

27TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF VEXILOLOGY

London, 7th-11th August 2017



Report on the 27th Congress of Vexillology (ICV27) London, 2017

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Acknowledgements

The ICV27 Organising Team are grateful to Emil Dreyer, Ted Kaye, Mike Kearney, Jantakarn Khloaisai, Rudi Longueville, Ian Sumner, Charlie Weekes, Leigh Wetherall and Stan Zamyatin for permission to use their photographs. This report is a corrected and expanded version of material first published in *Flagmaster* 158.



ICV27 Organising Team: left to right, Maggie Sumner, Lesley Ross, Leigh Wetherall, John Hall, Ian Sumner, Tom Randall, Graham Bartram, Mike Kearney, Kath Kearney

ICV27 Flag

The 27th International Congress of Vexillology (ICV27) came to the UK In 2017, taking place between 7-11 August at Imperial College London.

One of the first tasks of the organisers was to choose a Congress flag, and they asked FI members to submit suitable designs. The original idea was to create a 'longlist' from which the FI Council could select a shortlist and then a winner, but the voting was so emphatic that only a single vote was needed.

Several designs used devices of cross and sword found on the flag of the City of London. Imperial College is actually in the City of Westminster but the FI Council felt that the sword had been used sufficiently widely to represent London as a whole and would be allowable.

Tony Burton submitted a number of designs. His first design focused on that quintessential symbol of London, the Tube, reversing the colours of its station signs so the blue circle also represents the London Eye, a landmark impossible to miss. Plain lettering may be considered allowable as the device is meant to represent a Tube station logo. The criss-cross arms on the field clearly evoke the Union Jack but also the street grid of one of the major cities of the world. All roads led to London in 2017. He also submitted a variant of this design, using white for yellow and amending the central wording.



Tony Burton: 1

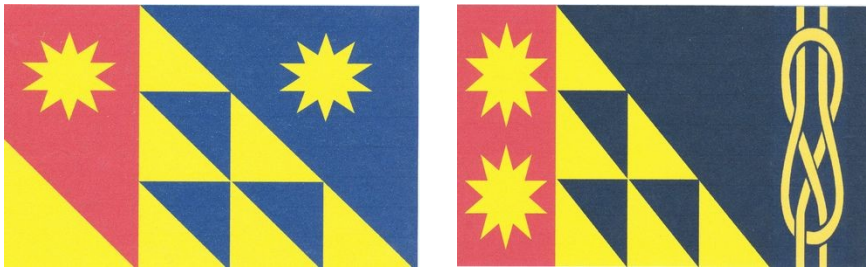
Tony's next design is based on a stylised idea of the latest London landmark, the Shard.

Blue and gold stand for FIAV and vexillology, while red, gold and blue are drawn from local emblems (the Royal Standard, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and Imperial College). Two ten-pointed stars plus six small gold triangles within a larger triangle (the stylised shape of the Shard) add up to $20+7$, equalling 27, the Congress number.



Tony Burton: 2

A variant of this design moved one star into the fly and replaced it with a shape that evokes the 'V' of Vexillology, while a second variant placed the FIAV knot in the fly.

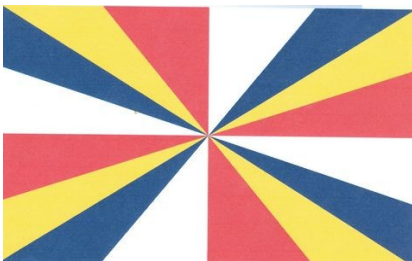
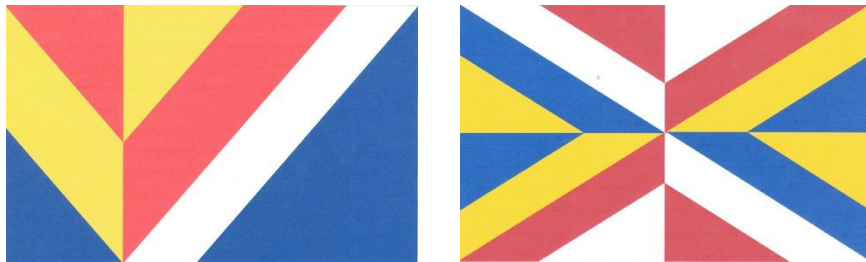


His next design combines the colours of the FIAV flag and the Union Jack, but without duplicating either, the yellow head band evoking the lead ends of the FIAV knot. The design is constructed from six lines (three vertical and three oblique) to form three large V-shapes for Vexillology, while 3 x 3 x 3 points for each triangle equals 27, again the number of the Congress.



Tony Burton: 3

His final three designs were all more abstract. The first combines the colours of FIAV and the Union Jack in a V-shape for Vexillology. The second is suggestive of the Union Jack without duplicating it. It combines the colours of local heraldry and of FIAV, all expressed as an interlocking rotation of V-shapes styling human figures in welcome and celebrating the pageantry and fellowship of flags.

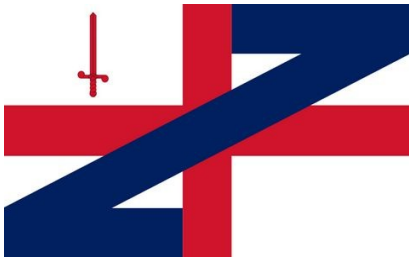


Tony Burton: 4

His last design combines the colours of local heraldry and flags. The construction is of shards in the shape of V for Vexillology – repeated 40 times, all arranged gyronny as a burst of energy. It is a flag of many parts suggesting the flags of many of the delegates. It is a gay flag emphasising the pageantry of the occasion. There is a suggestion of the Union Jack, but the designs of each are quite distinct.

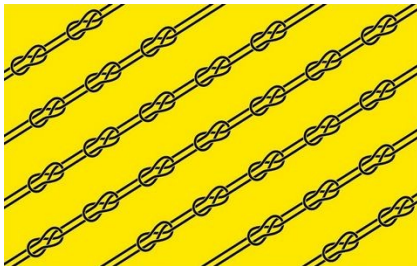
Tim Fallows used the flag of the City of London with a bold blue over-stripe, evoking both '2' and '7', the Congress number. He described this as the flag of London

'dressed with the blue sash of vexillological wisdom'. Congress delegates would have a lot to live up to!



Tim Fallows

Tom Randall submitted three designs inspired by Imperial College. The first was a series of 27 FIAV knots in black on a yellow field. The colours of yellow and black are taken from the coat of arms of Prince Albert, who during the nineteenth century did much to develop the institutions in the immediate geographical area of the Congress (at one time nicknamed 'Albertopolis'). The colours also feature in the arms of our host, Imperial College. Tom's second design reduced the number of knots to one. Across the top was '11011', the binary number for '27', the number of the ICV. The use of binary, familiar to all computer students, is a nod to Imperial College and its wider area, which are home to several scientific institutions. His third design developed these ideas further, combining the binary figure with a green FIAV knot, recalling the arms of Saxony, and more particularly of Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg.



Tom Randall: 1

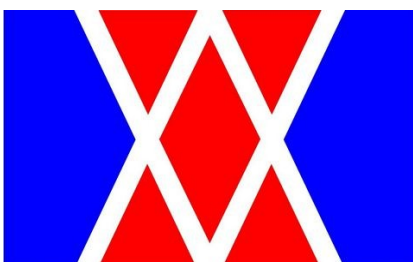


Tom Randall: 2



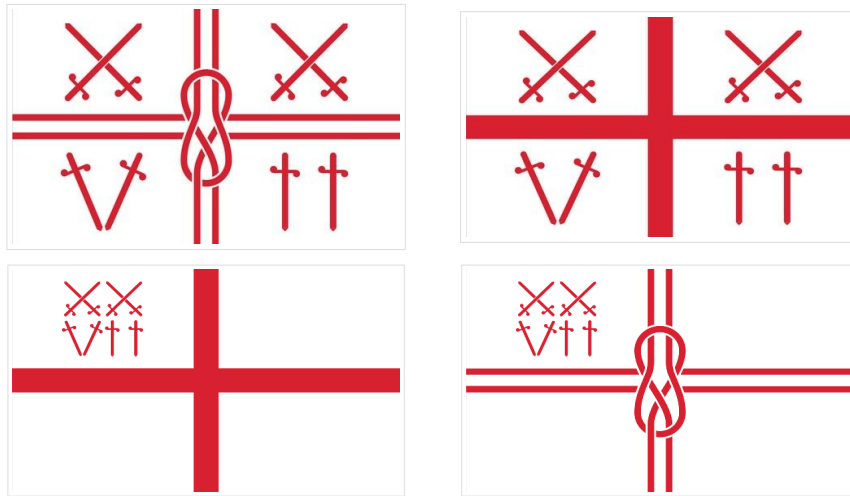
Tom Randall: 3

Charles Reed's design combined the colours of the UK national flag with those of the flag of London and showed the Congress number in overlapping Roman numerals.



Charles Reed

Ali Vinall's main design incorporated the cross and sword from the City of London flag, alongside the FIAV knot. The swords spelled out '27' in Roman numerals. He also submitted a number of alternatives as shown below.



Ali Vinall: main design (top left) and variants

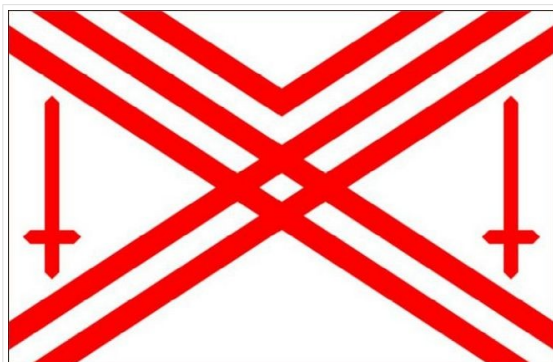
But the winner was ... Nicolas Hugot, who also based his design on the flag of the City of London.

Nicolas' flag comprises a double St Andrew's saltire, a chevron in the upper part of the flag, and two swords of St Paul – all in red on a white background.

The two saltires form twice times the Roman figure X (i.e. 20), the chevron forms the Roman figure V, (i.e. 5); and two swords form twice times the Roman figure I.

Overall the elements total 27 for ICV27 London 2017. The shade of red has been formalised according to the Pantone system as PMS 186, with detailing in PMS 187.

Nicolas comments: 'You can also see a red saltire for Ireland, and within it a white saltire for Scotland (making it a "British" flag instead of a merely "English" one) but this is more of a coincidence than a true intention!'



The ICV27 flag: Nicolas Hugot's winning design

Registration

Registration opened at Imperial College on Sunday 6 August, at the ICV27 Helpdesk adjoining the Congress venue on the third floor of the Huxley Building.



Welcome to ICV27: Kath Kearney and Leigh Wetherall at the Congress Helpdesk

Friends old and new began to meet up in the foyer before repairing to the FiveSixEight café-bar in the Beit Quadrangle to continue the conversations over a meal and a drink.



Just registered: (left to right) Alan Cooper, Susanne Schmidt, Falko Schmidt, Patricia Edwards, Debbie Kaye, Željko Heimer, Jan Oskar Engene

Opening Ceremony

Delegates and companions gathered on the Queen's Lawn, at the heart of the Imperial College campus, at 9.00 a.m. on Monday 7 August.



Delegates and companions gather to hear the welcoming speeches

The platform party consisted of Malcolm Farrow, President of the Flag Institute, and the FIAV Board – Secretary-General Kin Spain, Secretary-General for Congresses Graham Bartram and President Michel Lupant. They were accompanied by flag-bearers John Ford (Union), John Hall (Flag Institute), Ian Sumner (FIAV) and Leigh Wetherall (ICV27).



Welcome from Malcolm Farrow: behind (left to right) are FIAV's Kin Spain, Graham Bartram and Michel Lupant



Welcome from Michel Lupant: flanking him (left to right) are the Union Flag and the flags of the Flag Institute, FIAV and ICV27



Nicolas Hugot's ICV27 flag (right) is carried at the Opening Ceremony by Leigh Wetherall; left is the FIAV flag carried by Ian Sumner

Following the Ceremony the ICV27 flag and the Union Flag were raised above the Imperial College campus and flew together throughout the Congress.



The Union Flag and the ICV27 flag flying over Imperial College

The Opening Ceremony ended with the traditional group photograph, taken on the steps of the Queen's Tower, before delegates and companions headed for coffee and biscuits and the parting of the ways – to the presentations or to the coach for Kenwood House.



Delegates and companions gather on the steps of the Queen's Tower

Presentations

At the heart of every International Congress of Vexillology are its presentations. As usual, ICV27 offered a real mixture, covering many different aspects of the discipline, with contributions and points of view from all over the world.



Inside the Lecture Theatre

Several speakers chose to discuss their nation's civic flags, revealing a variety of different approaches.

Some nations make use of historic patterns, like Croatia (Željko Heimer); others take a more modern approach, as in Georgia (David Chkheidze) or Bulgaria (Stoyan Antonov).

Some adopt a mixture of the two, as exemplified by the flags of Dutch polder boards (Marcel van Westerhoven), while Canada (Rob Raeside) seems about to be overrun by ultra-modern swirls and swooshes.



David Chkheidze



Ted Kaye

Ted Kaye (USA) spoke of the recent renaissance of civic flags in the United States and of the many new flag projects across the country.

Irish county flags (Stan Zamyatin) have emerged from Gaelic sports teams to become the widely used, but wholly unofficial, symbols of their locality.

Finally, Roberto Breschi (Italy) played detective in a tale that took him to libraries, archives and museum basements, hot on the trail of civic flags displayed in Florence in 1869 in an exhibition celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of the poet Dante.



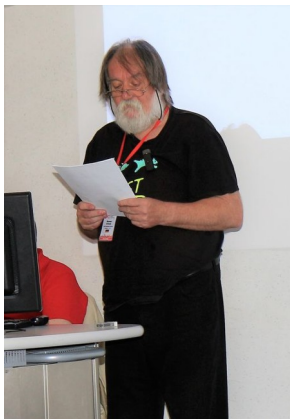
Željko Heimer



Stan Zamyatin

Others speakers opted for sports flags as their subject.

Roman Klimeš (Germany) has uncovered the whereabouts of a flag used by the Bohemian team at the 1912 Olympics, previously thought lost. Peter Hans van den Muijzenberg (Frisia) highlighted some inconsistencies in the official narrative of the history of the Olympic flag.



Roman Klimeš



Peter Hans van den Muijzenberg

Aleš Brožek (Czech Republic) presented findings from his researches on early Czech rowing clubs, and Victor Lomantsov (Russia) has been tracking down the flags of sports societies in the Soviet Union.



Aleš Brožek



Victor Lomantsov

Several talks highlighted the importance of flags to a nation and its citizens.

Annie Platoff (USA) opened the Congress by describing the Soviet Union's use of flags in the socialisation of its children. Other presenters described the process and occasional controversies marking the adoption of new flags in Puerto Rico (Avelino Couceiro), Rhodesia (Bruce Berry) and the Gambia (Jos Poels).



Bruce Berry



Jos Poels

Ralph Kelly (Australia) rose above mere country to delve into the history of an unofficial flag designed to represent the British Empire, often to be found on eBay.

Many nations include references to the flag in their written constitution, but Nicolas Hugot (France) found little in the way of uniform treatment from country to country.

Xinfeng Zhao (China) described the origins, both mythical and real, of the flags of Genghis Khan and also demonstrated flag-carrying technique in his country.



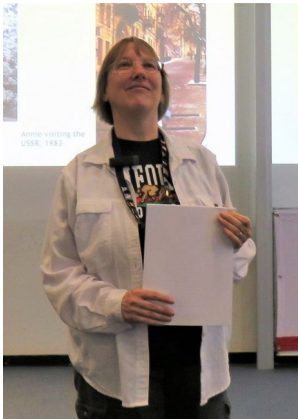
Ralph Kelly



Xinfeng Zhao

The role of flags in binding a community was emphasised by Attila Szekeres, speaking on the flags of the Szekelers, a Hungarian minority in Transylvania, northwest Romania.

Uroš Žižmund (Slovenia) proposed a range of new official rank flags for his country, while his compatriot Aleksander Hribovšek described the search for suitable flags for officials of the national vexillological association, Heraldica Slovenica, which will host ICV29 in Ljubljana in four years' time.



Annie Platoff



Attila Szekeres



Uroš Žižmund

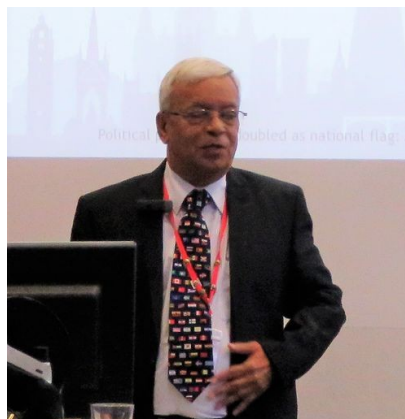


Aleksander Hribovšek

The use, and occasional misuse, of flags was revealed by Kevin Harrington (Canada), Sekhar Chakrabarti (India) and Tony Burton (Australia).



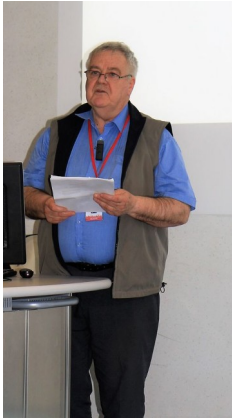
Kevin Harrington



Sekhar Chakrabarti

Ladislav Hnát (Czech Republic) catalogued the flags used by many of the political parties within the European Parliament.

The role of women in flags, as flag bearers, manufacturers, users, or simply devices was the topic addressed by Patrice de la Condamine (France).



Tony Burton



Patrice de la Condamine

So important are certain flags to national history that they have to be preserved, and Rachel Phelan (Ireland) described the conservation of the flag that flew over Dublin's General Post Office during the 1916 Easter Rising.

Meanwhile the current Thai national flag marks its centenary in 2017, and a quartet from the Thai National Flag Museum in Bangkok, led by Pluethipol Prachumphol, enumerated the various changes undergone by their country's flag, and described the creation of a massive Thai flag that found its way into the Guinness Book of Records.



Rachel Phelan



Thai National Flag Museum

Christopher Maddish (USA) and Alan Hardy (UK) suggested new and very different directions in flag design.

Ralph Bartlett (Australia) revealed the striking, innovative flags devised for several Melbourne art events and festivals by Bob 'King' Crawford.

John Cartledge (UK) discussed the use of the colour red in modern flags.

And Alain Raullet (Brittany) showed a very different way of flag carrying.

Breton flag bearers often carry the flag horizontally across their shoulders, and some flags are designed specifically to make use of this alignment.



Christopher Maddish



Alan Hardy



John Cartledge



Alain Raullet

Researching flags old and new, and disseminating that information, remains an important part of vexillology. Pierre-Jean Guionin (France), editor of the *Album des pavillons*, described the latest edition of this iconic flag book, while Hervé Calvarin (France) emphasised the importance of the critical evaluation of sources, using examples from French West Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. Manuela Schmöger (Germany) introduced her new civic flags website, <kommunalflaggen.eu>. Cédric de Fougerolle (France) explored the use of bookplates or ex-libris as a potential source of attitudes and personal responses towards flags.



Hervé Calvarin



Manuela Schmöger

Having made new discoveries, we also need a means of describing flags unambiguously for future researchers, and Theun Okkerse (Netherlands) proposed a new way of achieving just that.



Ralph Bartlett



Theun Okkerse

Passing on this research and knowledge to future generations was the challenge addressed by Tiago José Berg (Brazil), who described a high-school classroom project to produce a display of national flags during the Rio Olympics.

Carlos Alberto Morales Ramirez (Singapore) also had schools in mind when discussing the inclusion of endemic animals on flags and their potential use in interesting children in local ecology.



Tiago José Berg



Carlos Alberto Morales Ramirez

Looking back, Bruce Berry showed some photos from the Cape Town congress of 1997, an unwelcome reminder to many of how young they once looked. Looking forwards, where do we go from here? To ICV28 in San Antonio in 2019, of course. And to further study.

Following Whitney Smith's death in 2016, Scot Guenter (USA) reminded the vexillological community of Smith's dictum that it is critical to study flags without imposing value judgements on their design – all flags represent the community from which they spring and all are worthy of study. Scot urged delegates to employ critical thinking in their research to build a body of knowledge that might incorporate approaches from many different disciplines and ended with his traditional, ringing, call to arms: 'Keep studying those flags!'



Scot Guenter

ICV27 Companion Group

While their partners settled down to a full week of flags, the 34 members of the ICV27 Companions Group (from 20 different countries) set out to explore some of London's lesser-known treasures – sustained by tea and scones, coffee and pastries (though not all at the same time!)



Left to right, Barbara Ross, Annie de La Condamine, Lena Lindqvist, Roman Križanič, Susanne Schmidt, Suzanne Kelly, Michael Platoff, Irina Herzfeld, Pat Edwards, Elisabeth Dreyer, Viviane Thomas, Jenny Naughton, Sukla Chakrabarti, Lin-na Li, Elizabeth Dangaard, Wendy Raeside, Marianne Wissink, Janna Hinterberger, Esther Cruz, Mark Hinterberger, Janice Lancaster, Laurence Soucier, Patricia Keegan Poels, Lory Orsini, Ornella Poggi, Karen Lowe, Debbie Kaye

Our first destination was Kenwood House, a quintessential Georgian country house, high on Hampstead Heath, and just six miles from Trafalgar Square. The view from Kenwood's terrace gives almost no sign of the city, just the faint outline of two towers peeking between the trees of Sir Humphrey Repton's landscaped park, but a short walk to the east and London opens up before you. Inside the house are

masterpieces by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Dyke, Cuyp, Reynolds, Gainsborough and more – all bequeathed to the nation in 1928 by Edward Cecil Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh (heir to the brewing fortune).



There are flags to be found as well, mainly among the Dutch maritime paintings. Of course none escaped the eagle eyes (and cameras) of our group, ever alert to their vexillological duty!



Lunch at Kenwood: clockwise from left, Irina Herzfeld, Susanne Schmidt, Elisabeth Dreyer, Sukla Chakrabarti, Debbie Kaye, Roman Križanič, Annie de La Condamine and Viviane Thomas; behind are Michael Platoff, Patricia Edwards and Maggie Sumner

Tuesday brought a visit to busy Kensington Palace, with lots to explore on our full-day tickets, including special exhibitions featuring former residents Princess Diana and Queen Victoria. We also enjoyed the calm of the elegant Orangery, built as the setting for Queen Anne's sophisticated court entertainments and a suitable backdrop for our no less sophisticated group to relax over a well-earned cream tea!



Kensington Palace: left, the Round Pond; right (left to right), Marianne Wissink, Mike Kearney and Jenny Naughton, with (behind), Elizabeth Dangaard, Karen Lowe and Roman Križanič

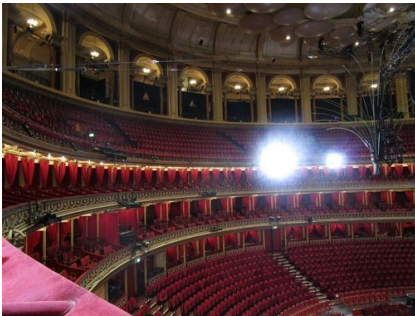
Thursday took a smaller group on an optional visit to Hyde Park, the Wellington Arch and Apsley House – once known simply as Number One, London – the home of the Duke of Wellington. More wonderful paintings here, rescued from a fleeing Joseph Bonaparte after the battle of Vitoria in 1813 and later presented to the Duke by King Ferdinand of Spain, not to mention the State Dining Room with its dazzling silverware – the gift of the King of Portugal.



*Arriving at Apsley House:
left to right, Lena Lindqvist,
Karen Lowe, Elizabeth Dangaard,
Barbara Ross, Susanne Schmidt*

We closed our programme on Friday morning with a Grand Tour of the Royal Albert Hall.

We had a peek at the Queen’s Retiring Room and views of the auditorium from the Gallery and from the box owned by Earl Spencer, where one companion found herself in Princess Diana’s seat.



Royal Albert Hall



Queen's Retiring Room

We also caught rehearsals for *Oklahoma!*, that evening's Prom.

A chorus of 'Oh, What a Beautiful Morning', followed by coffee and cake rounded off a wonderful week.

Mike Kearney, Kath Kearney and Lesley Ross provided indispensable help throughout, and our thanks go to all the companions who took part so enthusiastically in our tours.



*Coffee at the Royal Albert Hall:
front (left to right), Barbara Ross,
Lena Lindquist; behind, Viviane Thomas,
Patricia Keegan Poels, Debbie Kaye,
Susanne Kelly*

Events and Excursions

Monday – Rooftop Barbecue



The tempting array of food



Everyone tucks in

On Monday evening the Flag Institute hosted a rooftop barbecue at Baden-Powell House, just a few minutes on foot from Imperial College, to welcome everyone to London and to celebrate FIAV's 50th birthday.

A good time was had by all – despite the best efforts of the British summer weather!



Left to right, Roberto Breschi, Tomás Rodríguez Peñas, Sebastià Herreros i Agüi and Marco Mecacci raise a glass

Taking shelter from the British summer weather



FIAV President Michel Lupant (left) chats to Sekhar Chakrabarti; behind, with camera, is Ladislav Hnát

Tuesday – 25th Session of the FIAV General Assembly



Left to right: President Michel Lupant, Secretary-General Kin Spain, Secretary-General for Congresses Graham Bartram

The minutes of this meeting are available online from the FIAV website:-
<https://fiav.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Info-FIAV-44.pdf>

Wednesday – Excursion to Royal Greenwich

On a day of torrential rain, ICV27 delegates and companions travelled by coach to Greenwich to visit the Royal Observatory, the Cutty Sark and the National Maritime Museum.

Barbara Tomlinson, Curator Emeritus at Royal Museums Greenwich, gave a presentation on the flags in their collection, including the White Ensign of HMS Chester, worn at the battle of Jutland in 1916, and we returned by river with a trip on the Thames Clipper.



National Maritime Museum from the Royal Observatory



National Maritime Museum: main entrance



Barbara Tomlinson



White Ensign of HMS Chester

Wednesday – Raising the Prime Meridian Flag

In his paper, *Colour Coding and New Vexillological Avenues for Flag Design*, Christopher Maddish (USA) presented a framework for representing numbers by colours that allows new flags to be devised for previously flagless locations by reference, for example, to their altitude or their longitude and latitude. Among his many examples was a flag for the Prime Meridian, which runs through the Royal Observatory. Royal Museums Greenwich kindly gave permission to fly the flag at the Observatory, and during the Wednesday excursion delegates and companions mustered to see it raised – even though the weather refused to cooperate!



FI Chairman John Hall helps to attach the flag to the halyard



Raising the flag

The flag of the Prime Meridian uses blue, white, yellow, black, and orange. The central blue and white chequered pattern represents the central zero point of the Prime Meridian and indicates that a person has crossed a unique line of sorts, as in crossing a finishing line. The black and yellow vertical stripes symbolise that at high noon on the Prime Meridian the day has officially begun at midnight on the other side of the world.



The Prime Meridian flag flies proudly in the leaden London skies

Countries that can fly this flag include: Ghana, Togo, Burkina-Faso, Algeria, Mali, Algeria, Spain, France and England – as well as Antarctica.

Thursday – Flags of the World (FOTW)

As at every ICV, members of the online vex group Flags of the World (FOTW) took the opportunity to meet in person.



FOTW Director Rob Raeside addresses the group



FOTW members at the meeting

Thursday – Whitney Smith Memorial Service



FIAV Secretary-General Kin Spain leads a service in memory of the late Dr Whitney Smith – Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road

Closing Banquet and Awards

The Congress closed with a drinks reception and banquet in the opulent surroundings of the National Liberal Club on London's Embankment.



Gathering for pre-dinner drinks



Ralph Kelly, Andreas Herzfeld, Debbie Kaye, Ted Kaye, Irina Herzfeld



Tim Fallows, Ron Strachan, Rolf Hinterberger, Janna Hinterberger



Alfred Znamierowski, Bruce Berry, Attila Szekeres



Alan Hardy, Rudi Longueville, Malcolm Farrow



At the banquet: 1



At the banquet: 2

The Closing Banquet was also the occasion for the ICV27 Awards ceremony.

The Best Paper Award, sponsored by NAVA and renamed this year as the Whitney Smith Award, recognises outstanding scholarship and presentation in a paper delivered at an International Congress of Vexillology. The winner is selected by a panel appointed by the FIAV Board and receives a pewter tray and a signed certificate. The award went to Rachel Phelan for her paper, 'What's up with the big green flag? The conservation of the flag of the Irish Republic'.

A Laureate of the Federation is named by the FIAV Board for an outstanding, original contribution to the science of vexillology. This is the highest award in vexillology and a laureate is named only when there is deemed to be a worthy candidate. The seventh recipient of the accolade was Dr Željko Heimer, for all his work, particularly on the flags of Croatia.



*New Laureate of FIAV
Dr Željko Heimer receives his medal*

The Vexillon, sponsored by the Flag Society of Australia and selected by the FIAV Board, has developed into an award recognising the most important contribution to vexillology during the two years preceding an ICV. The award went to Pierre-Jean Guionin, for his work on the latest edition of the *Album des pavillons et marques distinctives*.



*Pierre-Jean Guionin,
winner of the Vexillon Award*

A Fellow of the Federation is named by the FIAV Board to recognise a significant contribution to vexillology and/or for rendering significant service to FIAV or a FIAV Member.

The recipients were Roger Baert (Societas Vexillologica Belgica), and a Flag Institute trio – Kathryn Kearney, Maggie Sumner and Leigh Wetherall – for their work in organising and running the ICV.



The ICV27 award winners take a bow



ICV27 award winners and the FIAV Board: (left to right) Kath Kearney, Leigh Wetherall, Kin Spain, Maggie Sumner, Michel Lupant, Graham Bartram, Željko Heimer, Rachel Phelan, Pierre-Jean Guionin, Roger Baert

Hemisflag ICV28, San Antonio, 14-19 July 2019

As ICV27 wound down, so we also heard news of ICV28, which will take place in San Antonio, Texas, from 14-19 July 2019. Organised by the Vexillological Association of the State of Texas (VAST) under the title Hemisflag – a nod to Hemisfair, the 1968 World's Fair held in the city – its theme will be 'Flags at the Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas'. The organising committee consists of Hugh L. Brady FF, James T. Liston, Charles A. Spain WSF, H.P. (Pete) Van de Putte CFEE FVAST and Vanessa Van de Putte.

The St Anthony Hotel will host the Congress and the 26th Session of the FIAV General Assembly, and will also be the official Congress hotel. The 53rd meeting of NAVA will probably also take place during the Congress.



Kin Spain, Vanessa Van de Putte, Pete Van de Putte and Hugh Brady receive the FIAV flag on behalf of the ICV28 Organising Committee

A full-day excursion will feature a visit to the Whitney Smith Flag Research Center Collection, now located at the Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin. A call for papers will be issued in spring 2018, when a scientific committee and a proceedings editor will also be named. The proceedings will probably appear as a special issue of *Flag Bulletin*.



ICV28 flag: representing San Antonio's iconic Alamo and the rivers that flow through the city