Figure 2. Alan Moorwood enjoying the intricacies of his IR instrument sculpture with Mark Casali at his retirement party.

who has developed the state-of-the-art in infrared detectors under Alan's leadership and by Jean-Lous Lizon, who has assembled or maintained much of the VLT instrumentation. Roberto Gilmozzi, the current Head of the Telescope Division, recounted time spent with Alan at the VLT in the very early times, when ISAAC was being commissioned. Mark Casali, the current Head of Instrumentation, presented Alan with another of Jean-Louis Lizon's sculptures, based on parts from different IR instruments (see Figure 2). This sculpture was interactive and a set of hex-keys was provided to release one of the stuck mechanisms! Alan, whose memory is renowned in ESO, recounted extensively many experiences on and off the telescopes (see the photo on the Astronomical News section page).

References

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New Staff at ESO

Adrian Russell

I am originally from Sheffield in England, and sadly still find myself supporting Sheffield United football club despite the fact that they never win! When I am not working I am also a keen photographer. My wife Lilie and I have two girls Elizabeth (8) and Victoria (5); they will both start at the Munich European School in September and are looking forward to learning to speak German.

Having started life as an electronics engineer, I rapidly became hooked on astronomy and did my PhD at the University of Cambridge (at the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory, MRAO), working on mm-wave heterodyne instrumentation and molecular line studies of outflows in star formation regions.

In 1987 I joined the Royal Observatory Edinburgh (ROE) and my wife and I went on a three-year tour of duty in Hawaii, where I was a support scientist on the newly commissioned James Clerk Maxwell Telescope (JCMT). During this time I supported many of the instruments on the telescope. In 1990 we moved to Garching and I spent a two-year sabbatical with Reinhard Genzel's group at the Max-Planck-Institut für extraterrestrische Physik where I worked on very high frequency sub-mm instrumentation for the JCMT. In 1992 I returned to the ROE and became the Head of the JCMT Instrumentation Programme. This involved

Adrian Russell

managing the international development programme carried out in the UK, Canada and the Netherlands.

In 1995 I made a massive change in direction to become the UK Project Manager for the Gemini project and moved into the optical/infrared world. Following the most radical reorganisation of British astronomy in decades, I was privileged to become the first Director of the UK Astronomy Technology Centre in Edinburgh in 1998. In January 2005 we moved to Charlottesville Virginia and I joined the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) as North American ALMA Project Director/Project Manager.

Now, 20 years later, we are back in Germany! My family and I have just arrived at ESO and already it is very exciting. From my perspective the opportunity to become Director of Programmes at ESO was compelling. It is hard to imagine a better time to join ESO. As I see it there are three overriding priorities for ESO in the coming years: to continue to successfully operate and develop the existing ESO facilities; complete ALMA and ensure it fulfils its scientific potential; and establish the European ELT as the world's foremost optical-infrared facility. The prospect of playing a key and defining role in these areas, especially the E-ELT, is incredibly exciting. There can be little doubt that opportunities like this come very rarely indeed.

Elena Valenti

In June 2004 I had my first experience with ESO telescopes. At that time I was a PhD student at Bologna University and I was visiting UCLA Astronomy and Astrophysics Department in Los Angeles for several months to work on high resolution infrared spectra of cool giants in the Galactic Bulge. I flew from a hot and noisy LA to Santiago for my first observing run as PI at La Silla Observatory, three nights with SOFI on the New technology Telescope (NTT). I remember being a bit worried, not only because I had no previous experience, but also because I knew that an important part of my PhD thesis, aimed at studying the Bulge stellar populations in the near-infrared, actually depended on those three nights. I think I fell in love with

Elena Valenti

the place from the very first night. I still believe there is nothing more beautiful than the southern sky on a clear winter night in the Chilean desert! The observations went absolutely fine; I had good seeing and great support from ESO staff, astronomers and telescope operators. I went back to LA not only with my data, but also with the feeling that something important had actually happened. I found myself enjoying observation much more than I could imagine and I started considering the idea of applying for the ESO fellowship in Chile, as I wanted to learn much more about telescopes and instrumentation, in particular in the near-infrared.

In October 2006 I joined ESO as fellow with duty at Paranal. During the first year I was assigned to the VLT Unit Telescope 1 (UT1), which at that time was equipped with ISAAC and CRIRES, so I could take advantage of my previous, first experience as an observer with an infrared imager (SOFI at the NTT) and spectrograph (NIRSPEC at the Keck II telescope), and largely improve on it. With CRIRES I also had the chance to have a closer look at the adaptive optics (AO) systems. Of course I already knew what an adaptive optics system should do in principle, but the first time I saw live, in real time, a fuzzy and confused crowded field in the centre of our Galaxy becoming clear once the NAOS loop closed, I was so amazed that I immediately asked to be trained on UT4 instruments as well. Working with NACO and SINFONI allowed me to become more and more familiar with AO systems, an experience that turned out to be extremely useful for my scientific activity. It gave me the chance to explore new possibilities and start new collaborations in the study of resolved stellar populations, which is one of my main research interests. I honestly don't see that there is anywhere else quite like ESO, where one can have both the chance to acquire such different expertise and get in touch with the most up-to-date observational facilities.

Since the beginning of my fellowship I have been amazed by the enormous number of things — related to instruments, telescopes, meteorology, software, data handling, etc — that I could learn. I was always extremely pleased by the great generosity of the people working in all divisions (astronomers, telescope operators, engineers, electricians, software people) in sharing their knowledge and hence allowing me to significantly increase my knowledge of observational astronomy. During the fourth year of my fellowship, I moved to the Astronomy Department of the Pontificia Universidad Catolica in Santiago to work full time on scientific research. It was another great experience, and possible because of the ESO Chile fellowship rule that allows fellows to spend one year of pure research in a Chilean or ESO member state university. If I could go back in time I would certainly re-apply for the fellowship in Chile. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity now to thank, one more time, all the people I have met and worked with in Paranal and Santiago, because they all contributed to my scientific and personal growth.

Since April 2010 I have moved back to Europe to take up a position with the USD staff at ESO Headquarters in Garching. This is an extremely stimulating and scientifically active environment that allows young astronomers to work in areas of frontline technology and astronomy, and potentially to keep in touch with all branches of astrophysics. Now I can use the experience acquired at the telescopes to support astronomers on many different kinds of observations. It is a slightly different job but one that I really enjoy. There are many new colleagues who are always willing to share their expertise and with whom it is a pleasure to work.