

"Joined-up Hydrography"

With the launch of the International Federation of Hydrographic Societies (IFHS) later this year we bid a fond farewell to The Hydrographic Society (THS).



Earlier this year, I attended the EGM of The Hydrographic Society and was pleased to hear that all being well, the new Federation is to be adopted at *Hydro4* - the 14th International Biennial Symposium of THS/IFHS. At the same time The Hydrographic Society will be dissolved, which causes me some sadness as this pioneering body has made a huge contribution to our profession since it was founded in 1972. However, I do firmly believe that we must embrace change and move forward, looking to the future but with due regard for the past.

Indeed, I feel this is an exciting time for Hydrography; FIG Commission 4 is pressing ahead with new alliances and partnerships with sister organisations. The most recent is the signing of a new MoU with the IHO at the Athens FIG WW in May. We now have a formal framework within which to co-operate on projects in areas of common interest into the future. FIG is a recognised NGO with strong links to the UN and Commission 4 now has a close alliance with the IHO, an intergovernmental body of some 72 national hydrographic offices.

Since I first took office, one of my main objectives has been to pursue closer links with the wider hydrographic community. I feel I have achieved this with the IHO and would like to extend the hand of friendship and co-operation to the new IFHS. To my mind this is the final piece of the jigsaw and will give the profession the status and broad recognition it deserves. From my informal discussions with the national Hydrographic Societies I am persuaded that there is grassroots support for a similar agreement with the new IFHS.

In this way we can we increase our knowledge and understanding of hydrography for the benefit of the whole profession, across areas of common interest. We already co-operate successfully on the FIG/IHO/

ICA International Advisory Board, and this could be extended to other areas such as promotion of the profession, standards, education and training, joint publications and conferences/seminars.

Closer co-operation between IHO, FIG and IFHS will deliver what I like to call 'Joined-Up Hydrography': namely, a united cohesive profession covering all aspects of hydrography, spanning all areas of operation, both in commercial and government sectors. I firmly believe that the time is right and that there is a clear opportunity and willingness to enable this process.

If you have any thoughts or comments on this article or any other Commission 4 business then please do not hesitate to contact me. I would encourage you to take a look at the website, www.fig.net/figtree/commission4/index.htm, which contains the latest news from Comm 4, including future events, conference papers, articles and details of past meetings. ■

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EAB

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