

**Report for the 26th General Assembly
FIG Working Week in Paris, 13-17 April 2003**

**International Institution for the History of Surveying and Measurement
Permanent Institution of FIG**

Annual Report 2002–2003

Washington Congress

Four consecutive sessions at the Congress provided 11 varied papers on the History of the Americas. Topics covered Mason & Dixon, the Fairfax Line, Hassler, Verplanck Calvin, Andrew Ellicott, the Spanish influence, Alaska, Whymper and the Peru Arc. All were well attended considering the multiplicity of sessions running at any one time. Despite considerable effort no papers materialised from Canada or from South American authors. As well as appearing in the FIG Proceedings the papers for these sessions were produced as a separate document through the generous assistance of Marc Cheves of the *Professional Surveyor*. To whom sincere thanks are expressed for all his help. A copy of the Proceedings was presented to the Burney Library of the Smithsonian Institution.

It was felt that the formula used of no more than three papers per 1½ hour session gave all speakers a fair opportunity for both presentation and subsequent questions. Whilst there was an open invitation for papers many were specially sought so as to give a well balanced and varied programme.

On the evening before the sessions Marc Cheves of the *Professional Surveyor* arranged a behind the scenes visit to the survey instrument collection at the Smithsonian Institution. The curator, Deborah Warner, displayed some of her prize exhibits which were greatly admired and discussed by around 100 delegates.

During the Congress there was a competition on Roman Land Surveying by groups of college students. Unfortunately few delegates noticed that this was on the programme.

Book Reprints

To coincide with the Congress a reprint of the 1657 textbook *The Compleat Surveyor* by William Leybourn was produced. This was a follow-on from the earlier reproduction of *Geodaesia* by John Love of 1688. The latter is now sold out but Leybourn is available for purchase at \$50 plus postage and packing from Walter Robillard at e-mail robw@mindspring.com or by post W Robillard, 1601 Berkeley Lane N E, Atlanta, Georgia, 30329, USA or fax + 1 404 248 1464.

Any profit made from these books is used solely to help finance the Struve Geodetic Arc project since the Institution gets no funding from FIG.

Thoughts are being given to the possibility of producing a third reprint.

Struve Geodetic Arc

Steady progress is being made with the project to get a selection of the surviving points on the Struve Geodetic Arc (from North Cape to the Black Sea) preserved as UNESCO World Heritage Monuments. The time scale envisages a submission to UNESCO in February 2004 (it can only be done once a year) with a result some 18 months later.

50 copies of a draft submission to UNESCO were produced and distributed to the countries concerned and to various appropriate persons within the European Parliament. Jan de Graeve took copies to Paris where he met with an appropriate member of UNESCO who was able to give valuable advice on how we should proceed with the project.

In September 2002 the Estonian surveyors organised a conference in Tallinn and Tartu to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the completion of the measurement. Two days of conference contained 13 technical presentations on various aspects of Struve and the Arc measurement. Among the 60 or so who attended this event were Jim Smith and Jan de Graeve who also prepared the Resolutions.

During the presentations the idea was floated that if the Struve Arc UNESCO submission was successful then it would be appropriate to try and do the same down the 30th Meridian Arc of East Africa. Some soundings on this have already been made in South Africa and were favourably received. It has also been noted that 2004 is the 125 anniversary of when David Gill floated the idea of an Arc of the 30th Meridian. This may lead to an appropriate event in South Africa sometime in 2004.

In addition research was in hand regarding the link between the two arcs - said to have been completed in the 19th century but for which any records are proving elusive. One of the Resolutions supported this.

This was followed by a whole-day technical visit first to the surviving terminals of the Simuna baseline - one already monumented and the other recently excavated; then to Tartu and in particular the Observatory there. During the visit a commemorative plate was unveiled at the point used as the origin of Struve's work.

During the conference the Surveyor General of Finland Jarmo Ratia confirmed that his Department would do the necessary preparation and production work for the UNESCO documentation. For this generous offer we would wish to extend our thanks to Mr Ratia and to Pekka Tättilä who has been tasked to oversee the production.

Funding

The Institution would like to acknowledge the valuable grant made to it by the RICS Education Trust. This is being put to good use in the Struve Geodetic Arc project.

Forthcoming Activities

FIG Working Week 2003

With the move of the 2003 venue to Paris the Institution has found it possible to mount both a small exhibit and have some appropriate papers presented. This will be followed by a special visit to the IGN on 14 April 2003.

Jan de Graeve will give one of the Keynote Addresses to the Working Week.

Struve Working Group

A small group will meet in Brussels from 4 to 6 July to process the material required to be included in the documentation for UNESCO. This will allow time for any gaps to be filled before the submission date.

FIG World Mapping and Surveying Colloquium in Sydney and Canberra

Australian colleagues are in the process of organising a spectacular gathering split between Sydney and Canberra 19-24 September 2003. Details are on the FIG web site.

Next Struve Conference and Working Group

To continue the momentum built up in Tallinn the surveyors from Belarus kindly offered to host a similar gathering 3-7 September 2003 in Minsk and arrangements for that are in hand.

January 2003

Jan de Graeve
President

International Institution on the History of Surveying and Measurement