



Mt John — The First 50 Years: A Celebration of Half a Century of Optical Astronomy at the University of Canterbury

John Hearnshaw, Alan Gilmore

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Mt John University Observatory is New Zealand's only professional research observatory for optical astronomy. In 1965, Mt John University Observatory was founded at Lake Tekapo in the Mackenzie Basin to take advantage of the favorable conditions for astronomy. Telescopes were installed, and in 1981 a lighting ordinance helped protect the site from light pollution. Astronomical research had been thriving on Mt John for 40 years when astrotourism started to take off. Today Mt John is both a research observatory and a mecca for stargazing astrotourists, who come to see the pristine landscape and the amazing dark night skies. It is one of the most beautiful astronomical observatories in the world, but also a place with an often turbulent history, having been rocked by personality battles, funding shortfalls, student demonstrations, and, on one occasion, a destructive fire. In spite of all that, its scientific work has been an outstanding success, and Mt John's research work, especially in stellar astronomy, is known and respected around the world. This richly illustrated account follows the development of an iconic New Zealand scientific institution.

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