

## SETTING THE SCENE

It is a great honour to give the first talk at this symposium. The organizers have suggested the title “Setting the Scene”. How should I interpret that? Carole has already given an introductory speech. I plan to give a sketch of Wim’s work and person. That sketch is a personal view, based on reminiscences. I apologize for possible overlaps with other speakers.

Wim’s work has been incredibly broad and diverse, in terms of both institutes and subjects. Wim, born in July 1940, was a student at Leiden from 1957 to 1963. In April 1961, at age 20, he became assistant at the Observatory; in 1965 he was appointed on the scientific staff. In 1961-63, he did ground-breaking work on the polarization of the Galactic background radiation, with Charles Seeger and Gart Westerhout, and with Elly Berkhuijsen, Lex Muller and Jaap Tinbergen. Next, he developed the software for the Westerbork Synthesis Radio Telescope, and developed a complete system, in time for the inauguration of the telescope in June 1970. (I shall come back to this later.)

In 1970, Wim joined the staff of the Netherlands Foundation for Radio Astronomy (NFRA), and he became Head of the Reduction Group. In 1971-72, he was coauthor of two early scientific papers: one on Cyg X2, with Luc Braes: and a famous one, on M51, with Don Mathewson and Piet van der Kruit. In 1974-75 he served as Acting Head of the NFRA management committee (the “Werkgroep”), replacing Harry van der Laan, who spent a year at Princeton. Then, between 1974 and 1990, Wim chaired the Werkgroep for 10 years. In addition to that, Wim served on many national and international committees. For instance, in 1987 he worked on 17 committees, including Leiden Observatory, the National Committee for Astronomy, the UKNL collaboration (both the Isaac Newton Group at La Palma and the James Clark Maxwell Telescope at Hawaii), the Hipparcos Satellite, the ESO Council, the European VLBI Board, and the Australia Telescope.

From 1992 to 2004, Wim worked at the Australia Telescope National Facility (ATNF), on polarization and on the preparation of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA). In the same period, he had a major share in the development of software systems for the VLA, La Palma, the JCMT and ESO.

In 2005 Wim obtained a professorship at Groningen University, shared with NFRA. In that position, he played key roles in the development of the Low

Frequency Array LOFAR, and in studies of the Epoch of Reionization (EOR), but he also worked on pulsars, recombination lines, ionospheric Faraday rotation, etc.

Who is this guy, doing all that work?? What sort of a person? I give some personal recollections.

In 1958-59, Wim was one of the students working at the Dwingeloo Radio Telescope on 21-cm line observations for my thesis project on Neutral Hydrogen in Orion. One day, Wim pointed out to me that time could be saved between observations by moving the dish to the next position while the previous one was being recorded. An 18-year old boy was telling me how my program could be improved!

Between 1965 and 1970, NFRA was struggling to bring the Synthesis Telescope to completion. The construction of the dishes and (especially) the receivers had suffered delays. But the software system was complete and fully operational in June 1970, when Queen Juliana inaugurated the WSRT. And the software turned out to be flawless! Jan Hogbom and Wim Brouw described the software system in 1974. It consists of five components: data collection, data correction, system calibration, Fourier transformation, and astronomical application. And the whole, complex system was developed by ONE person: Wim Brouw!

In 1998, I spent a few days at Sydney, on my way to a symposium at Canberra. Those three nights (10-13 August) I stayed with Wim and Joan. An excellent chance to relax after a hectic period at home, to talk with friends at Radiophysics, and to prepare for the workshop on High-Velocity Clouds.

In the 80's, as mentioned above, Wim was a key person in many committees. Together with his work as Werkgroep chairman, it demonstrated Wim as a true LEADER. And, two significant facts: Wim has no personal webpage (the details mentioned above come from the NFRA Annual Reports). And his publications of WSRT research show few first-authorships. Wim is MODEST.

Back to 1980. On 28 April, Jan Oort would turn 80 years old. Together with Wim and with Henk van de Hulst, I was preparing a book in his honour; "Oort and the Universe". On 5 December I had written the invitations to about 20 authors. Within seven weeks, all contributions had been received. But they had to be typewritten and collected into a book. And on 26 January I was to fly to Australia for a long observing run. I spoke with Wim and said: "If my plane crashes, will

you please see the book to completion?” His answer: “Of course”. Wim is HELPFUL. (In fact, Janni Millenaar at Dwingeloo did all the typing. I came back on 22 February, and then was ill for two weeks. But on 28 April, I could present the book in perfect fashion.)

THIS IS WIM BROUW: Extremely bright, fully reliable, efficient and modest. Wim LEADS and SERVES.