

THE GERMAN HYDROGRAPHIC CONFERENCE 2005 IN WILHELMSHAVEN

Deutscher Hydrographentag 2005

This year's annual Hydrographic Conference of the German Hydrographic Society (DHG), the "Deutscher Hydrographentag", took place in the North Sea port city of Wilhelmshaven from 6-8 June. This event, a four to five-year tradition, was jointly organised with the German Association of Surveying (DVW) and the Commission responsible for Hydrography.

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The venue had been carefully chosen: Wilhelmshaven is Germany's only deep-water port. At present it is by far the most important oil terminal in Germany, but there are concrete plans to extend the port and to develop it further as a container port, particularly for the deep-going container vessels of the latest generation. It was no surprise, therefore, to find the city of Wilhelmshaven fully aware of the importance hydrography has for it, as the First Mayor of the city, Mr Eberhard Menzel, emphasised in his opening speech. The conference was well attended by approximately 150 participants, among them some from the neighbouring Netherlands and from Austria. As always, there was an accompanying exhibition showcasing the products and services of some twenty companies.

Conference Programme

One session of the conference programme was devoted to the far-reaching local project of expanding the port capabilities of Wilhelmshaven with a new deep-water container terminal. Another session dealt with other projects along the North Sea coast, such as the results of projects to deepen the Weser River. A particularly interesting paper addressed the question of sea-level change over the last seventy years.

There were many papers presenting results of hydrographic measurements for a wide range of purposes, such as measuring the squat using GPS, determination of sediment transport, density measurements in the bottom layer, the hydraulics of the Jade-Weser Port, to name but a few. Other papers examined the potential of space and airborne remote-sensing methods in hydrography. Another group of papers dealt with the use of digital terrain models and GIS.

The wide-ranging role of hydrography was brought to the attention of the public in an evening lecture on "Hydrography - Tsunami - System Earth" by DHG board member Gunnar Tietze. At the same time, a public exhibition at the nearby OCEANIS, the virtual underwater laboratory that attracted many visitors at the 1998 EXPO in Lisbon, showed the history and uses of echo sounding under the title: "Echo sounders - hearing the depth".

As always, a trip by ship accentuated the maritime atmosphere, creating the best conditions for good and friendly talks between conference attending hydrographic professionals.