

**Report for the 24th General Assembly
FIG Working Week in Seoul, 6–11 May 2001**

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE HISTORY OF
SURVEYING & MEASUREMENT**

1. The Struve arc

Slow progress continues to be made in the project to get a selection of the remaining points demarcating this 19th century geodetic arc recognised as World Heritage Monuments. Russia is the first country to have a point marked and a plaque fitted to it. This was primarily due to the efforts of Vitali Kaptjug of St. Petersburg who masterminded the exercise with some financial assistance from the Institution. The most northerly and most southerly points were already marked and so were some of Maupertuis (1736) but efforts continue to get the other countries involved to a similar position so that a detailed case can be submitted to UNESCO.

2. Book reprint

As a means to both inform the profession at large and to raise funds for the Institution, the book *Geodaesia, or the Art of Surveying and Measuring of land* by John Love of 1678, has been reprinted in a limited edition. This was the first textbook on surveying used in the Americas. The organisation of the publication was by Walter Robillard of Atlanta, Georgia, who has been a long time supporter of historical input to FIG. Sales have been very encouraging and copies are still available through David Wallis, 161 Cooden Drive, Bexhill-on-Sea, E Sussex TN39 3AQ, UK at £35 including post and packing. Thoughts are now turning to the possible reprint of another such early book on land surveying.

3. Symposium

During the Prague Working Week of 2000 the Institution held a very successful gathering of about 60 colleagues was held at the Technical Museum in Prague. Various papers were presented on the topic of the Struve arc and on the work of Robert Hooke in the survey and reconstruction of London after the Great Fire of 1666. A copy of the John Love book was presented to the FIG President and another copy to the Prague Museum of Science.

4. Washington 2002

During November 2000 Jim Smith attended a meeting at NOAA in Washington to persuade the FIG Administration to include in the Congress of 2002 A History of Surveying Exhibition and Symposium along the lines of the very successful one held during the Brighton Congress of 1998. It is hoped that a small team based around staff at NOAA will prepare both the Exhibition and Symposium under the guidance of Walter Robillard.

5. George Everest

Following the publication at the end of 1999 of a biography of Sir George Everest, Jim Smith has given a number of talks both in the UK (including one at the Royal Geographical Society) and the USA, on the topic of Everest's life and work. After the Seoul meeting he is stopping off in Hong Kong to give two further presentations.

6. LaCaille

2001 is the 250th anniversary of the visit to South Africa by L'Abbe Nicholas-Louis de LaCaille at which time he measured a meridian arc near Cape Town. As a commemoration of that event Jim Smith presented a paper at the CONSAS gathering in Cape Town during March 2001.

7. Other events

Jan De Graeve gave a presentation on history of surveying techniques in Brussels to the Belgian Map Collectors Society.

In Ghent studies for land surveying were introduced just 10 years ago at the University by Jan de Graeve. To commemorate the event he gave a paper on the Struve Arc measurement and its importance to an audience of 130. This was the continuation of a paper he gave 10 years ago on the Arc measurement in Peru and Lapland by the French Academy of Sciences. This was accompanied by an exhibition on the History of Cartography and of Surveying Instruments in the University held in the Museum of History of Science, Ghent University and continuing until the end of June.

Jan De Graeve is preparing for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Brussels Association of Surveyors (1876-2001). The first law book for surveyors in Belgium, of 1451, has been translated into Flemish by Jan de Graeve and into French by Jean Mosselmans. The book will be presented to the Belgian Royal family on April 25th.

November 30th – December 1st 2001 there will be an International Colloquium held in Brussels on History of Land Surveying from Roman Times through to the Middle Ages. In conjunction with this there will be an exhibition in the Brussels Royal Library from November 22nd to December 21st. This will be under the International Institution for the History of Surveying & Measurement and will show:

- original and replica instruments from Roman times,
- the evolution of property rights and legal documents,
- with books and instruments through to the 16th century.

This event has been promoted as there was no response from Korea to the suggestion for organising an event there to coincide with the 2001 FIG Working Week.

Toulouse. On May 21st 2001 there is to be a Colloquium "La Condamine et la Mesure de la terre". The draft programme contains a dozen or so papers. Among the presentations will be one on LaCaille by Jim Smith and another by Jan de Graeve on the Struve Arc. Further details from: Jacques Le Pottier, email jacpot@univ-tlse1.fr

8. Millennium measure

David Wallis, The Treasurer of the Institution is involved with the project promoted by the Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers to erect a Millennium measure in London.

Progress has been delayed due to the designated location under the new (Wobbly) Millennium Bridge in the City of London not being accessible. This situation is likely to prevail until the autumn of 2001.

The design has been finalised, as a triangular sided scale of 2000 millimetres, encased in a glass "obelisk" shaped column. The glass sides are etched with dates and events covering the history of the City of London, Events in the Christian calendar and scientific discoveries and advances in technology over the last 2000 years. The glass and stainless steel column is mounted on a granite plinth, the glass sides being edge illuminated at night.

9. Connection between Struve arc and the arc of 30th meridian through E Africa

Jim Smith is working on bringing together all available pieces of information to determine whether or not there is a continuous link from Cape to Cairo. Offers of information on any part, but particularly the connection between Moldova and Egypt would be much appreciated.

10. The Roman Land Surveyors' Texts

The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies has recently published The Roman Land Surveyors' Texts with an introduction, commentary and translation into English edited by Dr Brian Campbell of the Queen's University of Belfast. The book has nearly 600 pages of text diagrams, maps and plates. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary.

11. Prize competition

Details are about to be circulated regarding a prize on a topic relating to the History of Surveying. This will be presented at the Washington Congress of 2002 and will be of a valuable poster donated by the FIG Commission 7. See the next FIG Bulletin for details.

12. Web page

Negotiations are continuing to get a web page as part of that for the Science Museum in London.

Jan de Graeve
Director

Address for correspondence:

J R Smith
24 Woodbury Ave
Petersfield
Hants GU32 2EE
UNITED KINGDOM
E-mail 101765.332@compuserve.com