

# THE XIX INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF VEXILLOLOGY YORK 23-27 JULY 2001



On the evening of Sunday, 22 July, 2001, in the mediæval splendour of the restored 15th Century Guildhall in the ancient city of York, amid the flags of 28 countries and more vexillological associations, Councillor Irene Waudby, Lord Mayor of York, welcomed delegates to the XIX International Congress of Vexillology at a civic reception. The following morning, in the same impressive setting, the Vice Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Colonel Edward York, declared the XIX ICV open. He was introduced by Robin Ashburner, President of the Flag Institute, who spoke of York's historical significance and thanked those who had worked to prepare the Congress, both in York and elsewhere.

After the opening ceremony the participants and accompanying persons paraded with their flags through the streets of York, led by Mr John Redpath, the Town Crier in full 18th Century costume, ringing his bell to attract attention of the citizens and, with his cry "Oyez, oyez!" telling of the reason for the parade and naming the countries taking part. This colourful spectacle attracted much interest from York residents and visitors. The procession passed York Minster, and went on into the gardens of the Yorkshire Museum, where the Congress itself was to take place. Outside the Tempest Anderson Hall, the venue of the Congress proper, the flag of the XIX Congress was hoisted by João Lourenço of Zimbabwe, the youngest delegate present.

A total of 106 delegates from 28 countries attended the Congress, many with accompanying spouses and other family members. Five countries, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Japan and Zimbabwe were represented at an ICV

for the first time. The flags of participating countries and associations were displayed around the conference hall.

Congress began with a presentation on British naval flags by Cdr Bruce Nicolls. As the Congress was in Britain to commemorate the bicentenary of the Union Flag, each session was planned to begin with a British topic. 31 presentations covered a wide range of subjects from all over the world, almost all of them brilliantly illustrated with computer-generated images, produced by Graham Bartram, General Secretary of the Flag Institute.

Notable among presenters was 93-year-old Teodoro Amerlinck from Mexico on early Mexican flags, and teenage delegates Lorenzo Breschi on Analysis of Flag Colours and Mason Kaye on Maps on Flags. Lorenzo could not attend the Congress in person and his paper was delivered for him by Dr Peter Orenski.

Other papers covered Tudor flags, flags of Argentina, political flags in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Royal Standards of Southern Africa, attempts to change the flag of New Zealand, flags of Cornwall and the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, signalling flags, flag tattoos, Ottoman decorative finials, "One Nation under God" - an analysis of religious aspects of the US Flag, flags of the Canton of Vaud and of Italian states, Dutch military colours, 100 years of flags in Ohio, British sledge flags of polar explorers, political flags in Senegal, flag stamps of Australia, flags of Scotland and Wales and porting Flags. The last paper was an interesting and amusing coverage of Flags in Comics, the Case of Asterix, the Gaul, by Dr Marcus Schmöger, in which York was shown on the map of England as a stronghold of vexillology in an otherwise vexi-ignorant wilderness.



Flags parade through York's streets



Over 100 vexillologists attended

During Congress, breaks for tea and coffee were held in the Hospitium, a 14th Century building, formerly the guesthouse of St Mary's Abbey. In the same room was a display of some 20 British Royal Standards, adding glorious swathes of colour to the splendour of the building. These included the actual Royal Standard and Standard of the Prince of Wales which flew at the opening of the first Welsh Assembly. Also in the room was a set of the newly-designed gonfalons of the city of Assisi, seen outside Italy for the first time, and historic military flags loaned by the Imperial War Museum.

The main flag displays were in yet another historic building, the 14th Century Merchant Adventurers' Hall, the largest timber-framed building in York, home to what was once the most powerful and wealthy trading company in the city.

The Great Hall had a display of British and British-derived flags and ensigns, especially to commemorate the bicentenary of the Union Flag. The nearly 100 flags in the display showed the influence of British design in naval, civil and civil air ensigns in former British territories throughout the world.

The Undercroft had a more general display, with flags of Africa, Imperial Germany, Asia and Albania. Most of the flags were known to vexillologists from books and charts, but few of them had been seen in reality before.

More unusual flags included German Imperial colonial designs, approved by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1914, but not made at the time, due to World War I. Many of the flags displayed were from the collections of Bruce Berry of South Africa and Clay Moss of Mississippi, to whom the Flag Institute is greatly indebted for providing and displaying their flags.

The social aspect of Congress included visits to the Minster Embroideries (not normally open to the public) for accompanying persons, and the Jorvik Viking Centre, a dramatic recreation of York over 1000 years ago, on the actual site and based on archaeological finds. There was even a Viking Raven Banner!

The all-day trip on Wednesday was to Hartlepool Historic Quay, 60 miles north-east of York. The Quay is an impressive recreation of 18th-19th Century marine life. Hartlepool has a fine reputation for restoring old ships. At the centre of the Quay was the frigate *Trincomalee*. This ship was built in India in 1817 and is now fully restored to her original condition.

Accompanying persons also visited Lotherton Hall, a stately home with a deer park and bird garden. The highlight was a picnic prepared by Ethel Faul, wife of Michael, principal Congress organizer, and two friends.

At the FIAV General Assembly on Monday evening, the Vexillological Association of the State of Texas, the Japan



Top-left clockwise: the Guildhall decked in flags for the Civic Reception; João Lourenço shows his flag to the Lord Mayor of York & her consort; Mrs & Col York, FIAV President Michel Lupant, FIAV Sec-Gen for Congresses Graham Bartram & FI President Robin Ashburner; the Town Crier

Vexillological Association, the Confederate States Vexillological Association, Flags of the World, Vlaggendokumentatie Centrum Nederlands, Heraldic and Vexillological Institute (Poland) and the Moldovan Heraldic, Genealogical and Archivist Society were admitted to membership. The officers of the FIAV executive were re-confirmed in their positions for a further two years, Professor Michel Lupant of Belgium as President, Mr Charles Adkin Spain of the United States as Secretary-General and Graham Bartram as Secretary-General for Congresses. Miraculously, the entire meeting was completed in one 3-hour session.

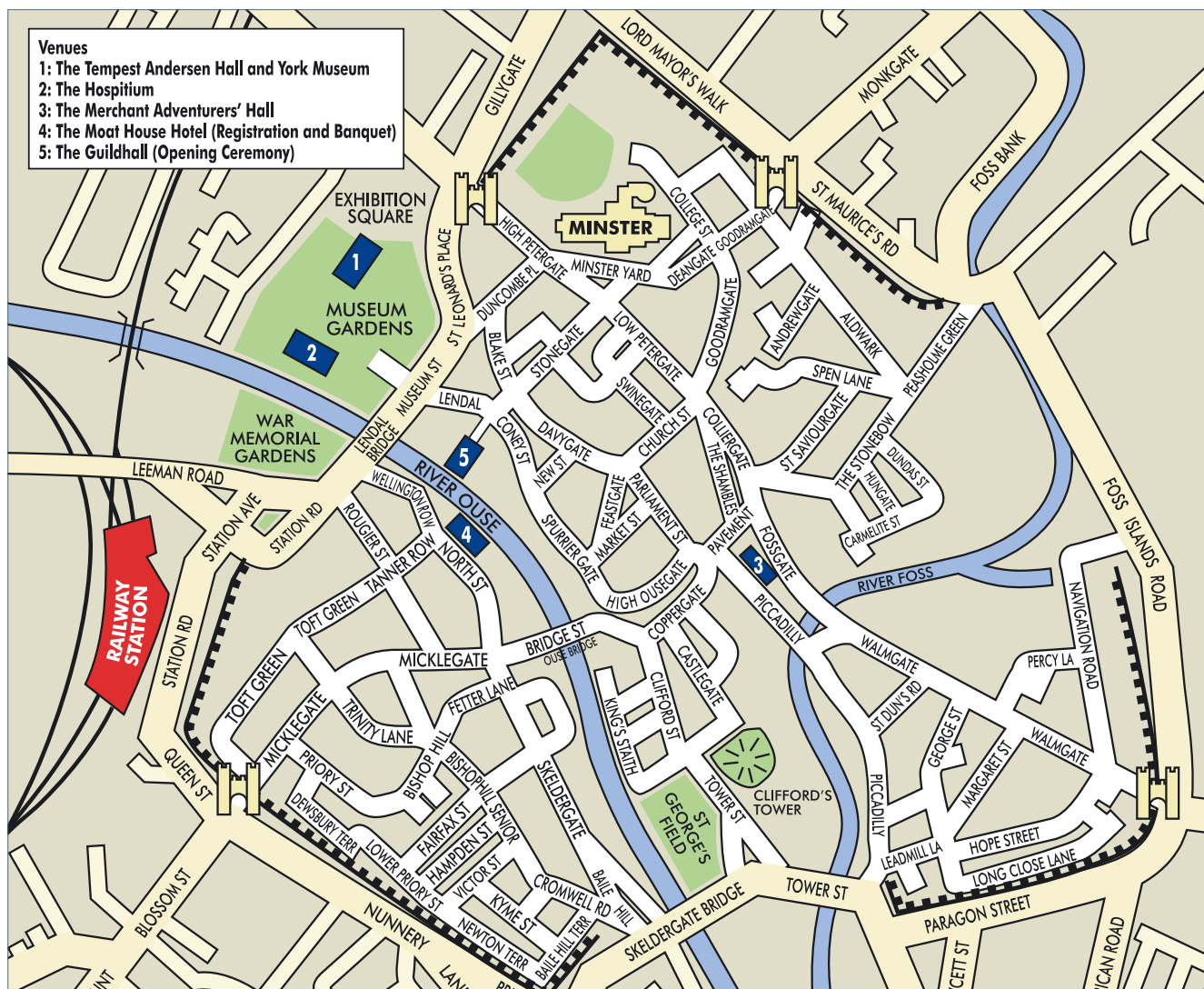
The Congress ended with the final banquet in the York Moathouse Hotel, overlooking the River Ouse. This excellent dinner was the setting for the Congress awards. The Flag Institute President thanked all who had contributed to the success of the Congress, particularly Michael Faul, editor of *Flagmaster* and Membership Secretary.

Cdr Bruce Nicolls, past President of the Flag Institute thanked Robin Ashburner for the leadership, drive and practical contribution (in flags and flagpoles) which he had made to the Congress. He paid tribute to the oldest and youngest contributors, and referred to the debt which all vexillologists owe to Dr Whitney Smith the "father" of modern vexillology.

The Vexillon, for the greatest contribution to vexillology in the past two years, was awarded to Capt Armand du Payrat of the French Navy, for his work with the *Album des Pavillons*. The award for the best presentation at the Congress went to Dr Philippe Rault of Brittany for his paper on "New Flags for an Old Country", outlining the work of the Breton Vexillological Society in encouraging the design and use of flags in Brittany.

FIAV recognized as Fellows of the Federation Teodoro Amerlinck y Zírion, Barrie Kent, Bruce Nicolls, Christian Fogd Pedersen, Lucien Philippe, Whitney Smith, Aldo Zigioto and Alfred Znamierowski. Michael Faul was recognized as a Fellow of the Flag Institute. Ethel Faul received a bouquet for her work in assisting with Congress, presented by her grandson, João Lourenço. She and her assistants also received bouquets in appreciation of their work with the Accompanying Persons Programme.

In closing the Congress, FIAV President Michel Lupant thanked the Flag Institute for organizing the XIX ICV and commented on the high quality of the presentations. After describing the event as an example of the universality of vexillology, he expressed the hope that we would all meet again in Stockholm for the XX International Congress in 2003. So ended a memorable and at times emotional evening.





Top-left clockwise: British flags in the Merchant Adventurers' Hall (including ensigns from Sarawak, Bermuda and North Borneo); Breton flags in the Merchant Adventurers' Hall (including those of Bigouden, Dinard and Le Juch); Flags of the World (FOTW) attendees; silk kimonos at Lotherton Hall; Alfred Znamierowski receives his FIAV Fellowship from FIAV Secretary-General Charles 'Kin' Spain; Teodoro Amerlinck with his FIAV Fellowship; Michael Faul with his Fellowship of the Flag Institute; Royal Standards (courtesy of HM The Queen) in the Hospitium display (from left to right, Other Members Standard, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the now obsolete Trinidad & Tobago)