

## Weekend meeting in Aix en Provence - 9, 10, 11 November, 2007

ICE Senior Vice President Jean Venables and her husband Roger (FICE) were among 50 participants at the joint ICE / IET event centred at Aix en Provence. The first day's session was at Cadarache for a briefing on the ITER fusion project; this started with ITER project presentation by senior scientist David Campbell, followed by a tour of the fully functional Tore Supra toroidal plasma fusion reactor guided by Clement Laviron. The visitors were shown the control room where they observed one of a series of test "burns" by the reactor, and then inspected one of the superconducting electro-magnet field coils.



After a pleasant lunch in the Château de Cadarache we had further presentations on the ITER tokamak by Gary Johnson and on the civil engineering aspects of the project by Jerry Sovka. Extensive technical details are available direct from the ITER website <http://www.iter.org/>.

The theme at Toulon was the construction in chaotic geological conditions of the second motorway tunnel, condemned to follow the alignment of the first which took 12 years to complete because of ground collapses. Added to the geological conditions is the shortage of surface space and limited access through the town. Site director Jean-Pierre Vigouroux of Bouygues, leader of the construction consortium, explained that the tunnel is close to the naval port and some 40 meters below sea level.

An alternative programme to the Cadarache visit was arranged for those preferring to visit sites associated with artist Paul Cézanne. The group's cultural visits also included the Fort Beaumont Museum at Toulon in memory of the allied landings in Provence in August 1944, the Château Vannières vineyard where Bandol wine is still made traditionally, the Luberon hillsides with visits to the ochre quarry at Roussillon and the Lavender museum at Coustellet.

During the three days Jean Venables conversed with all participants and we are very pleased that a future ICE President will be aware of the conditions prevailing among members in continental Europe prior to her Presidency.