

Notes from the Conference Organizer

We were all looking forward to the jubilee 30th ICHC conference in Naples, Italy. In the middle of December, we received the news that everything was prepared, but two days later we were told that the museum in Naples had cancelled the conference.

I didn't hesitate for long. I had organized the 21st ICHC conference that was held in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, in 2010, and it was high time to grasp this opportunity. The first task was: Where? A repeated joke is no joke, so I chose Znojmo. This is a small historical city sitting upon a high bank of the Dyje River with a beautiful monastery that has a Baroque hall in which I had attended a number of conferences.

Znojmo is in a land of vineyards, not far from the Austrian border and only 50 miles from Vienna, so it is readily accessible by air from practically anywhere. What is more, there are three interesting museums not far away – one right in the centre of the city in a former hydroelectric plant (bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles, tractors, motors – all made in this country). There is another interesting bicycle museum 10 kilometres from Znojmo across the border in Austria and the largest Czech cycling museum is located just 20 km away in the Boskovštejn castle. So there was nothing left to do but to arrange for everything. Anyone who has ever organised something like this will know



Gary Sanderson and Charlie Farren getting their glasses filled by Jan Králík at the welcoming reception. Irene and Phillip Sanderson look on from the side, and Christopher Wignall in the background talks with an unseen person.

what it involves, so there is no point in describing the process to someone who has never done it. Simply, I went around the city and arranged for everything. Then it was necessary to only regularly check and make sure that the agreed areas, technology, transportation, catering, museums, accommodation, etc., etc. were still valid. My friend Jiří “George” Mewald offered to help me where-ever needed during the conference, and this was very much appreciated.

I would like to especially thank Gary Sanderson, who accepted responsibility for the paper work and for informing our “families”. His e-mails kept our interest at a peak. Finally, 30 participants arrived, not a great many, but very loyal, including the “founding father”, Nicolas Clayton. I would like to thank everyone who undertook the trip to Znojmo from all around the world, from Australia, from Europe, and from the U.S.A. and Canada. I am sure everyone was glad they came ... In addition to interesting lectures, we gathered together in a restaurant every evening, and we visited all three nearby museums with interesting bicycles and related objects. Even the weather was kind to us: no rain.

The 31st ICHC conference will be held in one of Belgium's most interesting cities: Ghent. This is a beautiful city, and Dirk van Luchem is an experienced organiser who is dedicated to the ICHC as well as to the IVCA and his local bicycle club. We are all looking forward to what we know will be another very special event.

-Jan Králík



David Herlihy and Tom Baker relax with Jiri 'George' Mewald during a Conference 'break' outside of the Monastery.