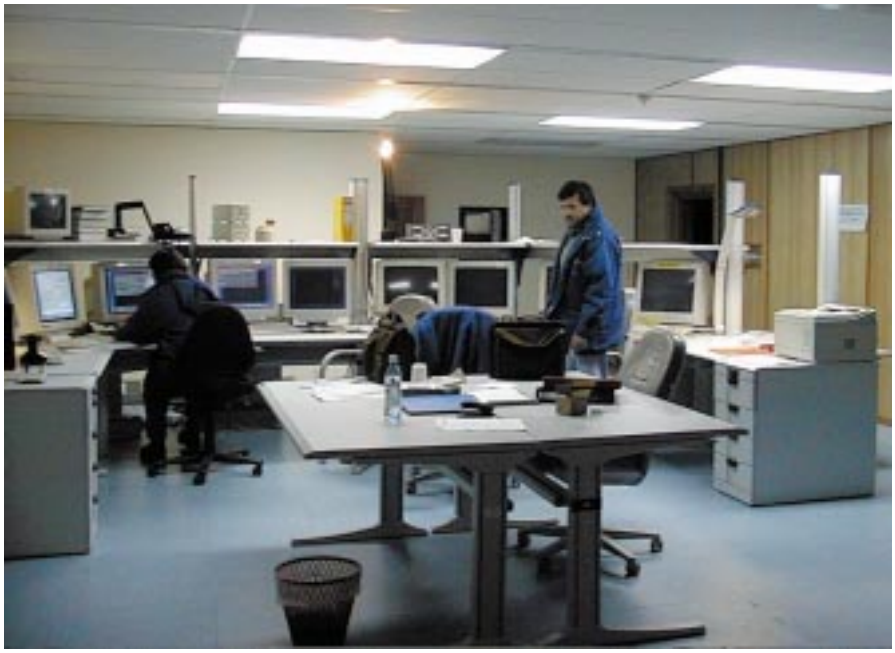
# A New Control Room for the 3.6-m Telescope

*M. STERZIK*

The 3.6-m telescope team started the year 1999 with the move of the control room. Our new control room is now located in the third floor of the telescope building, in a spacious room that has been freshly refurbished for this purpose. The general design is kept modern and functional, but a warm and friendly atmosphere in the room is generated by wooden panelling and wooden doors.

The central area of the room is dominated by the huge operations console. We decided to use the same U-shaped desk that is well known from the NTT and VLT control rooms. The VLT-compliant operation of the telescope control system, adapter and autoguider, and the instruments require the extensive use of workstations and X-terminals in order to monitor and control all subsystems. One wing of the desk is dedicated entirely to telescope operations. The other wing is assigned to the visiting astronomers, allowing them to perform all necessary tasks from the preparation of observations to a first online data inspection and analysis. All our instruments can be operated from the new control room except the CES, which is still in the "old" CAT control room until its new VLT-compliant instrument control system becomes available later this year.



The size of the room allowed us to separate the generic control room from a more private area (for the few relaxed moments with music, tea or coffee) with a long bookshelf.

I am convinced that our users will enjoy, and benefit from this qualitative enhancement of their working environment.

On the technical side, I am glad that we can now offer a significantly improved telescope pointing behaviour as compared to the past year. Tightening the M2 mirror support structure allowed us to eliminate several high order harmonic terms in the pointing model. At present, we achieve about 8 arcsec rms pointing accuracy, a figure that is expected to decrease further once the new "Heidenhain" strip encoders can be used for axis control.

## VLT DATA FLOW OPERATIONS NEWS

# The NTT Service Observing Programme: On the Efficiency of Service Observing

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**Abstract**

A number of articles have recently appeared in the ESO Messenger reporting on the past experience of the NTT service observing programme in Periods 58, 59 and 60 (Silva and Quinn 1997, Silva 1998). In this paper, the third in this series, we report on the results of a statistical analysis of the efficiency of service observing during Period 60. We have compared service observing (SO) with the classical 'Visitor' Mode (VIS), and with the other main programme executed at the NTT during this period, the ESO Imaging Survey (EIS). To obtain an insight into the efficiency of service observing, we examined the Period 60 NTT observing logs in detail. We have only compared nighttime operations, and do not include pre-observing preparations into our analysis.

The observations in Service Mode suffered significantly more from adverse weather conditions at La Silla than both the VIS and EIS observations. On average, the down time during Service Mode (both weather and technical down time) is more than double the down time during either the VIS and EIS Mode, 23.7% versus 10.9% and 10.4% respectively. Irrespective of these adverse weather conditions during Service Mode, it can be