

REPORT OF THE FIG INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE HISTORY
OF SURVEYING & MEASUREMENT (IIHSM)
2014-2015

Since the general Assembly of Kuala Lumpur, where John Brock presented a fascinating paper on the history of surveying in early China, we then had a one week congress in Australia on Norfolk island which is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It is a remarkable historic place as it houses the descendants of the mutineers of the Bounty. Half of the papers were presented by local historians and political representatives and half by surveyors and visitors with an interest in the historical aspects of surveying,. Congratulations are expressed to John and his partner for the very fine organization.

Alan Wright (1934-2013) whose death was noted in the last Report, has left a big hole in the organization with the loss of his presence in our working group. The IIHSM has been able to find a home for his vast collection of Electronic Distance Measuring (EDMs) devices which have been presented by both his family and Malcolm Draper to the Ghent University in Belgium. This should be of interest to the present and future generation of student surveyors and hopefully also attract visitors to the University Museum. Jim Smith, Alan and I had for many years looked for a proper place to house this important collection. A selection of the collection was on show to the public during the 2014 summer conference of the ICA History of Cartography Section at the university premises. In due course there will be a permanent display when the building works at the University are complete. It has joined the display of angle measuring instruments we saved when it introduced the studies of surveying at Ghent University some 15 years ago.

Last summer the Group met the Struve Arc committee to help progress the project to enhance the Struve Arc by incorporating Central European countries and thence over the Mediterranean Sea and down the Arc of the 30th meridian to South Africa. The full Cape to Cape arc (North Cape to Cape Province) was the original dream of Sir David Gill and Struve's son Otto. That meeting had been planned originally to be in the Ukraine but that had to be cancelled after Russian troops had invaded the country and annexed Crimea. Hence the re-scheduling of the meeting to Vilnius.

We continue to find and study documentation on the arc measurements and were pleased to find an original signed copy by Wilhelm Struve of his Report of 1867, dedicated to the Ambassador of Sweden Baron Wrede. The Struve arc is also being studied by other scholars: *The Struve Geodetic Arc: Pathway to Global recognition* has been published in both Russian and English by Vladimir Mkrtychan; and there could soon be a publication on Arc measurement in Spanish from scholars in Spain.

Further work continues on other possible publications on Arc measurements both internationally, historically and specifically in Africa. These would join the English translation of Struve's Reports on the Arc that bears his name that is now a World Heritage Monument. The IIHSM was instrumental in translating over 1000 pages!! from the French and publishing the two volumes several years ago.

We prepared the Sofia meeting and our History Group, which was created officially as IIHS&M in 1994, so in 2014 celebrated its 20th anniversary with the same Board, although unofficially created already in Sofia in 1983 under the Peevsky Presidency. Then it was

housed in Commission I and at that time we issued the first FIG publication of the definition of the Surveyor, der Vermessungsingenieur, le géomètre –Expert, in all three languages of FIG. We hope this will be reissued by this FIG Bureau.

With the loss of Alan Wright and other Board members getting older, we would welcome interested colleagues to come and join our team.

We wish the Bureau and our colleagues a very successful working week.

Jan De Graeve director IIHS&M