

POTSDAM – SEDDIN – NIEMEGK: HISTORY OF A LONG-TERM GEOMAGNETIC OBSERVATORY SERIES

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Under the auspices of the Göttinger Magnetischer Verein (Göttingen Magnetic Union), directed by Carl Friedrich Gauß and Wilhelm Weber and supported by Alexander von Humboldt, the magnetic observatory of Berlin was established in 1836. In 1872 it had to be closed due to anthropogenic signals. At the time of the First Polar Year (1881-1882) three magnetic observatories existed in Germany: Göttingen, Munich and Wilhelmshafen. Wilhelm Foerster, the director of the Potsdam astrophysical observatory, initiated construction of the Royal Prussian Magnetic Observatory of Potsdam, which was officially opened on 1 January 1890. Max Eschenhagen, its first director, died very young in 1901 and was succeeded by the famous Adolf Schmidt. Anthropogenic noise at Potsdam prompted the move of the variometer recordings to Seddin in 1907 and increasing man-made signals forced the closure of Potsdam magnetic observatory in 1928. Adolf Schmidt then established a new magnetic observatory near the small town of Niemegk. The Niemegk station was officially opened on 23 July 1930, Schmidt's 70th birthday, and was named after him from the beginning. From 1932 onward observations were completely carried out in Niemegk. With Potsdam-Seddin-Niemegk the international scientific community has an observation series of almost 120 years, with only one discontinuity of about 10 months in 1945/46. Several scientific and instrumental achievements are connected with these observatories, including:

- Discovery of pulsations by M. Eschenhagen
- Classification of magnetic activities by M. Eschenhagen, A. Schmidt and J. Bartels
- Fundamental contributions to Earth's magnetic field modelling by A. Schmidt
- Construction of a magnetic theodolite by A. Schmidt
- Construction of field balances by A. Schmidt and G. Fanselau
- Fundamental contributions to magneto-telluric research by H. Wiese

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