

to the diffraction limit of an 8-metre telescope” and infrared cameras with “16 million pixels and a resolution of ~ 0.1 arc-seconds over a field of 7.5×7.5 arc-minutes²” have been deployed. Alan led this development over 30 years. He also mused in his article how the process of designing and building astronomical instruments has changed over the years: “It turned out we actually had to write down the specifications to remember them, use advanced design and failure mode and effects analysis software, have project plans and meetings and even reviews to check where we were.”

To the consternation of many of his colleagues and friends, even some of the native-English speakers, Alan would use his exquisitely-developed sense of irony

to make points with great effect. He could do this equally to cut through verbal obfuscation and reveal the naked truth or to light-heartedly diffuse a conflict. His aptitude for recalling past history and even the details of conversations was quite stunning and sometimes intimidating. He would recall one of your statements from years ago in order to reinforce a current point while you would struggle to remember that the conversation took place.

There are many more contributions that Alan made to ESO and its staff. He represented the ESO instrumentation programme in front of countless internal and external committees, always exhibiting a depth of knowledge and judgment that awed his audience. In front of bodies

such as the Scientific and Technical Committee and the ESO Council he was a convincing advocate of the need to keep part of the instrumentation development in house in order to serve as a link between the ESO community at large and the Observatories. As one of the key drivers of instrumentation at ESO, Alan was living proof that functional work and research can be successfully reconciled. Alan’s advice was sought by many people at ESO and he responded willingly and generously, particularly to those who posed well thought-out questions!

References

- Beckman, J. E. & Moorwood, A. F. M. 1979, Rev. Prog. Phys., 42, 87
Moorwood, A. F. M. 2009, The Messenger, 136, 8

In memoriam Carlo Izzo

Tim de Zeeuw¹
Michèle Péron¹

¹ ESO

Carlo Izzo, a software engineer at ESO, died on 23 June 2011, at the age of 51 after fighting courageously a short illness.

Carlo, born in October 1958, was educated in Italy at the University of Padua where he studied astronomy. He started his career at ESA, Darmstadt in 1985 where he was involved in software development for the operation of the payload of the EXOSAT satellite. Following this he joined the Max-Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics (MPE) in Garching on a Fellowship and then went on to be a software developer for X-ray astronomical data analysis within the MIDAS environment. He joined ESO in 1999 as a Scientific Applications Developer, where he

was involved in the development of the FORS and VIMOS pipelines. Later he became a main developer of the Common Pipeline Library and he was the ESO responsible for the KMOS pipeline.

Carlo was highly respected by his colleagues and customers for his expertise as an engineer and his strong astronomical background. Carlo was known for bringing innovative contributions to a wide range of projects including new pattern-matching methods for the FORS and VIMOS pipelines, scientific workflow and modular designs for multi-object spectroscopy, and science-grade improvements for the FORS Accurate Photometry project. He was dedicated, passionate and enthusiastic, and always had a positive approach to his work. He was excellent in communicating his enthusiasm to his peers and was a pleasure to work with. He will be remembered as a brilliant friend and colleague with a great sense of humour.

