

Message of the President

It is hard to believe that I am writing already my second foreword to an annual report of our Foundation. And yet another year has passed, and a busy one it was! As usual it was a year of impressive research activities in both stations, as the contributed reports of our “customers” amply demonstrate.

But we also celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Foundation this year with a special dinner after our board meeting, in the company of distinguished guests, representing sponsors, science, and politics. The evening was made especially memorable by the music ensemble “Lundi Soir”. I would like to thank Louise Wilson and Erwin Flückiger for arranging this small but distinguished celebration. I also thank Prof. Tammann, my predecessor, for his witty after-dinner speech, in which he reminded us of the really remarkable history of the Foundation, which has over the years always managed to adapt the infrastructures to the needs of the varying scientific communities.

One of the most noteworthy adaptations was, of course, in 1973, with the extension of the Jungfrauoch activities to Gornergrat, where a truly competitive astronomical observatory was established. It so happens that in 2005 the Gornergrat observatory required a lot of attention because of the renovation of the Kulmhotel, the planning of which I have described in my last message. A few flaws occurred, but the constructive spirit between the Burgergemeinde, the German and Italian astronomers, the staff of the Foundation, and last but not least, the construction teams on site prevailed and always led to a good solution. After some difficult months, the Köln observatory is again in action, and the Italian telescope has been dismantled and shipped back to Italy. I would like to thank our Italian colleagues for a long and scientifically valuable collaboration.

The very positive experience of my first year has been consolidated in the second. Our very able staff, our custodians, and all the helping hands from the railways and hotels are maintaining a positive atmosphere that stimulates and enables the scientific output, the summary of which you find in this report. During the upcoming 75th anniversary of the research station Jungfrauoch we want to inform a wider public on the achievements of high altitude research by organising a scientific conference from September 11-13, 2006, in Interlaken.

I would like to finish by gratefully acknowledging the continued support of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Foundation’s various foreign and national members. Their financial contributions are of course the basis without which “the high altitude research spirit” could not survive.



Bern, March 28, 2006

Hans Balsiger

