

Report on the JCMT Board meeting – June 2009

The most recent meeting of the JCMT Board took place 2 – 3 June 2009 at the University of Cambridge, UK, hosted by UK member Dr John Richer.

Operations and Instruments

The last reporting period saw a slight reduction in the technical fault rate from the previous period to 5.2%. In fact on a weekly basis, the fault rate has generally stayed below the 5% target set by the Board and this is a credit to the efforts of the JAC staff. During this reporting period bad weather significantly affected observations with 26.5% of time being lost.

RxWD was used during this reporting period with excellent results. The new D-band mixers, provided by SRON, have significantly improved the performance of this receiver, which for the first time has clearly impacted the usage statistics. The Board and Director thanked the staff who had worked on this noting that the JCMT now has a world-class receiver for the 690-GHz band.

HARP is now operating with 15 working receptors after a successful upgrade. HARP continues to dominate instrument demand by the community. Both HARP and RxA have operated well during the reporting period with no major problems.

The Board continued to be impressed by the science output from the facility, with 65 refereed papers published in 2008. The JAC's programme of public outreach events and activities continued to be very strong during this reporting period.

SCUBA-2

Integration of the instrument into the observatory environment in late 2008 proceeded extremely well and solutions to the two remaining issues resulting from this phase of work are awaiting final verification.

The instrument performance and fabrication of the science-grade arrays has been an ongoing concern for all. Dr Holland from the UKATC gave a presentation to the Board on the latest progress. While it was disappointing to learn of a design error in the cryogenic wiring which compromised the testing of the batch 4a 850 array, the partial results from this test seemed encouraging. Tests of the 450 array were imminent and a work-around to the wiring problem had been implemented for this. The Board approved a fast-track programme for the instrument commissioning which would lead to community-driven early science before the end of 2009.

JCMT Legacy Survey

Good progress is currently being made, particularly with the GBS and NGS surveys. The Quality Assurance (QA) pipeline has also been released for use at the telescope.

Interferometry

Progress has been continuing with the eSMA and a major milestone, the demonstration of phase transfer at 345GHz, has been achieved. Although further work to improve the performance of RxWB is still required, it is hoped that the pilot programme will commence in the near future.

Planning for the Future

The Board agreed that future plans for the observatory should begin to be considered and acknowledged that the direction of these would be dependant on the outcome of various reviews within the partner countries.

Ms M Cooper (JCMT Board Secretary)