

ESO Schmidt Telescope Improved

Improvements made on the Schmidt telescope during 1974 and 1975 have resulted in an encouraging rise in plate production.

The quality of the ESO Schmidt plates has come up to an acceptable level and now compares favourably with plates from other Schmidt telescopes around the world.

With the assistance of J. R. van der Ven, mechanical engineer, and J. van der Lans, electrical engineer, of the TP Division, a new drive system and a new electronic control system for the right ascension and declination motions were designed, constructed and installed. Furthermore, problems concerning telescope orientation, optical collimation and mirror handling were solved.

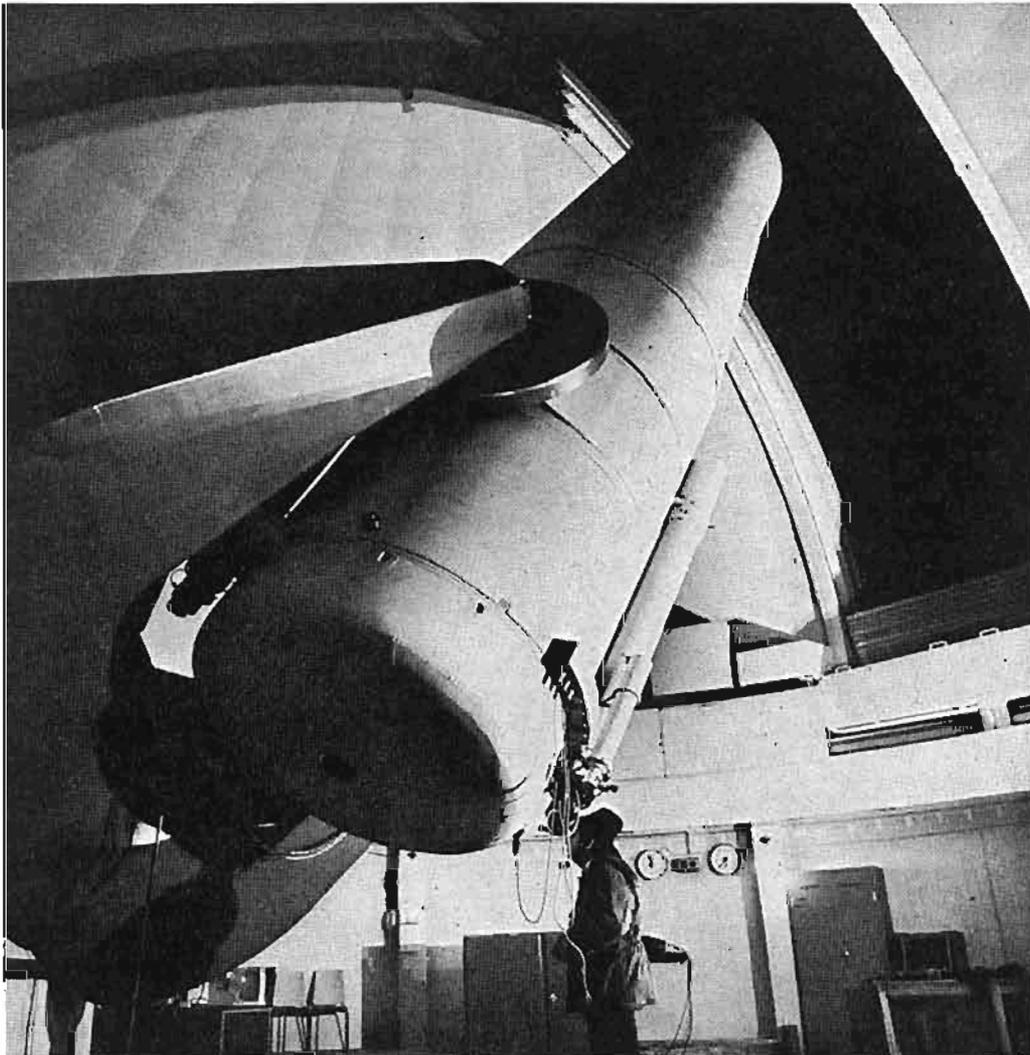
A new guiding system was developed and successfully tested by A. B. Muller, senior astronomer. This system enables guiding on stars in the focal plane of the Schmidt camera near the photographic plate. J. van der Lans developed a television system for this guider, which permits guiding on stars as faint as 14^m .

Tentative Meeting Schedule

The following dates and locations have been reserved for meetings of the ESO Council and Committees:

March 30	Finance Committee, Hamburg
May 10/11	Observing Programmes Committee, Hamburg
May 12	Instrumentation Committee, Hamburg
May 13	Finance Committee, Hamburg
May 14	Committee of Council, Hamburg
June 1	Scientific Policy Committee, Hamburg
June 2/3	Council, Hamburg
October 26	Instrumentation Committee, Munich
October 27/28	Finance Committee, Munich
October 29	Committee of Council, Munich

Further improvements, foreseen for 1976 and 1977, concern the plate-holder and filter systems. A new corrector-plate now being studied at Zeiss Jena will permit high-quality ultra-violet exposures. By the end of 1977, the Schmidt telescope should be fully modernized.



The ESO Schmidt telescope is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Since it was put into operation on La Silla in late 1972, more than 1,300 plates have been taken with this instrument. Most of the plates are 1-hour exposures for the ESO surveys of the southern sky. The staff consists of three, ESO astronomer Hans-Emil Schuster and night assistants Guldo and Oscar Pizarro. An improvement programme is being carried out under the supervision of André Muller, ESO senior astronomer.