

Sun, sea and. . . !
 Surveyors from
 over 65 coun-
 tries, congregat-
 ed in Athens for
 the annual FIG
 Working Week.
 With over 200
 papers, a theme
 of *The Olympic
 Spirit in
 Surveying* who
 could resist an
 event in a town
 with a Tripods
 Street? Our
 reporters are
 Ruth Adams and
 Dan Schnurr.



FIG Working Week: Athens 2004 The Olympic Spirit in Surveying

We attended on behalf of the RICS, participating in Commission 4 (Hydrography) and Commission 5 (Positioning and Measurement). Between us we attended all the Comm 4 and 5 sessions as well as other adhoc meetings.

The plenary session, which Ruth would have made if she hadn't been stuck in the hotel lift, saw presentations from Prof Beulter, President of the International Association of Geodesy, and Dr Camecho-Lara, the director of UN OOSA, the United Nations Office for Outer Space. It is excellent to see support from such key organisations for the work of FIG.

Ruth partook in the workshop on under-represented groups in surveying. This mainly focused on raising the ratio of women in surveying and is holding its first virtual board from 05-09 July 04. More details can be found at:

www.shu.ac.uk/hosted/netSurve

Commission 4 held a series of three workshops that were well attended. Subjects covered ranged from hydrography and charting, to marine cadastre and vertical reference frames. This last session saw presentations from Steve Shipman, IHB (International Hydrographic Bureau), and Ruth and turned into an excellent roundtable discussion on vertical surfaces in the marine world. Ruth is currently working on a white paper on this subject, the latest version of which will be found on the FIG website, but comments from anyone on this key issue are welcome.

We were honoured to have Alexandros Maratos, President of the IHB, present a paper. That Tuesday also saw the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the International Hydrographic Organisation and FIG (Commission 4).

The Commission had an excellent technical tour on board the Hellenic Survey vessel *H/S O/S Naftilos*. Our hosts were superb and we spent the day discussing survey issues (not to mention running some lines) and all under the glorious Greek sun. More information on this trip can be found at the

Commission 4 section of the FIG website. The Commission also held its annual meeting and a joint meeting with Commission 5, with which we are increasingly having closer ties. A Comm 5 takeover of Comm 4 was hotly debated over ouzo later that evening but the hydrographers are holding out!

Commission 5 too had

a successful conference, once again being a critical role linking the instrument manufacturers and technological innovations with researchers and practicing surveyors. The Commission coordinated five of the conference technical sessions. The range of subjects and the nationalities represented were wide ranging. For example, a review of geodetic activities in Cuba was presented, and there were many Greek contributions. A few papers were also on the subject of the forthcoming Olympics; the development of the multi-sensor GPS-based rowing coaching system (TS29.2) being a personal favourite.

An open meeting was held at which various subjects were discussed, some 25 national representatives attending. The current plan for the working groups was discussed and some of the initial results of the work carried out to date were presented. Two steering committee meetings were held to discuss in detail the initial results of the Working Groups and future activity at forthcoming events. All working groups – WG5.1, Standards; WG5.2, Reference Frame in Practice; WG5.3, Integrated Positioning Systems; and WG5.4, Cost effective surveying technology and techniques for developing countries – have been active and more details can be found at:

www.fig.net/commission5/

Dan is chair of WG5.4 and is busy working towards its proposed publication "Guidelines for Cost Effective SDI for Informal Settlements". The group produced two papers for this conference; one focussing on the technology and one on the difficulties in providing the mapping information to the developing world. The structure of the document will now be finalised and presented to UN-HABITAT for comment at the forthcoming Barcelona Conference (September 2004).

Summary

All in, it was another successful conference. As ever, the social events were fun; allowing us opportunities to get to know our international colleagues. On the work front, both Dan and Ruth have plenty of work to progress during the next year before the next working week in Cairo, April 2005. If you have any comments on either of their Commissions, please do not hesitate to contact them.

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Commission 4 had a technical tour aboard the Hellenic Survey Vessel, *Naftilos*.

