

## News from the Roque

At the time of writing, the 10-m GTC telescope, the flagship project at the Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory, continues to make very good progress. As can be seen from the web cameras on the GTC's web page ([http://www.gtc.iac.es/webcam\\_s.asp](http://www.gtc.iac.es/webcam_s.asp)) the main telescope structure is essentially complete and many of the mirror segments have already been received. The year 2005 will be an important one for the GTC project, as the telescope will be prepared to receive the first photons.

The GTC project will also have a base at sea level in a brand new building, the Centro Astronómico de La Palma (CALP), which is nearing completion at the time of writing. The GTC offices are located in Breña Baja, only a few kilometres from the main town of Santa Cruz. We hope that the short distance between the Mayantigo building and CALP will help foster close collaboration between the various observatory groups.



Left: Progress on GTC Telescope, picture grabbed from internal webcam on 25 February. Right: Picture of CALP base.

The Liverpool telescope has had its first robotic observations last year. Following an upgrade to the hydraulic system for the enclosure, the telescope will be fully ready for regular operation.

A long-standing item on the wish-list of the observatory has been the construction of a visitor's centre where the public can receive information about the functioning of the observatory, amongst other things. The growth in tourism and the resulting increase in numbers of visitors to the observatory has made this even more important in recent years. Latest progress is that land a little down-hill from the observatory has been made available for the construction of a visitor's centre. This important step may well mean that such a centre will become reality not too long from now.

The fact that the Canary Islands are not always blessed with sunny skies is indicated by the adjacent pictures, taken during one of the severe snowy periods that this winter has produced. We're contemplating adding skis to the standard observatory outfit. ☐

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Views of the snowed observatory. From top to bottom: An ING's car almost covered by snow (credit Juan Carlos Pérez); View of Fuente Nueva site from JKT's internal live camera; Panoramic view from nitrogen plant (credit Jürg Rey).