

**Report to the 31<sup>st</sup> General Assembly  
FIG Working Week in Stockholm, Sweden, June 2008**

**International Institution for the History of Surveying & Measurement**

**Report of Activities 2007-2008**

**1. Congress in Hong Kong**

All efforts to make contact with persons in Hong Kong interested in historical topics failed so there were no history sessions held there.

**2. Working Week in Stockholm**

A full programme of papers has been arranged for Stockholm. 15 papers are expected, covering a wide range of topics, and these will be spread over 5 sessions each of 1½ hours i.e. 3 papers per session as a maximum. The sessions will be on both the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of June. The probability is that there will be 3 sessions on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 2 on the 14<sup>th</sup>, possibly followed by a suitable visit.

All arrangements in Stockholm have been very ably carried out through Hans-Fredrik Wennstrom, to whom sincere thanks are extended.

**3. Working Week 2009**

To date it is not expected to hold any sessions at the Israel Working Week. However if there is sufficient interest shown by Israeli delegates in Stockholm then it would still be possible to make arrangements.

**4. Struve Geodetic Arc**

During 2007 over 1000 hours of work has been put into the translation from French to English of the two volumes of Report written by F G W Struve – *Arc du Méridien de 25° 20' entre Le Danube et le Mer Glaciale, mesuré depuis 1816 jusqu'en 1855*. These describe in detail all the work on the geodetic arc that was accepted by UNESCO in 2005 for inscription on the World Heritage Monument list. In total around 1000 A4 pages are involved so it will be a major exercise to both (a) recover some recompense to the IIHSM for the effort and (b) to get it published in a form as near identical to the originals as possible.

Two of the Scandinavian countries, Norway and Sweden, through which the arc goes have generously contributed financially to the project but further such input is required before the project can be finally seen in bound form. Any readers or possible sponsors who would be interested to assist are asked to get in touch via [jim@smith1780.freerve.co.uk](mailto:jim@smith1780.freerve.co.uk).

The requirement for such a translation was incorporated early on in decisions relating to the attainment of World Heritage status. Hence once the positive decision came from UNESCO it

became imperative to make the huge input of effort to follow through the written support for all the practical input made by the countries involved in finding and marking the points used. The narrative sections are most informative on the work carried out over the period 1816 – 1855 and these are supplemented by lists of all the observations and calculations. It forms a notable historic document that will hopefully become available for use throughout the ten countries concerned, by visitors to the 34 points involved, and those who might wish to do further research on this unusual World Heritage Monument, that was a first of its kind for both the Surveying profession and for UNESCO.

Among future activities envisaged for the Struve Arc is its extension through the Arc of the 30<sup>th</sup> meridian. While in Stockholm it is hoped to create interest among delegates from any Eastern Africa countries through which the 30<sup>th</sup> Arc goes. Any such delegates or university researchers who are unable to make contact during the Working Week are invited to contact Jim Smith at other times by e-mail at jim@smith1780.freeserve.co.uk

## **5. Other events in 2007**

- Jim Smith gave two talks in Switzerland during July. One at the University in Zurich on the "Struve Geodetic Arc" and the other in Bern to the Swiss Group for the History of Surveying on "Everest, the Man and the Mountain".
- Jan de Graeve attended a History of Surveying meeting in Warsaw Poland and gave a talk on the History of Surveying in memory of Prof. Kazimierz Czarnecki.
- Jan De Graeve also gave a talk at the Leyden Museum about the work of the IHSM and one at the university of Louvain la Neuve on the Mercator projection.

## **6. Future events.**

- a. Preliminary work has already been done towards holding sessions at the next FIG Congress in Sydney. The Venue has already been confirmed in Paramatta for sessions on the History of Surveying in Australia.
- b. Contacts have been confirmed for various history of surveying lectures to be held in the Netherlands and in Poland (Polytechnic of Warsaw).
- c. During 2008 there will be a joint symposium between the History Group of FIG and its equivalent in the ICA. This will be held in Portsmouth University, England 10-12th September. Further information for anyone interested can be obtained from Jim Smith at the e-mail address in Item 4 above.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

We are pleased to be able to report that in the USA a major library of surveying books (around 1600 volumes) has been preserved as an entity and also the historical surveying instruments of the same former owner have been kept together in a private collection in the UK.

Jan De Graeve  
1 February 2008

Web site: [www.fig.net/hsm](http://www.fig.net/hsm)