

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

2013-2014

The IIHS&M was last present at the ROMA FIG conference when it held a successful one-day symposium in the new premises of the Italian Association of Surveyors and were honoured by the presence of the FIG President.

Last year, in Nigeria neither Jim Smith nor I could attend due to health problems but John Brock was present and he reported that the Nigerian colleagues had prepared a book on the history of their profession, distributed during the IIHS&M symposium.

For the Kuala-Lumpur FIG-Conference, we have prepared a one-day symposium. While I write this report we have no confirmation where, when or how it will be organized although there a half a dozen good papers available including one on another project for possible World Heritage nomination.

From 6 to 10 July, 2014 our colleagues of Australia prepare a one week history conference on Norfolk Island, in the Pacific Ocean. John Brock has finalized an important and interesting set of papers on the history of our profession.

In 2012, Alan Wright and Jan De Graeve attended in Belarus the conference on the Struve Arc Meridian. They urged for renewed action on the extension of the Struve Arc project over Central Europe countries to Crete and Egypt, to join the 30<sup>th</sup> Meridian Arc. Jim Smith has researched all relevant documentation extending from the existing World Heritage Monument to South Africa, with assistance from Jan De Graeve for the part in former Belgian Congo and Uganda.

For the last two years progress has been un-necessarily stalled for unfortunate reasons but it is hoped to get the project moving again in 2014. The aim for an heritage monument spanning 105° of latitude is feasible and the basic research completed. It is now up to all the National Survey Organisations concerned to do their bits towards completing the submission to UNESCO.

Regrettably the original time scale for completion by 01.01.2015 is no longer feasible but 01.01.2016 could be possible.

We have to report the unexpected death of our colleague Alan Wright who assisted us for many years and who had in his early career been very active in Antarctica where his name is given to a peninsula on the coastline; near the Stonehouse Bay. For some 25 years Alan and colleagues had been seeking a permanent home for his large collection of EDM instruments – particularly Tellurometers. His death meant an unexpected crisis with the collection but we are able to report that we have been able to fulfill his long lifetime dream. Unfortunately no feasible British home could be found but we were successful with the Department Surveying and Geography, of the Gent University in Belgium, where it will be useful for the next generation of surveying students. The University is in the process of building a new Museum covering the various disciplines within its Departments. The collection will be called “The Wright- Draper Collection” after Alan and his colleague Malcolm Draper who supplied many of the instruments.

It is hoped to arrange an unveiling ceremony towards the end of 2014 when there happens to be an international cartographic conference at that University. Details will be announced in due course and all interested persons will be welcome.

We have previously mentioned that we were seeking a location for a Museum of Mapping in the UK but with the export of the Wright-Draper Collection that idea will now be shelved.

### **Forthcoming events**

The surveying community will honour

2014 : Georg Wilhelm Frederich Struve.

2015 : Snellius or Willibrord Snell Van Royen.

2014 will also see the biennial Struve arc Management Committee conference in The Ukraine.

### **The Institution.**

The IIHS&M was created officially in Melbourne 1994 but was already active since 1980 under Commission 0 or part of Commission 1.

With the loss in the last two years of Professor Mike Cooper, Helmut Minow and Alan Wright we are seeking new blood to join the committee. Any readers who are devotees of the history of our profession and who would be interested to join in the organization of our events and be willing to be active with new projects as they arise are asked to contact me directly at [jan@degraeve-geo.eu](mailto:jan@degraeve-geo.eu)

Our present officers are:

Jim Smith, honorary secretary who has attended the FIG conferences since 1968

David Wallis, honorary treasurer, who was well known in the Commonwealth Community of Surveyors for a similar period.

Jane Insley. Recently retired from a career as a Curator at the Science Museum in London.

John Brock. Meetings organiser

I attended my first FIG meeting in Montreux, in 1981 although I had already been to the Paris meeting of 1978 to organize an historic exhibition, with the original photos and documents of the first meeting of surveyors in 1878 in Paris.

Alan Wright, John Brock, Jim Smith and local associations in Germany, Austria, Holland, France, Hungary, USA and Australia and other individual colleagues have been active to keep the history of our profession alive in many parts of the world.

We will welcome colleagues who come and join the Board to go on and improve the services of I.I.H.S.&M. for the next 50 years. We call on the young surveyors to come and join us. You will enjoy it.

Jan De Graeve

Director IIHS&M