

## SYDNEY (Australia) – APRIL 2010

Jan De GRAEVE, Belgium

### INTRODUCTION

I.I.H.S&M. Colloquium – 2<sup>nd</sup> day

Dear Colleagues – Surveyors.

It is a great experience for me to be here, as honorary director of the International Institution for the History of Surveying & Measurement, in Sydney – Australia.

In 1994 it was my first visit here down under, in F.I.G – Melbourne where I was chairing Commission 1 – F.I.G, professional practice and code of ethics. This code had been finalised under Jacques Tassou (of France) in Sofia – Bulgaria, with a definition of the Suveyor – le Géomètre-Expert, der Vermessungsingenieur. (F.I.G. – publication no 2, 1991)

Since under linguistic pressure of English, the scope has been focussed on the function in society of the surveyors, worldwide, rather, than the professional himself.

The prime role of the surveyor was and is and remains to:

<< A surveyor is a professional person with the academic qualifications and technical expertise to practise the science of measurement ; to use that information for the purpose of planning and implementing the efficient administration of the land, the sea and structures thereon ; and the instigate the advancement and development of such practises. >>

But this is maybe not the right place to discuss this matter, but you are the right audience to deliver this message to bring it back to Commission 1, to the board of F.I.G and to the General Assembly.

In 1994, as chairman of Commission 1, we proposed to create officially this I.I.H.S&M. here in Melbourne although it had been unofficially in place since 1980 and part of Commission 1 later Commission 0 (zero), being the beginning and the end ; all 10 Commissions have their history or are concerned by the past and its evolution.

After the papers presented by our colleagues Bjorn Harsson (Norway), Vitali Kaptjug (Russia), B. Chubney, G. Preiss and ND Umarbaeva, after intervention of Seppo Härmälä from Finland, I was honored to present to the F.I.G General Assembly – resolution 1:

*<< Considering the great historical value og the measurement of the Arc of the Meridian and that an interest exists of landmonuments marking the arc of thr Meridian, called Struve, which exists over 9 countries and 25° of latitude from the Black Sea to Hammersfest, situated on the North Coast*

*of Norway, Commission I recommended that FIG should present a request to the United Nations that the remains of this arc of meridian be added to the World Heritage List of Historic Monuments.>>*

It has been adopted by unanimity by the General Assembly.

Since we have worked hard, all of the members of the board but also and especially our colleagues in the 10 countries through which the Struve Meridian lies, from the North to South; Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, (The Island of Hogeland – a (secret) military naval base), Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldava.

Without their help and cooperation we might not had succeeded in our goal to have that meridian classified and protected, and to see it on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. The UNESCO-delegates unanimously have agreed its inscription in Durban (RSA) in July 2005. Today the Northern Obelisk in Hammerfest – Fuglenaes is visited by over 100.000 people a year.

There has been a lot of preparation work and reports by Jim Smith and Pekka Tätälä, who finalised the document, which we submitted with our Finnish colleagues at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

We had visited and/or **schaired** meetings in Tallinn – Estonia, in Hammerfest – Norway, in Sweden, in Helsinki – Finland, in Chisinau – Moldava, in Kiev – Belarus and in Jacobsstadt – Latvia, and this year we will visit the sites in Lithuania so only Ukraine remains for the future (2012).

In the meantime, Jim Smith, and I have translated and edited the translation of the Struve Report: **Are du Méridien de 25°20 entre le Danube et la Mer Glaciale mesuré depuis 1816 jusqu'en 1855 – St Petersburg, I – 1860 et II – 1857, by FGW Struve, Tenner, Hansteen and Selander.**

I would like to thank our Aussi colleague Ian Rüger ; in Sydney (University of Sydney – School for Surveying – N.S.W.) who translated: *Über den Geodätischen Teil der Norwegischen Gradmessung – Operationen van DG Lindhagen* (German- English).

The original books (2 vols) in French are very rare and lack in most libraries, and so we had asked and paid for a xeroxcopy from Tallinn's University and upon receipts I was lucky to buy an original in public auction in Germany. This made it possible to have the text on both sides of the English Channel and proceed to the translation (+/- 1000 pages = +/- 1200 hours).

This fundamental text is now available in hard copy for further study in English and should be available in most universities and libraries of surveying (for infor: fax Jan +322 262 10 33).

This meridian +/- 26° East of Greenwich , which is the reference meridian since 1874. Now what do we do for the future?

The aim of Friedrich Georg Wilhelm Struve was to develop Meridian Arc Measurement from North to South, I mean North Pole to South Africa. Preparation work was happening in 1860 by the son of FGW Struve: Otto, to link the 26° with the 30<sup>th</sup> Arc through during the FIG-Egypt week, we had a plaque unveiled near Cairo, with the director general of Egyptian surveyors and we could experience some <<hot weather>> in the Egyptian desert. Jim went to South Africa, near Buffelfontein, to unveil a plaque of the most southern point of the 30<sup>th</sup> Arc of Meridian. So we have northern and southern countries involved of Africa, remains 9 other countries to be involved Sudan, Republic of Congo (ex-belgian Congo or ex-Zaire), Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (ex North Rhodesia).

During previous FIG-events we have tried to create a common interest from our colleagues in those African countries, but the difficult political situations in many of these countries have not made it possible to see much progress yet. Our Egyptian colleagues are ready to propose an international conference and we could ask for some UNESCO-funds to get it organised but the African response has not reached us so far.

Jin Smith is working hard through the files and archives of the Ordnance Survey and I presented the Belgian contribution, around the Equator +/- 2,5°, at a previous symposium.

We also make progress in the link between Europe and Africa, and in 2009 I went to Bucarest to improve cooperation with our colleagues of Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Greece. An other road over Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Israel is also under investigation and we would be grateful if our colleagues could help us with documentation, references to copies of existing plans of junction over land between Meridian 26 and 30.

The F.I.G.- publication on History of Surveying will tell you what happened between Melbourne and Sydney in some detail.

### **For the near future**

In 2012, Gerard Mercator was born 500 years ago (1512-1594).

We will join efforts to a multinational celebration on the Mercator Museum in St-Niklaas (Belgium) and Duisburg (Germany) and the Netherlands, with a exceptional exhibition (travelling) and many local events and we will prepare a conference (I.I.H.S&M).

Personally, I prepare a major work on Gerard Mercators library at least on his 220 scientific books he possessed read and studied, but I will tell you later in this conference a little more.

For 2012 F.I.G. – Roma, preparation work is on progress together with our Italian colleagues and I went to Rome this February to prepare the I.I.H.S&M seminar for May 2012.

After this introduction, please welcome the first speaker.