO Banquet**  
*Captions/commentary are opposite each image – realization is up to design team.* |
| **Fig 13**  
This was planned and supported by IEEE’s local partnership and opened up with a reception by Glasgow City Council. |
| Did I mention that we were in Scotland? Well we had King Robert the Bruce introducing some of the conference activities and he was a right rowdy character, starting sword fights and flirting with all the ladies. However he did come from a less civilized era of history and in the end he did knight a few of the conference participants so we’ll forgive him his brashness. |
| **Fig 14a** |
Back to the civic reception which was a very civilized affair. One is tempted to saw it was a bit restrained for a Scottish reception, but those canny Scotts were lulling us into a false sense of security ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig 14b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

After the civic reception delegates were bundles into busses and taken to a top-secret location where they were exposed to a “multi-sensory” experience in a rather unusual venue. Due to the powerful ‘multi-sensory’ experience many guests were overwhelmed, but fortunately those canny Scotts had provided a special medicinal treatment for their guest, known as a ‘signature cocktail’; this powerful medicine was very suitable to dull-down the peaks of the ‘multi-sensory’ experience for sensitive guests ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig 15a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Thanks to the efficiency of the on-site teams responsible for supplying medication our POCO delegates were quickly able to relax and engage with the powerful ‘multi-sensory’ experience and were carried away by the lilting voice of our Scottish guide enveloped by the latest in multimedia technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig 15b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Some overhead shots give a better feeling for the venue which was able to convey a close sense of intimacy, while catering for 200 + participants.

| Fig 16a |
In many ways this felt like a theatre show and we were all playing our parts in that show. And getting fed as well! This mixed-mode experience was delivered by a very professional team and provided a unique and memorable experience for POCO delegates. Montreal will have its work cut out for POCO 2016!

Towards the end of the evening we were introduced to the IEEE MGA team who were responsible for coordinating and setting up POCO 2015. Naturally loud rounds of applause echoed around our secret venue.

And your editor’s conclusion? Well if you need help and assistance with creating a unique experience for your conference then IEEE MGA have the team and experience to deliver. And if you are interested in chairing or managing an IEEE Conference then POCO is the place to make the right contacts and learn about the current state of art and best practice in conference planning and management.