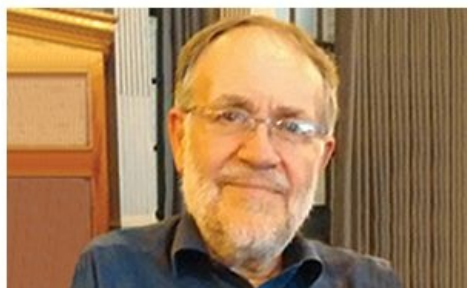


Lawyers are Rubbing their Hands While We Worry About Tunnels!



We reflect on the lives of surveyors past, whether registered title really does protect you and just how much tunnel surveying has changed, or perhaps not.

In this issue, we mark the passing of several significant surveyors. Derek Browning (co-founder of Longdin & Browning), Dr Tony Jones, Gary Covington and as we were going to press, Jonathan Davy. So far we have only been able to put together an obituary of one of them.

Gary Covington was amongst that last generation of surveyors who undertook mapping projects before the advent of GPS. Whilst EDM was already available through devices like the Tellurometer and the Aga 6, often they were unsuitable for the task in hand. Jan

Karulus (himself of that generation) recounts how Gary and his survey party had to set to and hack their way through the Cameroonian Bush to make a trace through which they could measure. Back then the nature of surveying was very different. Months or even years away from home; experiencing people and cultures very different from home, living in rough accommodation, even living off the land all gave young surveyors unique experience. While they would have had an education it was topped off by experience something you gained and when you needed it rather than just after you needed it.

On the topic of GPS, I am able to provide a review of Pinpoint, a book about how the satellite navigation and positioning technology is changing our lives and possibly our brains (page 31). Surveyors should enjoy it as it has lots of insightful anecdotes and tangents.

English Law, the Land and Europe

Many do not appreciate the complexities of legal systems. English Law relies heavily on case law – actual disputes tried before a judge whose decision will then be cited by lawyers for ever unless challenged in the Appeal or High Courts. Carl Calvert's column in this issue provides some interesting reading for those who believe an entry in the Land Registry's register is absolute proof of title. Recent case law found in favour of the original registered owners but not before they were put to the expense of going to trial and learning that even a forged deposition (surely a criminal offence) might not protect your title.

With the UK about to get to grips with the complex work of how we leave Europe, I do wonder how many people realise the amount of work we've gifted to lawyers. I was chatting to one recently who was rubbing his hands at the prospect and looking forward to at least a decade of work in unravelling commercial contracts and agreements between the UK and Member States. In the meantime, there are important issues over initiatives like INSPIRE, the harmonisation of mapping datasets and ERASMUS, the student exchange project, which has allowed so many young students to gain experience of a different country. Fortunately for most surveyors, we have only to ponder the topographical and mathematical problems of our relationship with Europe. The British Isles' slow tectonic drift away from the continent, while it may be millimetres each year (unlike Australia's 7.5cms – see Undercurrents page 12) it mounts up over time until coordinates have to be adjusted. We still have much to learn on this topic as Richard Groom discovered in his review of papers presented at the FIG working week in New Zealand (see page 24).

Not Bad for Nearly 150 Years Ago

I am always impressed when tunnels driven from each end meet with reasonable accuracy, unlike Colonel Barog's tunnel on the narrow gauge KalkaShimla Railway in India. The Colonel's calculations were out and the two tunnelling teams missed each other. The poor man shot himself. The recently completed Gotthard Base in Switzerland had the benefit of some of the most advanced surveying equipment in the world. Nevertheless, tunnelling surveyors and engineers are always nervous about their calculations. Driven from both ends, the 57km tunnel closed to 8cms. Not bad, but what about an earlier drive under the Alps? In 1871 the 7½ mile rail tunnel under Mont Cenis driven from both sides between France and Italy closed to within 12 inches (300cms). Not bad for nearly 150 years ago.

Meet Our New Publishers

Lastly, can I urge readers to try to make the trip to InterGEO, this year in Hamburg 1113 October. In addition to many UK companies exhibiting, watch out for our new publishers Geomares and their team, who will be distributing copies of this journal and others including Engineering Surveying Showcase and GIS Professional.

