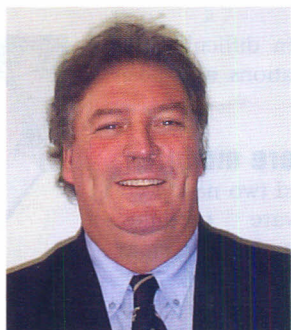


Our irrepressible antipodean columnist looks back at the year's highpoint in Munich, the new friends and acquaintances made and ahead to 2010.



## FIG revisited, while Sydney beckons

by John F. Brock

What a hoot it was in Munich in October for the XXIII FIG Congress! Being with all of those special Brits I mentioned last issue, I could have been sitting in Shepherds Restaurant uttering Michael Caine-isms like: "I told you to just blow the bloody doors off!" (from the movie *The Italian Job*, of course).

At FIG Congresses I always look forward to getting some quality time with my Jamaican surveyor friends **Cynthia**, **Horace** and **Duel**, and now new friend **Glendon**. I also had the distinction of being introduced to **Julaine** who was a most captivating West Indian lady lawyer. Bahaman surveyor **Thomas Ferguson** from Nassau was another lively personality with whom it was a pleasure to make acquaintance.

It does not get any better than experiencing the smallness of the world through networking with other surveyors from many countries and I warmly congratulate the German Congress Committee under the Presidency of **Holger Magel** and Directorship of **Thomas Gollwitzer**, for staging a world class international conference in a city of vast intrigue and beauty. The Intergeo Exhibition had to be seen to be believed in its vastness of mapping and surveying aids with around 300 exhibitors taking part. I met and had conversations with the Surveyor-General of Mongolia Prof. Dr Shairai Batsukh and his counterpart from The Bahamas, **Godfrey Humes**, in addition to the Mayor of Munich at a special lunchtime reception in the historic Munich Town Hall (Rathaus in German!).

### Great history weekend

The FIG Institution for the History of Surveying and Measurement – **Jan de Graeve**, **Jim Smith** and **David Wallis** – set the bar even higher with a phenomenal Saturday and Sunday filled with diverse and interesting aspects of our history. The workshop on the first day was held in the magnificent Bavarian Office of

Surveying & Geographic Information during which we were treated to dancers while we dined on a traditional Bayern meal. The first event of the day was a tour, conducted by the Bavarian Surveyor-General **Georg Fichtinger**, of the most brilliant geodesy museum housed within the building, as well as a look in the basement where thousands of lithographic stones for the maps of the whole area are stored. They weigh over 1700 tonnes! As the report detailed in the last *GW*, the lecture programme was of the highest quality and content, from the Aztec cadastre and Swiss alpine surveyors, to the German mapping contribution in the Australasian region along with Gauss and Humboldt to boot!

### Australian ambassadors shine

What a proud Aussie I was when I saw just how brilliantly our young ambassadors conducted themselves in their assignment to encourage interest in the next FIG Congress. There were no complaints about the incredible Sydney FIG2010 party as the final event of the congress. As you saw from the last edition of *Undercurrents*, even the giant Koala was saved from dehydration, while I put myself on a "prawn only" diet. It makes my heart beat with pride to know that the future of the surveying profession is left to such a wonderful group of young surveyors and I applaud the superb efforts of our NSW Congress Director **Paul Harcombe**, our phenomenal NSW Surveyor-General **Warwick Watkins**, demonstrating seamless bipartisanship with Queenslanders **Matt Higgins**, **Graham Marion** from WA and NT's own **Rob Sarib**.

### Poland and Austria

After Munich I paid visits to nearby Berlin, Poland and Vienna. In Poland I was made an honorary Pole by the members of the Strzelecki family who generously showed me the last burial place of **Sir Pawel Edmund de Strzelecki** (the man who named Australia's highest mountain Mt Kosciuszko) in the crypt of the 1230 church of St Wojtech in Poznan. My host was **Ryszard Strzelecki** who is my schoolmate Les's father and he even took me to where Sir Pawel went to school to have morning tea with the Director.

My last day in Europe was spent touring Vienna. On a hectic schedule I visited the Schonbrunn Palace, cruised the Danube, rode atop the Prater giant tramcar Ferris wheel (Riesenrad) originally erected in 1897, finishing off with a classical dinner in the wine-making area of Grinseng complete with a traditional Austrian opera/dance show. Go to this magical city – it is truly wonderful! **GW**

Below: yours truly (far left) at the the Bavarian Office of Surveying & Geographic Information with (from left to right) **David Wallis**, **Bavarian Surveyor-General Georg Fichtinger**, **George Baitch** and **Jan de Graeve**.

