



The Cassegrain cage arrived just in time ... for the Christmas party. Spotlighted: S. Kay, B. Pillet.

The instruments, together with their support structure, can be raised by a forklift to the height of the cage floor and rolled inside the cage by a carriage that runs over a fixed rail.

Control racks are located at the rear of the cage. Instruments can be screwed to an adapter plate at the rear of the mirror cell which has a big diameter roller bearing, permitting rotation of the instruments about the tube axis. The cage is firmly connected to the telescope centrepiece at four places.

W. Richter, Head of the Mechanical Group, did the preliminary design work on the Cassegrain cage, then J. F. R. van der Ven came in, and Messrs. Simon, Blumenthal and Grobli were also involved.

The cage was made in Denmark by Allerups, Odense, and it came to the new assembly hall of the TP Division in December, 1974, for testing. This phase lasted about three weeks.

Asked how it might feel to work in the cage, Dr. A. B. Muller, senior astronomer, said: "With so many instruments in front of you and on both sides — as many as can be fitted in without making the cage too heavy — your position is not too comfortable. In future it may not be necessary for astronomers to sit in there so much, as we must consider the possibility of remote control for certain kinds of observations."

Electronics on La Silla Move to New Laboratory

For many years the electronics laboratory on La Silla has been on the first floor of the photometric (1 m) telescope building. This is in the centre of the site where most of the telescopes are located, and just under the observing floor of the telescope that uses most of the electronic equipment. However, the laboratory has neither windows nor a ventilation system, so that working conditions are far from ideal.

If the new astronomy building planned for La Silla is realized sometime, this problem will be solved. However, in the meantime an intermediate solution has been found by moving the electronics laboratory to the casino

in the so-called "old camp"; this was done in December, 1974. The casino has nearly double the floor space of the former room at the 1 m telescope and daylight enters freely from all sides. Apart from the big laboratory, there is an office, a computer room and a storage room.

The former electronics laboratory will be used to house the computer systems which are being used with the 1 m telescope. These systems cause deterioration of the astronomical seeing by the heat they generate and they have to be removed from the dome.

In order to provide a relaxation centre for the workers on La Silla, a new casino has been constructed next to the former one.

The service provided by the electronics staff on La Silla has always been excellent, even under the former less-than-ideal conditions. Now that they have a "new" laboratory will it be even better? The coming months will give the answer!

Astronomical Flight to La Silla

On Wednesday November 20, 1974, Professors Blaauw and Woltjer flew in a twin-engined Beechcraft Duke from La Serena via our Pelicano airstrip to Santiago.

Astronomer John Wood arranged that the flight went smoothly. Wood, Danish astronomer Bengt Grønbech and pilot/owner Sr. Santiago Ojeda left Santiago's Tobalaba airport at 8.45 a.m. and touched down in La Serena at 10.10. Professors Blaauw and Woltjer had been driven to La Serena airport by Albert Bosker, and the three of them joined the remaining flight to Pelicano.

Thus the aircraft was fully loaded with six passengers and a certain amount of baggage. In addition, two boxes of astronomical equipment for the Munich University Observatory group on La Silla were packed into the Duke.

The flight from La Serena to Pelicano took 15 minutes and the plane circled the observatory at the most photogenic altitude (low), while Blaauw and Grønbech took photos.

The landing in Pelicano was normal and very comfortable from a pilot's point of view because the runway is so wide and long (1,300 m). The flight from Pelicano to Santiago took an hour and a half.



A toast to inaugurate the Pelicano airstrip. From left to right: A. Bosker, L. Woltjer, A. Blaauw, H. Ponce, E. Bedmann, S. Ojeda, H. Franz, B. Grønbech.