

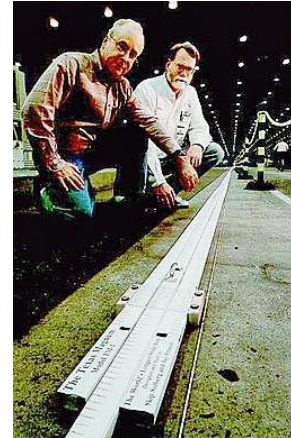
Russian Slide Rule: size of a building!⁹

By: **David Rance**

Owner: **Bashkir State University, Ufa**

How could anything ever surpass the *Texas Magnum* of Skip Solberg and Jay Francis?

At a staggering 107 metres long in 2001 it rightly took the *Guinness Book of Records* accolade for the longest slide rule ever made. Since the Solberg and Francis effort was a fully working slide rule with an accuracy of 6 places, its record is probably safe. But when it comes to the largest slide rule ever built, it has a Russian challenger!



What does it look like?



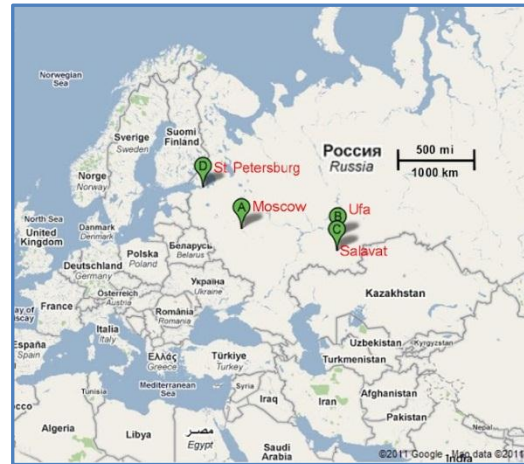
This is not a “photoshoped” image. The Physics and Mathematics faculty building of the *Bashkir State University*, Ufa not only looks like a slide rule with a framed cursor, it was meant to look like a working slide rule!

Where is it?

The 5-story university building was built in 1972 and can be found about 4300 kilometres to the east of London or nearly 1400 kilometres east of Moscow. Bashkir has only had university status since 1957. Its roots are an institute founded in 1904 for higher education in the capital of the Russian Republic of Bashkortostan.

⁹ Originally published as an example of an “one-off” for the IM2012, Bletchley Park, UK.

Ufa, lies between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains and the Republic is an important mineral rich part of Russia. It is a principal area for oil extraction and it also has rich deposits of natural gas, coal, ferrous and non-ferrous metal ores and precious and semi-precious stones. Bashir is now one of Russia's top universities and is a renowned centre for Physics and Mathematics.



IJzebrand's dream

Sadly despite repeated enquires in my best "Google Translate" Russian, I have been unable to learn much more about this impressive building. So many questions remain unanswered - like:

- How big is it and how long did it take to build?
- Who was the architect/designer and do any original building drawings still exist?
- Was there a special reason why it was designed like a slide rule?
- Is the slide rule theme also part of the interior design?

Needless to say it does stir a déjà vu memory of an International Meeting – the IM2003 held in The Netherlands. At that meeting the legendry European collector, IJzebrand Schuitema, talked about finding a suitable home for his amazing collection. His dream was that his collection would become part of a dedicated *Museum Technical Culture Heritage* – the concept based on an original sketch¹⁰ by UKSRC member Colin Barnes. Fellow Dutch collector, Leo de Haan, designed and built a model of what the building could look like for the IM2003.



In 2007 IJzebrand's entire collection found a new home - the *Arithmeum Museum* in Bonn, Germany. The dedicated building never got built but at least there is the *Bashir State University Physics and Mathematics faculty*.

¹⁰ For the full story see: "*Slide Rule Museum*" by Colin Barnes and IJzebrand Schuitema, UKSRC Slide Rule Gazette ISSN 1472-0000, Issue 5, Autumn 2004, Pg. 25.