

## The *International No-Dig 2011* conference and exhibition in Berlin, Germany

by Joop van Wamelen

### Introduction

The *International No-Dig* was in Berlin this year and followed the usual pattern - with one exception. This year it was held in conjunction with the exhibition *Wasser Berlin 2011*.

The conference was preceded by the meeting of the board of directors of the International Society for Trenchless Technology (ISTT). This was held on Monday 2 May 2011 and took most of the day.

Tuesday 3 May and Thursday 5 May were devoted to the conference.

On Wednesday 5 May a huge programme of site visits to trenchless projects took place.

Any free time was taken up by visiting the exhibitions and “networking”.

### The ISTT board meeting

The meeting was attended by representatives of all the affiliated societies except one. Certainly the most interesting part of the meeting was the discussion of the strategy of the ISTT. The strategy has three prongs:

- Training taking the form of a global outreach - witness the *No-Dig South Africa 2011!*
- Dissemination of information, ie:-
  - The official magazine
  - The papers at the *International No-Digs* (including 2011) have been and will be peer-reviewed and published on CD
  - The ISTT website is being re-designed. For example, it will provide free access for members to all the *No-Dig* papers ever published. The affiliated societies will also utilise the website to maintain the register of affiliated members.
- Outreach:-
  - Research colloquia
  - A presentation on how to establish a society and how to affiliate the society to the ISTT
  - Liaison with the fledgling societies in Argentina, Korea, Romania and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The next *International No-Digs* will be in

- Sao Paulo, Brazil: 12-14 November 2012
- Sydney, Australia: 1-4 September 2013.

Spain and Turkey extended offers to host the *No-Dig 2014*; a competent bid for Madrid and a spirited bid for Istanbul respectively. The decision will soon be made by the executive subcommittee of the board of the ISTT. The writer’s bet is on Istanbul...



## The No-Dig conference

There were three parallel sessions over the two days of the conference. They covered the themes of microtunnelling; HDD; asset management; liners and coatings; testing and assessments; jacking and boring; and CIPP - a total of 51 papers.

One paper was from South Africa, viz *The evaluation of decision variables for the rehabilitation of water mains in Durban, South Africa* by Simon Scruton of eThekweni Water and Sanitation. It was an excellent paper and well presented. The writer wondered why that metro is not a member of SASTT!

The collected papers were handed out in the form of a CD.

The writer picked up a few spare CDs. If a reader wants one, he can send the editor a self-addressed and stamped padded envelope. Please e-mail the editor first to check on availability and to get his private snail-mail address.

## The site visit

The *Baustellentag*, or *Construction Site Day*, apparently a traditional event at *Wasser Berlin*, took the form of sixteen separate tours, which were grouped in the categories of:-

- microtunnelling and other techniques - six tours
- auxiliary pipe technique, Swagelining and other techniques - five tours
- push-pull and other techniques - two tours
- slurry wall technique with jacking below ground-water level, relining and other techniques - three tours.

The writer attended a tour in the latter category, which comprised:

- the rehabilitation of sewers using the hose-lining technique and GRP hoses which are cured with UV light; KA-TE robot technology; and KS-ASS shaft rehabilitation, done departmentally by Berliner Wasserbetriebe, the water supply utility
- the trenchless replacement of approximately 1 100 m of DN 150 and DN 175 sewer pipes by DN 250 pipes using the pipe-eating technique, by Witte Spezialtiefbau, Boblitz Tief- und Wasserbau GmbH
- the trenchless replacement of a DN 300 cast iron rising main with a DN 500 ductile iron pipe using the push-pull technique, by Josef Pfaffinger Bauunternehmung GmbH
- the trenchless installation of approximately 700 m of new DN 300 ceramic sewer pipes using the pilot-tube pipe-jacking technique, by Frisch & Faust Tiefbau GmbH
- the excavation of launch and target pits using the slurry wall technique in preparation of jacking a DN 1800 reinforced concrete pipe underneath a road and underground rail tunnel at a depth of roughly 20 m and with the bottom of the sewer approximately 13 m below ground-water level, by Wayss & Freytag AG.

This project was undertaken to stop periodic flooding due to the flow of groundwater having been cut off by the construction of the underground rail tunnel. Mmm, so engineering mistakes are not exclusive to the southern tip of Africa.



*Slurry wall construction.*

- the trenchless rehabilitation of a gas pipeline by relining it with 450 mm dia PE pipe and infilling of the annular space, by NBB Netzgesellschaft Berlin-Brandenburg. In the suburb where this took place, there are still operating street lights running on gas. The writer thought that this project might have been called almost-trenchless. A ten metre length of the PE pipe was welded in the access pit. Due to the forest of horizontal shoring struts in the access pit, it was pretty tricky to get the pipe into position for welding. And the pit was nineteen metres long.

It was a long day, but well worth the effort!

### The *No-Dig* exhibition

The *No-Dig* exhibition filled a hall measuring roughly 4 000 m<sup>2</sup>.

Several societies for trenchless technology had their own stands. Equipment and materials suppliers and vendors of technology took up all the remaining space.

Several other halls housed the exhibition *Wasser Berlin*, which went under the slogan **KNOW H<sub>2</sub>O**. This exhibition covered everything to do with the abstraction, purification, pumping and distribution of water.

A great effort had been made to attract children and excited school groups were everywhere in evidence.

### General impressions and conclusion

The *No-Dig* was held at the *Messe Berlin*, an impressive conference and exhibition centre



comprising 26 halls on a site of 160 000 m<sup>2</sup>. It is at a central location in Berlin and is served by busses and the city railway.

The delegates were entitled to free use of public transport during the full length of their stay. In addition, there was a free shuttle bus between the main conference hotels and the Messegelände. Nobody had need of a hired car like when attending a South African conference!

In the writer's view, the acoustics of the three box-like conference halls was less than ideal. The rooms were much too

large for the audiences - and quite reverberant as well. Partly due perhaps to the poor microphone technique of some speakers, in addition to varied accents, it was not always easy to follow the presentations.

Actually, the acoustics also detracted from the board meeting on Monday, which took place in the same building.

Seeing that the construction site tour was part and parcel of an international conference, it was a pity that the English translation of the explanations by the site representatives was somewhat patchy in places.



*A real gas-fuelled street lamp in the 21<sup>st</sup> century!*

On the other hand, at the gas-pipeline site, the hosts provided simultaneous translation after handing out portable radios and headsets to the English-speakers! At every site spacious tents had been set up with tables and chairs to receive the visitors. Depending on the time of day hot drinks and snacks or a superb buffet-lunch were provided by the site hosts. On this, the coldest day of the *No-Dig*, when short spells of sunshine were punctuated by rain and even hail, this generous hospitality was much appreciated.

It was noticeable how much effort was put into occupational health and safety. The access pits were close-shored and sturdily barricaded. All the site personnel were fitted out in warm and waterproof protective wear, gloves, hard hats and safety harnesses.

A distinguishing and rather endearing feature of the exhibition was that many of the exhibitors offered free food, soft drinks, beer and wine to all visitors at their stands. This hospitality was patronised to the full and from early morning on. No wonder perhaps, since “Messe” denotes a fair. And the exhibition had all the jollity of a fair! On the other hand there was not a hint of undignified behaviour to be seen.

The writer enjoyed his short stay in Berlin. It gives every indication of being a good city to live in. This was confirmed by Professor Jens Hölterhoff of the GSTT. He told the writer that in 1997 he came to Berlin with the intention to study there for a few years and then move to a more salubrious university. He is still living in Berlin.



A sad feature which is generally in evidence is the irreparable war damage. The writer spotted what must once have been an elegant suburban dwelling, which after having been partly destroyed was hastily patched up and added to in steps later on. Even in the Germany of the Wirtschaftswunder, neither the masons nor the capital were there anymore to restore its charm.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to the board of SASTT for the opportunity to attend the events in Berlin. Once again, he gained valuable insights from his participation in the proceedings of the international board and discussions with a variety of ISTT members. The nuances of the board meeting and the informal discussions during breaks do not find their way into the minutes. Therefore, it remains important for SASTT to be represented at the ISTT events.

Lastly, everyone – but everyone - at the *No-Dig* who spotted that the writer was from South Africa remarked, in some instances with not a little envy, that they knew that South Africa was having a *No-Dig* in August!

Dear reader, if you did not know it yet, diarise the *No-Dig South Africa 2011* on 23 to 24 August. Everyone else seems to know about it already...



*Simultaneous translation on site.*

