

Towards FIG Working Week

Final preparations are well underway for the annual FIG Working Week (8 1). This year, we will be meeting in Stockholm (Sweden) from 14 to 19 June and, given the nearness to summer solstice, delegates will have an opportunity to travel north to above 66½°N to witness the midnight sun. The theme this year is “Integrating Generations”™.<P>

To quote the meeting's organisers, the theme presents an opportunity for participants to address “many of the issues facing surveyors in the next years. These include questions related to the need of getting young people interested in surveying and geomatics, how to keep the professional qualifications up to date, and the need for capacity building – all issues of great interest for FIG and the local organising committee. The theme can also be interpreted as being more closely related to the profession itself: what is the role of modern technology in global navigation satellite systems (GNSS), geoinformatics, laser scanning, etc. These fast-growing technologies are changing the way of our profession”. To those who have an interest in hydrography and the challenges facing the profession, particularly those that relate to the need of attracting young hydrographers to the profession, the chosen theme is likely to have a significant meaning.

The technical programme has three sessions plus a tour that will be of interest to hydrographic surveyors. Commission 4 has accepted many hydrographic/coastal area papers on coastal zone management, case studies in hydrographic measurement and professional practice. Further, there will be a joint workshop with Commission 8 on issues relating to the urban coastal zone. Indications so far are that the RICS and the IHO will send representatives (Steve Shipman and Ruth Adams, respectively) who are both hydrographers. Ruth, a former Vice-chair for Commission 4 and lead author of a FIG special publication on vertical reference frameworks, is now the Chair of the Geomatics Faculty Board of the RICS. Ruth also maintains an interesting survey-related blog (8 2) that some of you may want to check out. Unfortunately, due to the pressure of work commitments in the Canadian North, our Chair will not be able to attend; instead, the Vice-chair Administration (David Neale) will lead the Commission's efforts in Stockholm. At the Commission's executive level, there is one nominee for the post of incoming Chair 2010–2014: Dr Michael Sutherland, who has been nominated by the Canadian Institute of Geomatics. Michael is presently the Vice-chair and leads the Commission's Work Group 4.3 on Administering Marine Spaces.

Commission 4 has been holding a workshop, on 5 May, during the Canadian Hydrographic Conference and National Surveyor's Conference in Victoria (Canada) (8 3), including an overview of FIG and introduce the work of Commission 4 (hydrography). Participants were provided with a copy of FIG Publication 36, Administering Marine Spaces, International Issues (8 4).

In other news, the FIG/IHO/ICA Advisory Board on the Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers met in April, in Sydney (Australia), and considered an impressive list of applications by hydrographic courses for accreditation including courses from Turkey, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Malaysia and New Zealand. There have been some recent changes to the board membership: most notably, David Neale was recently appointed. The Board Chair, Mr Gordon Johnston has promised to provide us with a report on their deliberations at the upcoming Working Week.

In all, we expect that the Working Week will provide us with an opportunity to continue the work of the Commission as well as deepen our relationship with other Commissions in joint activities. It will also be the launch of FIG's voluntary peer-review process.

We look forward to seeing you in the land of the midnight sun.