In spite of all the good debates we had on economic and political struggles, it was an emotional rather than an intellectual occasion. So much joy, so much fun, but also that tinge of anxiety - reunions are full of reminders of what one did not do in life.

The reunion had a number of ‘serious’ events built into it to discuss big issues in development studies. We did so because we realised that people would not come from far away merely for three days of hugging and heavy drinking. In the course of the reunion, however, my suspicion was confirmed: most of us came not so much to talk about development, but to see old friends and talk about ourselves.

I had the pleasure to chair the session ‘Professional Experiences since IDS’. I am not sure why I was asked to because I am still at the IDS - to be more precise, I left for a few years and then came back. Regrets? Few IDS continues to be one of the most exciting places in development research and teaching. Perhaps this also explains why the IDS employs more alumni than any other single institution. One third of the Fellowship holds a Sussex degree in development studies.

But they were not the people who were asked to speak at that session. The four main speakers were Adrian FERNANDO (MP9, now in the corporate sector in London); Alan LEATHER (MPI, now working for an international trade union organisation in Geneva); Patricia AGUILAR (MPI3, now in charge of an incubator project which helps graduates to become entrepreneurs in Mexico); and Akio TAKAHARA (MP6/DPhil88) who worked for the Japanese government and is now at Obivin University in Tokyo. I shall not try to summarise their interesting presentations (we taped the session and can send you a copy). It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on IDS courses, on careers, and on opportunities - both missed and taken.

Perhaps the main realisation which developed out of this session, and the subsequent one when we met with current students, was the rich network which we are part of, a network through which we can find new jobs or carry out the jobs we have more effectively. The idea is not new, but the network is under-utilised, even by the IDS itself. We certainly hope to use the network more for recruiting new students, for identifying summer placements, and for helping them to find jobs after their courses. But we IDS is not just taking out, we are also putting in. The reunion was our biggest venture yet. It was fund-driven but with hindsight it was also a good investment in the Institute's future. A big thank you to Philippa Sankey, Mick MOORE and Gordon White, who carried the can and made it happen.
'The Alumni Reunion was excellent. It catered for those who just wanted to be with their former mates, meet new IDS colleagues, and those who wanted to catch up with academic issues.'

Thursday 15 July

Opening Address
The Director and the Conference Team

Plenary Panel
International Organisations and Governance
Mike Faber (chair), Hans Singer, Robert Wade
With presentations by Ana Paola Teixeira
('Obstacles to the Implementation of the New Unctad')
and Miguel Neves (MP13)
('Maastricht and the EC Development Cooperation Policy')

Democratisation
Chaired and Introduced by Mark Robinson
Including a presentation by Jethro Pettit (MP13)
('NGOs and Democratisation: No Easy Solution')

Poverty
Chaired and introduced by Martin Greeley (DPhil85)
With presentations by Ahmad Jazayeri (MP4/DPhil86)
('Financial Services for the Rural Poor')
and Georgia Kaufmann ('Urban Poverty')

The Alternative Reunion
(details to be whispered)

Opening Dinner

Disco
DJ - Ludovico Alcorta (MP5/DPhil91)
Skandangle - Gordon White and friends
Such a successful event. So many people told me that they found it not only enjoyable but also useful - a beautiful case study in networking.

IDS must be the only place which would dare make its first ever event for former students a three-day conference - and get away with it! It says a lot for the spirit of the place that so many people turned up from so far away - and so enjoyed it. It was marvellous to meet old friends, and make new ones.

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I thoroughly enjoyed the Alumni Reunion. Most of us felt that the combination of academic and social events was a great success...

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former
day
get away
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that so
punched up
- and so

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the new

Saturday 17 July

International Political Economy
Chaired and introduced by Robin Murray
With a presentation by Manfred Bienefeld
('Echoes of the New Imperialism')

Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Panel Discussion
Chaired by Susan Nkomo (MA6)
Panel: Ketso Gordhan (MP12), Dave Kaplan (DPhil78),
Avril Joffe (MP11) and Zav Rustomjee (MP13)

Alumlympic Fun and Games

Barbeque

Pantomime

Reunion Disco

DJ - Ludovico Alcorta (MPS/DPhil91)
If was absolutely terrific to be at IDS, smell the dust and the books, and not the least, to be in an academic ambience and listen to the scholars that have meant so much to us.

'a wonderful experience'

'It was absolutely terrific to be at IDS, smell the dust and the books, and not the least, to be in an academic ambience and listen to the scholars that have meant so much to us.'