

Meetings, Networking and Success



The theme of this issue is BIM and there is plenty to write about on this topic, including reports and comments from Geo Business and the FIG Congress as well as other meetings and projects.

Geo Business in London and the FIG Congress in Istanbul are reported on in full in this issue of GW. Both meetings were considered by our reporters to be very successful but this raises the questions of what we mean by success and what is the value of these meetings. Geo Business is primarily a trade show with a conference added on, and gives industry an opportunity to present products and also hear about the needs of practitioners. FIG is more of an academic conference with a significant input from government agencies and NGOs, with an exhibition. For either of this type of conference to be successful, there

must be interaction between the parties involved and a successful meeting will bring all relevant groups together. One of the main benefits for all attendees is the opportunity to network and this certainly happened in these two meetings as did a massive exchange of information between all participants.

How much do the activities at these meetings give a reflection of the current practice in geospatial surveying? Any conference organiser likes to have keynote presentations from leaders in the field from business, practice and academia, and the presenters like to show new and exciting development, but how much to these talks relate to what is going on in the field? Taking BIM as an example: James Kavanagh in his RICS column takes the view, based on FIG, that BIM is flourishing with significant international interest, but Anne Kemp at Geo Business raised a number of issues which indicate that there are problems with the implementation of BIM as originally conceived. Richard Groom in his report on BIM at Geo Business raises similar doubts and particularly asks how it is possible to convince all parties involved how to use BIM over the lifecycle of a building and whether geospatial surveyors can play a bigger role in helping this happen.

Conferences should give a snapshot of the state of science and technology in their subject. James Kavanagh emphasises the importance of BIM. He also sees urban development and land administration as important, particularly fit for purpose practice and land rights. He demonstrates the importance of working with international bodies such as UN Habitat and FAO and cites RICS involvement in developing ILMS as a particular success. In the report on FIG, digitalisation is highlighted as well as land management. At FIG, some delegates described opportunities for surveying professionals to carry out work calculating risk and insurance and post-disaster surveying for calculating hazard and, quantities arising from concerns about global warming and climate change. All of this reflects globalisation as a major driver and this is picked up in the report on the Engage conference where it is noted that global companies such as Allianz, SAP, AWS, PwC and Vodafone are very interested in geospatial data and they should need geospatial surveyors to advise and develop products dependent on this data. The message from these two meetings is that geospatial surveying is healthy and has a role to play in many aspects of the lives of all inhabitants of our planet, and, although BIM is a hot topic there is still a long way to go before it is fully accepted and implemented.

It is encouraging to see in several reports that the Geospatial Commission is making its mark and that William Priest, its director, is assuring us that this has support at the highest level in government; this is very encouraging given the distraction of Brexit. Geospatial issues are also in the national news regarding Galileo and maintaining this essential piece of infrastructure also seems to be on the government's mind.

Interesting times!

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