

Preface

The Sixth International Workshop on Adaptive Optics in Industry and Medicine took place in Galway, Ireland, from June 12-15, 2007. It was attended by approximately 130 delegates from 18 countries and also had a small exhibition with 12 companies participating. This series of Workshops started in 1997, with the first meeting being held in Shatura, Russia and subsequent ones being located in Durham (UK), Albuquerque (USA), Münster (Germany) and Beijing (China). This series is driven by grassroots activity in the field, and the relatively small size of the meetings has ensured an informal and lively occasion.

The subject of adaptive optics started with the publication by Horace Babcock, in 1953, of a paper describing how atmospheric turbulence may be compensated for in Earth-based telescopes. The idea was taken up by the US military in the 1970s and by astronomers in the late 1980s, and because of the demanding requirements for the then-available technology, adaptive optics was regarded as an expensive and sophisticated technique, to be undertaken only by big research and engineering teams. It was only in the late 1990s that people recognised that the basics of adaptive optics are not "rocket science", indeed they are very simple, and that through appropriate technological development, very high-quality but low cost adaptive optics systems could be constructed. Perhaps this is most vividly illustrated by the disclosure, at the Sixth Workshop, that adaptive optics is deployed in many DVD players at a cost of approximately 60 (euro-) cents per piece, and in quantities of more than one million per month. Another indication of the growing practicality of adaptive optics was the presence of many companies at this Workshop.

Organising any meeting, particularly one run at as low cost as possible, involves a significant volunteer effort. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Scientific Organising Committee for their help: Pablo Artal, John Gonglewski, Wenhan Jiang, Satoshi Kawata, Alexis Kudryashov, Gordon Love, Scot Olivier, Sergio Restaino, Robert Tyson, Ulrich Wittrock and Zhang Yudong. Local assistance was also provided by many people in the Applied Optics Group in Galway, with particular thanks to Emer McHugh and Úna Murphy for administrative support. The Workshop was co-sponsored by The European Optical Society and by The Optical Society of America. Finally, the Workshop could not have been held without the financial support of many companies and organisations: Advanced Medical Optics, Andor Technologies, Bausch & Lomb Ireland, Boston Micromachine Corporation, CILAS, Fraunhofer Institut Photonische Mikrosysteme, Hamamatsu, Holoeye, Imagine Optics and Imagine Eyes, IrisAO, Night-N, OKO Flexible Optics, Optos, Phasics, Scimeasure, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland.

The Seventh International Workshop on Adaptive Optics in Industry and Medicine is due to be held in Russia in 2009, and I hope that many people reading this Proceedings will be able to attend that event.

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Chris Dainty

