THE 14TH WORLD CONGRESS OF IAIN

David Broughton, Secretary-General reports,
“The first week of October saw around 120 speakers and delegates from 24 countries gather for the 14th World Congress of the International Association of Institutes of Navigation (IAIN), held in Cairo - a respectable number in light of the difficulties affecting the wide area.

“The Arab Institute had laid on a comprehensive technical programme of over 40 presentations, many having to be presented in parallel sessions. The schedule also included a technical visit to the Suez Canal, where the Chairman of the Canal Authority gave a fascinating insight into its inner workings.

“Although leaning towards maritime subjects, a much wider theme of GNSS vulnerability prevailed throughout the sessions, with a general consensus that a resilient positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) infrastructure was vital – but by no means guaranteed by any combination of spaced-based systems. Inevitably, the prospect of eLoran supplementing GNSS became a recurrent theme and drew much support. A parting question asked whether the likes of IMO, IHO and ICAO – all of whom desperately need a resilient PNT – actually talked to each other about it; if not, should IAIN act as a catalyst?

“The Congress had opened with the presentation by IAIN President, Dr Refaat Rashad, of the Association's 'John Harrison Award' for 'An Outstanding Contribution to Navigation' to the recently-retired IMO Secretary-General, Admiral Efthimios Mitropoulos, and the 'Necho Award' for 'A Special Achievement' to Prof Bradford Parkinson as the 'Father of GPS'. This proved to be a boon, as both recipients gave revealing presentations on their thoughts, the former explaining that advances into e-Navigation must not forget the human, and 'Brad' giving a unique insight into how GPS came about - in a format that has changed little in 40 years.

“But the Congress was not all work, as was discovered at the ice-breaker party in the spectacular host hotel and a dinner on a Nile boat, complete with Whirling Dervish and belly-dancer, although the latter’s ultimate partner – surely not a European Institute's former President? – is perhaps best forgotten.

“So, despite potential difficulties, the Congress was a great success, in both technical and personal terms. It concluded with the IAIN President handing over the baton to his successor, Captain Dick Smith RN – a previous President of both RIN and IAIN – and a young lady from Prague giving a most attractive portrayal of the city as host to the 15th World Congress to be held from 20th to 23rd October 2015. Put it in your diary now and follow www.iain2015.org.”