

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE HISTORY
OF SURVEYING & MEASUREMENT (IIHSM)
2012-2013

Rome

The IIHSM conference just before the FIG week was honoured by the visit of our FIG President. On this occasion the book on the maps of Rome was presented by the authors Mario Bevilaqua and Marcello Fagiolo: *Piante di Roma*. All participants and organisers were very surprised and delighted each to have been given a copy of this valuable book. The preparation of the one day symposium had been seriously disturbed by the financial problems of the Italian Government and the exhibition and the venue that had been booked and prepared already in 2010, in the library Casanatense, was cancelled a short time before May 2012. But our Italian colleagues made it possible to be the first to use the facilities in their new offices. Sincere thanks again to our Italian colleagues. John Brock had prepared a series of speakers and they were so numerous that the history session continued during the FIG week. On the Saturday a group visited the Vatican Museum and especially the map room by Danti.

Mercator 1512-2012

2012 saw the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Gerard Mercator, born in Rupelmonde, Belgium, he died in Duisburg, Germany. He was one of the most influential land surveyors and cartographers ever, who invented a projection system still in use to-day. By increasing the distances between the great circles of latitude he solved the major mathematical problem of the loxodrome, which became a straight line: or how to keep a constant bearing for the navigator. A one week conference was organised in Saint Niklaas, Belgium, and a one day conference in Duisburg, the two cities each housing a museum devoted to the great man. The Committee de Liaison des Geometres paid homage to Mercator.

Exhibitions were organised in Dortmund by our German colleagues and in St Niklaas, Belgium, by Jan de Graeve, on the mathematical and scientific books from the Mercator library. Jan has also published a 200p book on this research that had been finalised over the last few years. Title: *Gérard Mercator. La bibliothèque mathématique d'un génie. The mathematical library of a genius*, Le Livre & l'estampe.

Jan gave presentations in Vienna, Austria, in Duisburg, in Brussels, St Niklaas and in Rome during the FIG history meeting on Mercator.

Struve Arc Enhancement

As reported last year, the collection of Archive material relating to possible enhancement of the World Heritage Monument to cover 105° of latitude has been finalised. A meeting of existing Struve Arc countries was held in Belarus 3-5 July. Among the Resolutions taken there was the following:

Resolution No. 2

The Delegates of the countries of the Arc

decided to support the initiative of Mr Jim Smith, Alan Wright, Jan de Graeve and Vitalij Kaptüg in their impressive research work for the Central European and 30th Arc,

endorsed the Chair, Secretary General and other colleagues to prepare a stepwise work plan for a possible extension of the Struve Geodetic Arc in the northern and southern directions, further research of the Central European and 30th Arc. The plan shall consider an involvement of the authorities of the countries concerned, and provide guidelines for restoration of these Arc's geodetic sites.

It is feasible that some external funding may become available to assist this project but no details are available for publication yet.

The Struve arc enhancement was discussed in Belarus, and a paper prepared by Jim Smith was presented by Alan Wright and Jan de Graeve.

Subsequently in October Alan Wright and Jim Smith travelled to Brussels to meet up with Jan de Graeve and the Secretary General of the Struve Geodetic Arc Committee, Saulius Urbanus to further progress of the project. Useful exchanges took place with the hope that all could be completed in time for a submission to UNESCO by 1 January 2015.

Vermessungs Geschichte

The Dortmund Museum is interested to produce a translation of this volume into English. It is a history of surveying based on the German archives and practices prepared by our German colleagues. In Rome the FIG Foundation expressed its interest in this project and further discussions are on-going.

Adelaide

Little progress has been achieved in the project in Adelaide, Australia for the preparation of William Light's plan and the preservation of the parks in and around the city, to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

Abuja

No interest was found during the Rome gathering for an exhibition and/or historical presentations in Abuja. Unfortunately Jim Smith and I cannot attend this 2013 meeting in Nigeria due to health problems, but we know for sure there is a serious concern and interest in the history of our profession, as over twenty Nigerian colleagues attended the Stockholm meeting some years ago.

Professor Mike Cooper

During the year we lost valuable assistance with the unexpected death of Professor Mike Cooper. A former Commission Officer of FIG he had considerable historical knowledge and made numerous contributions to FIG gatherings. His input will be much missed.

Helmut Minow

We were sorry to be informed that our colleague and friend Helmut Minow had passed away and with his colleagues we paid respect during the funeral to a pioneer in the history of our profession who has devoted a great part of his life to the history, library and museum of Dortmund.

Committee membership

With the loss of Mike Cooper I would be pleased to hear from any FIG delegates with an interest in historical matters who might wish to join the group and help promote its projects. It is a small group of enthusiasts always looking for new anniversaries to celebrate or projects in which to take an active interest.

Museum of Mapping in UK?

Efforts continue to find a location for a Museum of Mapping in UK. With the demise of the exhibit and records library at the Ordnance Survey and little of relevance now on show at the Science Museum the requirement for a dedicated home becomes more urgent. Suggestions and offers of help on this are welcomed.

Future meetings

We look forward to prepare for next year a major program with the FIG President in his Home country with colleagues of the Philippine Islands who recently started a group on history of surveying

2014 Kuala Lumpur

2015 = 400 years after Snellius's triangulation of 1615

2015 = 350 years after Newton postulated in 1665 that the earth was oblate.

Board Members

Our board members are getting older so we would welcome colleagues from all over the world to come and join us to prepare the future of our past. Jan de Graeve

Jan de Graeve

February 2013