

Linux Developers' Conference 2003 in Edinburgh

O ye'll tak' the high road...

The organizers could not have picked a better place and time with the conference starting on the same weekend as the Edinburgh Fringe. Of course, many conference attendees took some extra time out to explore Scotland after the Linux meeting – and I must admit, it was a pleasant experience to see one or two geek t-shirts and familiar faces amongst the masses of tourists. George Watson's College itself has a special charm with its high ceilings and old paintings, which contrasted nicely with the modern technology.

As with last year (Bristol), this year's event started with tutorials on Thursday, with Stephen Tweedie taking a look "Inside the Kernel", and John Pinner and David Chan presenting an introduction to "Python for Programmers". Two presentation tracks on Friday provided interesting talks on topics such as "Extreme Linux Programming – A Continuum" (Jon 'maddog' Hall), "Free and Open Source Software in the Health Service" (Dr Anand Ramkissoon) and "XFS" (Christoph Hellwig).

The talk on "New Breakthroughs in Linux Supercomputing" had nice animated slides, although it was slightly strange to see someone at a Linux conference using a Power Point presentation running on Windows, but there is no accounting for taste.

My personal highlight was the Sweep [2] talk on Friday afternoon. Conrad Parker turned the auditorium into something in between a recording studio and

... and I'll tak' the low road, and I'll be in Scotland afore ye. A total of 200 visitors made the trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, for this year's UKUUG Linux Developers' Conference [1], which took place between July 31 and August 3 at George Watson's College. **BY HEIKE JURZIK**



Figure 2: Live DJing with Conrad Parker

a disco, and really put Sweep through its paces: multichannel editing, recording, and interactive scrubbing.

A lot has happened since Pixar Animation Studios started to take an interest in the Open Source editor for digital audio in 2002, and began supporting development activities. One thing that is new to the current release is the implementation of "scrubbing" (including modeling the physics of a turntable for playing vinyl records) and considerable enhancements to visual synchronization. Interactive scrubbing in a digital editor helps to find specific points in a sound file by providing direct feedback – that sounds just like working with a good old tape recorder. The audience were treated to a wide-ranging soundscape and a perfect show based on a collection of Sweep filters and effects, and an excellent selection of sound clips.

Linux Medley

On the evening of the first day, and accompanied by the sound of pipes, the conference attendees headed off for a Scottish buffet supper, with Haggis on the menu, of course. On Saturday again there were a lot of interesting lectures to attend. There was something for all

tastes, from the latest KDE development news, through a Bash workshop, to an introduction to computer forensics.

Gian Filippo Pinzari introduced NoMachine's NX Server and Client (see Software News on p. 8–9). This was one of the more technical presentations, and provided a lot of background information. It was a pity though that the audience could not really experience the speed of the remote X connection, as the link to the Italian test server looked like a local connection. You simply have to try NX out for yourself to discover how unbelievably efficient the tool is.

On Saturday evening everyone headed off to the conference dinner at Dynamic Earth, which provided ample opportunity for geek small talk in a jungle and ice age atmosphere. After the meal 'maddog', who had donned a kilt to celebrate the occasion, explained the connection between player pianos (pianolas) and Linux, using a Sgian Dubh – black (dubh) dagger or knife (sgian) – instead of a laser pointer. Despite the fact that it was received with gales of laughter, 'maddog' managed to get several serious points across.

If you ask me, the UKUUG Linux Developers' Conference 2003 in Edinburgh was an all round success: well organized with interesting talks, friendly attendees and exhibitors – something not to miss for next year! ■



Figure 1: LAN on the lawn

INFO

[1] Conference Info: <http://http://www.ukuug.org/events/linux2003/>

[2] Sweep Homepage: <http://sweep.sourceforge.net/>

[3] The Fringe: <http://www.edfringe.com/>