

# SANSA

## SPACE SCIENCE HISTORY

1538 - 1903

### Early History of Magnetic Observations

During the era of exploration between 1600 and 1700, visiting sailors from Europe were responsible for the early magnetic observations in South Africa.

1535

Portuguese navigator, De Castro, first measures magnetic declination off the Cape coast.

1595

A Dutch commander, Cornelis Houtman, on his way to India, obtains the first declination value of 0 degrees on land at Mossel Bay.

1600

An English physicist, William Gilbert states that the Earth is a giant magnet.

1818

A Frenchman, Freycinet, is responsible for the first complete determination of the magnetic field at Cape Town.

1841-1853

The Cape of Good Hope Observatory is established at the the Royal Astronomical Observatory and operated by a royal artillery detachment, led by Lt. Frederick Eardly-Wilmot.

1903

The first comprehensive geomagnetic field survey of southern Africa is compiled by Beattie and Morrisson.



UCT, 1932

1932 - 2011

### History of the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory

In order to develop a scientific understanding of the global nature of the Earth's magnetic field, simultaneous observations at various locations on the Earth's surface are required. It was for this reason that the International Commission for the Polar Year requested the establishment of a magnetic observatory in Cape Town.

1932

Prof A. Ogg establishes a magnetic observatory at the University of Cape Town.

1937

The Magnetic Observatory is incorporated into the Department of Lands as a branch of their Trigonometrical Survey Office.

1939

A long-term secular variation programme using field stations across Southern Africa is initiated.

1941

Due to the disturbing influence on magnetic observations by the electrification of the railway network, the Observatory relocates to Hermanus to become the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory (HMO).

1960

The Hermanus Magnetic Observatory forms part of the first South African National Antarctic Expedition (SANAE 1).

1969

The Hermanus Magnetic Observatory is incorporated into the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) as an independent research unit.



HMO, 1941

1987

Some of HMO's services are commercialised due to commercialisation of the CSIR.

2001

HMO is declared a National Facility and is transferred to the National Research Foundation.

2011

HMO migrates to the South African National Space Agency (SANSA).



Antarctic Expedition, 1960



SANSA, 2011



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