

## News from the Roque

Since the last Newsletter, there have been many developments at the observatory. The most significant ones are those focussing on the 10-m GRANTECAN telescope, where the building, services and dome have now largely been completed. At the time of writing this, the azimuth bearing is being mounted. The next several months will see the erection of the telescope structure. If you want to monitor progress on how the telescope is being erected, see [http://www.gtc.iac.es/webcam\\_s.asp](http://www.gtc.iac.es/webcam_s.asp).

The MAGIC Cherenkov telescope, officially inaugurated together with the Mercator telescope, on 10 October, has dramatically changed the skyline of the observatory. This 17-m telescope, out in the open, is now being fitted out with its segmented mirrors that later this year will catch the photons of Cherenkov light from high energy air showers. The HEGRA experiment, often referred to by visitors as the bee hives that were constructed in the same area, has been dismantled and removed.

The Liverpool telescope keeps making good progress. Some setbacks with the enclosure are being tackled, while the telescope structure is now essentially complete and the optics were recently put into the telescope. The Liverpool telescope was the centre of attention in May, as it was inaugurated by dignitaries from the UK and Spain.

In December La Palma was hit by a storm with exceptionally strong winds. The storm not only wretched havoc in the banana plantations on the island, but also caused the MERCATOR dome to suffer serious damage, sufficiently to stop operation for some time while a new dome was ordered. The adjacent picture shows how the new dome is being seated on top of the building.

The sometimes very strong winds hitting the island, under the right atmospheric conditions give rise to weird cloud formations. Last year Michiel van der Hoeven was lucky to be in the right place at the right time to take the adjacent remarkable picture, showing a dome-shaped cloud overarching the telescopes, lit by the setting Sun. This picture was one of the centre pieces of an exhibit of exceptional cloud formations organised by the aviation authorities on La Palma.

ING is participating in the development of SuperWASP, a robotic set of cameras that will monitor a very large part of the sky every night. The project is led by the Queen's University of Belfast. The system will sit in its own enclosure that is being erected over the summer, located not far from the JKT. More news on this project will be presented in the next issue of the ING Newsletter.

If you drive up to the WHT you will see on your left-hand side a slender tower with a small telescope at the top. This is a solar seeing monitor in support of the site testing campaigns for the planned Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST), a 4-m solar telescope under study in the US. La Palma is one of the few pre-selected sites for this telescope. ☐

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*From top to bottom: MAGIC telescope near completion (credit Lise Autogena); MAGIC telescope and adjacent control room under construction; inauguration of Liverpool Telescope on 7 May; replacement of damaged MERCATOR telescope; a fantastic cloud over La Palma (credit Michiel van der Hoeven); SuperWASP building.*

