

IAU Symposium 161: Astronomy from Wide-Field Imaging

IAU Symposium 161 'Astronomy from Wide-field Imaging' which is organised by the IAU Working Group on Wide-field Imaging will take place in Potsdam near Berlin (Germany) from 23 – 27 August 1993.

In what follows, some additional information is provided which complements the announcement in Newsletter No. 2 (page 74).

1. General Remarks

As mentioned in the Introduction (page 2), the IAU Executive Committee, in its September 1992 meeting decided to support this meeting and to include it in the prestigious series of IAU Symposia as No. 161. This has the immediate effect of approximately doubling the IAU financial contribution (now about SwFr. 17,000.-) which is available to support the travel and subsistence of some participants. Other sources of support within Germany are being sought; the first responses have been positive. Moreover, the Government of Brandenburg (the German "Land" of which Potsdam is the capital) has expressed great interest in this meeting, and considers it to be one of the important cultural events within the celebration of Potsdam's millennium year. We are therefore convinced that further help will also be forthcoming in different shapes from that side.

The response to the First Announcement has been very satisfactory, more than 150 replies have been received so far, most with indicated titles of papers.

The Scientific Organising Committee (SOC) consists of the members of the WG Organising Committee, plus Dr. Michel Mayor (Geneva Observatory, Switzerland), who also acts as representative of Commission 33. The Local Organising Committee (LOC) with members from the Potsdam, Hamburg, Tautenburg and Sonneberg Observatories began the preparatory work last October and has held regular meetings since then.

A conference poster in wide-field format (what else!?) showing a strip of the Milky Way and the facade of the famous Sanssouci palace has been prepared and was sent to all major institutes. There is some indication that it has in the meantime become a collector's item; complaints about inexplicable disappearances from display boards and quite a few requests for additional copies were recently received by the LOC. A second printing run will therefore be arranged. It is also the intention to make it available (for a nominal price) to all participants in the meeting.

2. Scientific Programme

The SOC has been busy arranging the key (i.e. invited) talks of the various sessions. By mid-January, a few talks still had to be set up, but the acceptance rate has been good and the response quite positive. The overall programme structure, as shown in Newsletter No. 2 has remained unchanged.

To prepare the detailed programme, the SOC decided to arrange a meeting in Potsdam on February 25 – 26, 1993; this would also give the opportunity to inspect the localities foreseen for the meeting and to interact directly with the LOC. Moreover, it will be necessary during this meeting to decide about the first allocation of support to participants; the IAU rules demand that this is done not later than five months before the meeting, in order to allow those participants who will need visas and otherwise have difficulties in obtaining supplementary funds enough time for the planning of their trip to Potsdam.

Due to the geographical distance, not all SOC members will be able to come to this meeting. For that reason, the deliberations will partly be done at distance and before the meeting, giving all SOC members the opportunity to actively participate in the decisions.

It is the intention to publish the Abstracts of IAU Symposium 161 in the July 1993 issue of the WG Newsletter. The Proceedings will be published in the IAU Symposium series by the official IAU publisher, Kluwer Publishing Co. in the Netherlands. They will hopefully become available at the latest in the beginning of 1994, i.e. well before the next IAU General Assembly.

3. Social Events

The following information has been received from Dr. K. Fritze, on behalf of the LOC:

"Potsdam is a very beautiful town in the midst of the unique landscape along the Havel River, just southeast of Berlin.

"In 1993 Potsdam celebrates its millennium with a lot of cultural, political and social events. The many theatres, cabaret, galleries and museums in the city will present a most interesting entertainment.

"For IAU Symposium 161, the LOC has foreseen several social events. In the evening of the day of arrival on Sunday, August 22, an Informal Gathering will be held at the Sternwarte Babelsberg. It is the observatory which succeeded the famous Berliner Sternwarte when it was relocated to Babelsberg in 1913. The Berlin-Babelsberg Observatory has an astronomical tradition of three hundred years and a long-standing experience in wide-field imaging during the last decades.

"Another part of the AIP is the Astrophysical Observatory Potsdam at the Telegrafenberg with the famous 'Einstein Tower' — a solar tower telescope which is in full scientific operation inside a unique, expressionistic scientific building.

"During the meeting it will be possible to visit both observatories with their scientific facilities as well as the historical instruments and exhibitions.

"A boat tour will be arranged with a steamer of the White Fleet on Wednesday afternoon; this will be a real highlight and surely a very rewarding experience for all participants.

"On Thursday, August 26, the penultimate day of the meeting, the Closing Dinner will be held at the Residence-Hotel.

"During your spare time (if you will have any!), there are many interesting sights of Potsdam which are worth visiting. Prussia's glitter and glory are closely connected to the name of Potsdam: the Sanssouci Palaces and Gardens, the New Garden or the Park and Palace of Babelsberg, and last but not least the historical city of Potsdam."

4. Next Announcement

Full details about the scientific and social programmes will be included in the Second Announcement which will be sent by the LOC in early March 1993 to all prospective participants and others who have expressed interest in learning more about this meeting. At the same time the hotel reservation forms, etc., will be included.

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