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Past - Present - Future

Holmin Verdozzi, Kristina; Forkman, Bengt

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LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

Past – present – future

The historical narratives in the first part of this book were intended to tell a story. It is by no means the complete history of the development of physics in Lund, but rather a patchwork of stories with which we hope to bring its history to life.

History only comes to life when we see the people involved in making it. We have, therefore, concentrated on certain individuals, not only to describe their unique contributions, but also to show that a single person can make a difference.

During the course of this work, the obvious has become clear, that history does not stand still, that it evolves and is augmented by events from the present. History is changed by the discovery of new facts and narratives – the tale is never really complete.

In relating this story, the need to document the present became clear to us. This prompted a Department of Physics Archive to be set up within the library, which contains documents and images that reflect aspects of the development of research, over and above the purely scientific ones.

Apart from providing a reminder of what has been, we hope that this book will increase the reader's understanding of the present; if we know how it all started, and what happened, then it is easier to understand why we are where we are today.



Kristina Holmin Verdozzi, faculty librarian and head of the Physics & Astronomy Library, is production manager of the physics department history project and one of the editors of this book.

This is not a textbook, but describing the history of physics in Lund in a broader perspective sheds light on its role in the international arena. We have therefore combined developments in Lund with international discoveries and the explanation of physical phenomena.

Regardless of whether you are a physicist or not – regardless of your background – we hope that you will find something of interest to you in this book, and that you will learn something new that prompts you to look deeper into the fascinating world of physics.

The evident that deserves to be mentioned again is that it was not possible to include all the people and events that took place in forming the Department's history in this book. There are of course gaps, inevitable in any narrative. As soon as we decide on a text and an image, we become aware of what has been left out. We leave it to our successors to fill these gaps with new and old stories.

The final three chapters of this book deal with the transitions between the past, the present and the future. First, there is a discussion on the factors that led to success, which should be applicable to other disciplines apart from physics. This is followed by an interview with the current Head of Department on the present status of physics in Lund and prospects for the future. The final chapter describes where we are now, and provides some insight into which doors physics may be able to open in the future.



Annika Nyberg, photographer and graphic designer, has been part of the production team of this book. Within the History Project framework she has together with Bengt Forkman and Kristina Holmin Verdozzi also produced the large screen presentation on display in the Physics Department entrance hall, a memory game and a monthly calendar.