Iain McLean (Official Fellow) continued to work in UK public policy research, this year with focuses on Scotland; the UK constitution; and options for an incoming UK government.

Applied research on UK (especially Scottish) devolution remained very active. The pamphlet Iain wrote with colleagues at ippr was the tip of the iceberg. Meetings were held with the First Minister of Wales and his advisers, and with the Leader of the Opposition in the Scottish Parliament. Iain was appointed to the Independent Expert Group of advisers to the Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution. The remit of the Independent Expert Group is to offer “impartial advice and evidence specifically to support the Commission’s work on how the financial accountability of the Scottish Parliament might be improved”. Iain had to fight off contradictory stories in the Scottish media, one of which described him as “PM’s aide”, and others hailed him as a convert to the cause of Scottish independence. The Finance Committee of the Scottish Parliament asked Iain for written and oral evidence on the Scottish budgetary process.

In 2005 Iain had submitted to HM Treasury a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to see files on updates of the Treasury’s 1976-9 “Needs Assessment” of the relative public spending needs of the four countries of the UK. The Treasury then replied that there had been no “interdepartmental” needs assessments since then. Only during this year did it become clear that this adjective answered a question that Iain had not asked. Another FOI release insisted on by the Information Commissioner over the objections of the Scotland Office has revealed (what Iain had already strongly suspected) that there was a unilateral Treasury update in 1984. Iain has therefore resubmitted his 2005 request to the Treasury.

Iain’s book on the UK constitution in the light of the collapse of Diceyanism, mentioned last year, will be submitted to the publisher at the end of 2008. The most interesting task of the year was reading the 1913 correspondence in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, between George V and Prime Minister H. H. Asquith on the constitutional position of the sovereign. A Working Paper containing the letters has been posted on the College Working Papers in Politics site.

The biggest project during the year was Options for Britain II. This project, of which Iain is principal investigator, aims to replicate “Options for Britain”, a research project edited out of Nuffield in the mid 1990s by four young researchers, two of whom (David Halpern and Stewart Wood) went on to adviser positions with the current UK government. Options II is designed, like its predecessor, to advise an incoming UK government on the range of options open to it across the main areas of public policy. David Halpern left his position as Senior Policy Adviser in the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit so that he could act, from outside government, as the main consultant to the project. It was planned that Stewart Wood, now at Magdalen College, should again be co-investigator, but his contract as special adviser to Chancellor Brown was renewed when Mr Brown became Prime Minister. A vigorous Advisory Committee ensures that Options remains non-
partisan. Substantial publications from this project are expected after this report goes to press.

Less directly (but still indirectly) connected with public policy was a project with three North American colleagues: André Blais (Montreal), James C. Garand (Louisiana State) and Micheal Giles (Emory). This replicates and extends earlier surveys of political scientists’ evaluations of academic journals. Previous waves were restricted to US political scientists. The current wave extends the survey to Canada and the UK. Fieldwork is complete; papers have been and are being given at academic conferences; we expect several publications next year. The preliminary results, presented to the Political Studies Association conference in April, were picked up and publicised by THES.

Papers were given at Charles University, Prague (x3); several Options for Britain events; the Political Studies Association conference; the Voting Power and Procedures conference, Caen; Edinburgh, Essex and Australian National universities. Government and think tank meetings addressed included ippr, the Scottish Parliament and a Holyrood magazine conference on Scottish tax-and-spend policy.

Iain was appointed to a one-month visiting professorship at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, which he will take up in spring 2009. He expects to resume his research programme in 18th-century social mathematics before or during this appointment. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy.

Publications
1. I. McLean, ‘Don’t let the lawyers do the math: Some problems of legislative districting in the UK and the USA’, *Mathematical and Computer Modelling* 48:0000-00 (2008). ISSN: 0895-7177 DOI link: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.mcm.2008.05.025](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.mcm.2008.05.025)


3. I. McLean, ‘Climate change and UK politics: from Brynle Williams to Sir Nicholas Stern’, *Political Quarterly* 79 (2), 2008, 184-93. ISSN 0032-3179.
