

# Australasian Hydrographic Society



## FIG 2010

The FIG 2010 World Congress held in Sydney from 11 to 16 April 2010 sought record numbers of attendees for all hydrography sessions. FIG organisers were astounded at the Hydrography contingent present and even claimed it was the largest number of delegates ever witnessed for Hydrography sessions at any FIG congress to date. This is fantastic news for hydrography in Australia and also great to see that such a large number of international hydrography delegates made the long journey to Australia for the event.

The Hydrography technical tour was also dubbed the 'best ever' mixing a bit of history, sightseeing and technical multi-beam demonstrations into a memorable afternoon.

## Australia on the Map World Hydrography Day Dinner

Who said hydrography was dull? Hopefully the 45 people who attended the World Hydrography Day Dinner in Canberra recently would think otherwise. There were rare maps, special guests, entertaining speakers, an award ceremony, even cutlasses, hydrography in all its glory.

The Australia on the Map Division continues to be actively involved in promoting World Hydrography Day on 21 June, and this year was no exception. For the occasion it was decided to have a formal dinner, but not just one with fine food and drinks, but something that would entertain and educate, particularly as it is the 90th anniversary of the Australian Hydrographic Service. We hope our guests were not disappointed.

The venue was the highly reputable Bookplate at the National Library of Australia, but the evening began outside the Map Room, where guests mingled before taking in a display of rare and historic maps kindly arranged by the Curator of Maps, Dr Martin Woods. From there we moved up to Bookplate, regaled with Eastern European folk and Gypsy music as we entered. Guests found a strange assortment of items on their tables - compasses, telescopes, protractors, even cutlasses, fortunately only toy ones. They were urged to take these away in case they had a need to navigate the high seas. Another little surprise also lay in store. A mysterious document rolled up and tied up with a ribbon. But eventually all was revealed, when they undid the document each guest found themselves in possession of a copy of the 1811 Freycinet Map, the first full map of Australia ever to be published. This was to serve as a reminder that the 200th anniversary of the publication of that map takes place next year.

Following a delicious main course of things like Maryland duck, Commodore Rod Nairn, the hydrographer of Australia, was invited to address the gathering on the significance of World Hydrography Day and the 90th anniversary of the Australian Hydrographic Service. Commodore Nairn gave a refreshing and insightful address, noting some of the roles and achievements of the Hydrographic Service and hydrographers over the last 90 years.

Following his address Commodore Nairn was asked to present the Australasian Hydrographic Society's Literary Achievement Award. We are proud to say that Australia on the Map Division member Robert King was the recipient of the award, recognising his contributions to maritime history and trade, political geography in relation to treaties, with papers published in three different languages. His work on the erroneous origins of the 'Dieppe Maps' was particularly noted.

One further highlight of the evening was a short lecture by Dr Martin Woods on 'The Trouble With Titles', how some map titles can be highly misleading, at times deliberately so. Martin's lecture was exquisitely informative and well received by the attentive guests. Rounding off the evening were performances on the piano by Cornelia Dragusin - pieces from the likes of Chopin, Mendelssohn, Bach and Bartók.

With such fine food, food for thought, beautiful music and good company, the whole evening was judged to have been a great success. So now we look forward to World Hydrography Day next year, and how we might commemorate that in a way that reflects the importance and dignity of the occasion.