

gramme of the European Space Agency (ESA): “Europe’s Quest for the Universe”*.

The preface by Philippe Busquin, former European commissioner for research, sets the tone of the book: “Great pride and optimism for European science comes across on reading these pages, all beautifully illustrated. Written to a high scientific level, this book provides the reader with a top quality reference on the subjects covered, and gives us ample reason to believe in a European research environment directed firmly to the future.”

Lo Woltjer has been involved in many, if not most, of the topics he describes in his book. He does this in a factual manner, quoting many actors, including himself, and omitting (purposely?) very few!

* To my knowledge, there exist so far two reviews of this book, one, quite detailed by Françoise Praderie, in the spring 2006 issue of Euroscience News (no. 34, page 9), the other by Giovanni Bignami, published in Nature (441, page 814, 15 June 2006).

Not only does he give us a somewhat ‘historical’ inventory of the telescopes and instruments that were built in the last three decades on the ground and for space, he also presents strong arguments for new sophisticated and ever more challenging developments. The author of “Europe’s Quest for the Universe” gives, probably as good examples to be followed, some interesting details about several of the most important astrophysical results that have been obtained in these last decades, some of which have led to attributing famous prizes (Nobel, Balzan, Gruber, ...) to their ‘prime-investigators’.

In the last sections of his book, Lo Woltjer, in a well-documented way that he shares with the reader, deals with fairly controversial matters such as publications, researchers and funding (“Why fund astronomy?”), and finally he tackles a series of future projects as well as the difficult subjects of international collaborations and organisational issues, the

latter two which, I think, could/should serve as challenges to e.g. the ESO Council and the present and forthcoming ESO Director General, and to their counterparts in the ESA Science and Exploration Directorates!

Let me end this very short review by briefly paraphrasing Philippe Busquin. The Universe is so magnificent that it constantly inspires both scientific and technological developments. Yet, at the same time, it remains a source of wonder and inspiration for our thoughts and dreams: is this not beautiful for all generations, especially the younger ones? Europe is definitely taking advantage of all this, as is so well demonstrated in Lo Woltjer’s book (although here and there a bit critically!). So, let’s continue to follow “Europe’s Quest for the Universe”, showing that our continent is the leader in several aspects of ground-based and space-borne astrophysics, as Lo Woltjer has shown us how to do so successfully.

Open House at the ESO Headquarters

Claus Madsen (ESO)

On 15 October, the ESO Headquarters opened its doors to the public as part of the All-Campus Open House organised in connection with the inauguration of the extension of the underground line U6 from Munich to the Garching campus. The day was blessed with clear skies and plenty of sunshine, and a large number of citizens took advantage of the opportunity to visit the campus. The estimated number of visitors at ESO was close to 3000 people, a record number. Another record was set by the number of ESO staff who, in anticipation of the high number of guests, volunteered to spend their Sunday at work to explain what ESO is doing and why it is important.



Photo: H. Hoyer, ESO

Visitors to the Open House learnt about ESO from exhibitions, activities, and presentations throughout the Headquarters in Garching.

Over the last couple of years, we have 'remodelled' the Open House and this time, the activities were organised around 'thematic clusters' called "Welcome to ESO", "The Observatory", "Science", "Technology for Astronomy" and "Astronomy for All". While most staff were assigned to the clusters, some acted as 'roaming astronomers' and as tour guides, accompanying groups of visitors through the house.

As in the past, the programme of the day offered a wide palette of activities and opportunities to learn about ESO: Video presentations and public talks in the auditorium, videoconferences with Paranal, information about employment opportunities at ESO, various technology demonstrations ranging from CAD-based telescope design to AVO, and a dedicated childrens' programme including planetarium shows, quiz and 'passport' games. ESO's amateur astronomy club, AGAPE, had trained their telescopes on the Sun and attracted many interested 'observers'. Also, the ESO Charity Group took part and enjoyed brisk sales from their stand, offering cakes and sandwiches and with the revenue going to, amongst others, the SOS Kinderdorf in Antofagasta. Contests for children (and their parents!) and ESO materials such as posters and T-shirts on sale completed the programme.

Meanwhile, the All-Campus Open House has developed into an activity which is recognised and appreciated beyond the boundaries of Garching or even Munich. This is evident from the fact that ESO, together with three other institutes on the campus, was awarded a special trophy by the initiative "Deutschland – Land der Ideen". This initiative happens under the auspices of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Horst Köhler, and is supported both by the Government and by German industry and commerce.

With this recognition and an end-of-the-day pizza party for the personnel involved in the event, the 60 or so ESO staff members headed for home, tired no doubt, but also with many interesting discussions and encounters behind them – just as the members of the public that had made their way to ESO on the day.

AGAPE, ESO's amateur astronomy club, set up telescopes so that interested visitors could safely observe the Sun while enjoying the good weather.



Photos: H. H. Heyer, ESO (4)



Visitors had the chance to see what they looked like in infrared light – and to take home a copy of the results.



Parts of the new VLT instrument HAWK-I, including its steel vessel, were on display in the integration hall.



ESO received a trophy from the "Deutschland – Land der Ideen" programme, in recognition of its contribution to the All Campus Open House event.