

The ISPRS White Elephant Club at the ICGBD

November 15-17, 2019 saw the ISPRS White Elephant Club (WEC) with various activities at the International Conference on Geomatics in the Big Data Era (ICGBD), Guilin, China. The conference was jointly organized by the Guilin University of Technology (GUT) and the Wuhan University, with the Local Organizing Committee being chaired by Prof. Qinglin Xie, President of GUT and the Secretariat by Prof. Guoqing Zhou, Vice President of GUT. The conference was attended by well over 400 participants. The White Elephant Club played a significant role in this scheme.

Within the very strong international group of keynote speakers the WEC Members Li Deren, Orhan Altan, Clive Fraser, Dieter Fritsch, Lena Halounova, Armin Gruen, Christian Heipke, Shunji Murai, Petros Patias, Marguerite Madden and Wolfgang Kainz represented 52 % of all keynote speakers, with the other speakers being Thomas Blaschke, Stewart Fotheringham, Michael F. Goodchild, Milan Konecny, Liqiu Meng, Alper Yilmaz, Charles K. Toth, Yun Zhang, Qing Zhu, Mei-Po Kwan.

There was a very rich scientific/technical program with 4 parallel sessions on 15th and 16th and 2 parallel on 17th, together with 6 Poster Sessions. On top of that the WEC had its full day Symposium, whose content is shown further down. This Symposium was meant to celebrate the round birthdays of Fritz Ackermann (90), Li Deren (80), Shunji Murai (80) and Armin Gruen (75). Integrated into this Symposium was the very popular WEC Seminar on How to Write a Thesis (A. Gruen), How to Write a Proposal (G. Konecny) and How to Give Presentations (Sh. Murai). This opportunity was taken to include Wolfgang Kainz as the 34th White Elephant into the Club, whose 60th birthday on 20 November was also addressed.

Unfortunately Fritz Ackermann could not make it to Guilin. His contribution was read by Li Deren.

The festivities of this day culminated in the evening in a Big Party with student dancers and musicians giving performances, hand-out of gifts to the "birthday kids" and finishing a huge birthday cake.

A special WEC dinner was organized on the next evening (16.11.). 14 WEC Members with partners and friends came together in a very relaxed mood and enjoyed excellent local food.

Another highlight was waiting for us on the next day: A boat trip on the Li River from Guilin to Yangshuo. This took us through the spectacular panorama of hundreds of karst hills, covered by dense southern vegetation, with small villages here and there nestled between river and hills.

A nice lunch buffet on the boat was followed by the visit of a water village and later an evening open air performance in a romantic setting on water in Yangshuo. This "Liu San Jie Light Show" is an amazing performance in what is called the largest natural stage in the world. It is a love story about a young woman called Liu San Jie, which means "third sister Liu". Her voice was so beautiful that it touched everyone. The legend is that a warlord falls in love with Liu San Jie but she has already fallen in love with a farmer's boy

from the village. The warlord does not accept this and kidnaps her but Liu San Jie's lover and friends in the village go to free her and the couple escapes living happily together.

The biggest surprise for me was that Gottfried, our Honoray President, could be with us, supported by his beautiful daughter Katharina and 2 students from GUT. He participated in all events and we all had together a truly great time. Our thanks go to G. Zhou and Deren and their teams from Guilin University of Technology and Wuhan University, who did a fantastic job in maintaining a very interesting scientific-technical program and a most memorable social program. We will never forget this great event. Nobody can top Chinese birthday parties!

WEC Symposium Guilin (16.11.2019)

8.30-10.00: WEC Symposium Opening

Chairperson: Chr. Heipke

On Li Deren (by Gong Jianya)

On Shunji Murai (by Ren Fuhu)

On Armin Gruen (by Clive Fraser)

10.15-11.45: WEC Session 1

Chairperson: J. Gong

Fritz Ackermann: "The development of aerial triangulation towards large blocks" (given by Li Deren)

Li Deren: "From Mobile Mapping to Automated Robot Mapping"

Shunji Murai: "Anomaly Sensing of Geosphere for Earthquake Prediction"

Armin Gruen: "Can photogrammetry contribute to save coral reefs?"

11.45-12.30: Panel discussion English GeoScience Cafe

13.30-15.30: WEC Session 2

Chairperson: S. Murai

Gottfried Konecny: "New technical enabling tools for data acquisition and maintenance of topographic data of urban and high mountain areas"

Christian Heipke: "Photogrammetric image sequence analysis"

Jun Chen: "Monitoring local SDGs progress with geospatial and statistical information: China's pilot project"

Lena Halounova: "Remote Sensing Data in the next 15 years"

Orhan Altan: "Space for UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030"

15.50-17.30: WEC Session 3

Chairperson: O. Altan

Marguerite Madden: “Extending Geospatial Learning from the Classroom to the Community”

Clive Fraser: “Drones and Camera Self-Calibration: Some important considerations”

Heinz Ruether: “Paradigm shifts in documenting tangible cultural heritage”

15.50-17.30: WEC Seminar

Armin Gruen: “How to write a thesis/paper”

Gottfried Konecny: “How to write a proposal”

Shunji Murai: “How to give presentations”



The Conference



Dancing and music performances by students at the Evening Birthday Party



Gifts for the three “Birthday Kids”



Cutting the Birthday Cake



Gifts from the Guilin University of Technology



Keynote Speakers



WEC Seminar speakers with new WEC Member Wolfgang Kainz



WEC Dinner with partners and friends



Boat trip on the Li River Guilin-Yangshuo



Li River bend – what a dramatic topography



Li River scenery, as captured on the Chinese 20 Yuan note



Relaxing boat ride with Prof. Guoqing Zhou



WEC with partners and friends on the Li River



WEC with friends at a water village



Our fisherman in Yangshuo



Romantic setting of the “Liu San Jie Light Show”



Romantic Guilin at night



Gottfried and his support team (daughter Katharina, Lily and two students from GUT)



Gottfried in intense discussion with Vincent Tao