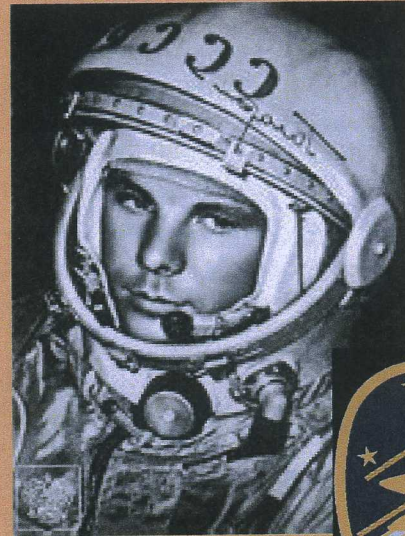
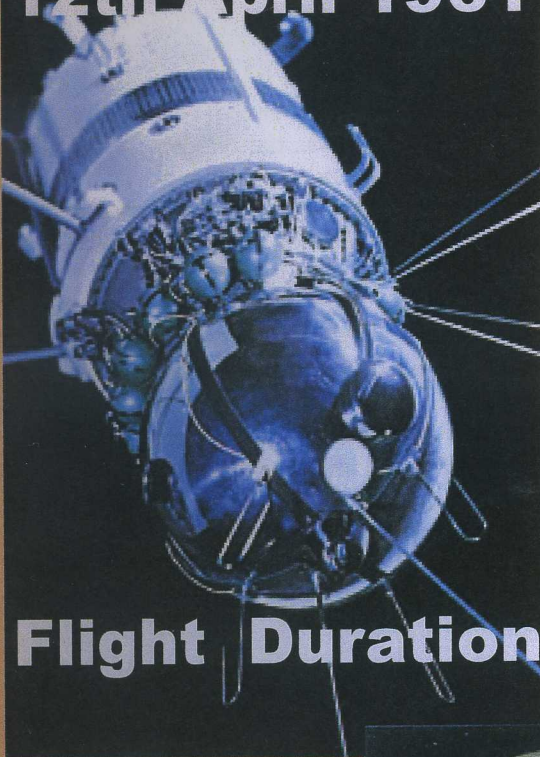




ORBIT



12th April 1961



Flight Duration **1 hr 48 Minutes**



**Yuri Gagarin
First Man
in
Space**

A Doyenne of Astrophilately—an interview with Beatrice Bachmann

In an article first published in the October-December 2010 edition of the on-line journal *Ad Astra*, our Italian sister publication, **Umberto Cavallaro** interviews Beatrice Bachmann shown in this photo taken by German ASSS member Jürgen Esders and also featuring Spanish ASSS member Antoni Rigo. Umberto and Beatrice are both former members of the ASSS. The article was sub-edited by Jeff Dugdale

The meeting is over. It has started very early in the morning – at 8:30 – and lasted until noon. This year there was no “technical” subject to discuss, except a minor upgrade to the SREV, quickly unanimously approved by the Delegates. This meeting has especially commemorated the Event: 25 years ago, *Astrophilately* was born in Rome, as an FIP Section. Beatrice Bachmann, the founder and first “Leader” of the Section had been invited to summarise the main milestones in the journey of this first quarter century. A long interesting path, with much learning involved. All the Delegates meet for the working lunch in the snack bar of the Congress Centre and we deal again on the same subject with funny stories and anecdotes.

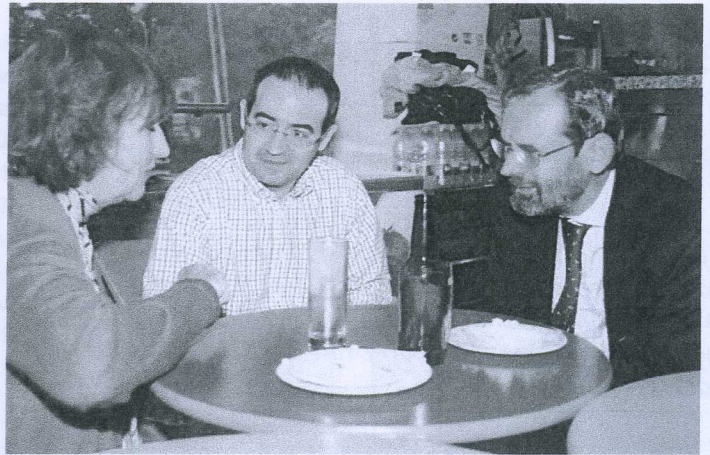
I make an appointment in the afternoon with Beatrice for a short interview.

“How did your interest in astrophilately start?”

“It started in 1961 in Germany where I used to perform as an actress in theatre. I was fascinated about Gagarin’s space flight and it happened that a friend of mine made me aware of the possibility of recording this event with philatelic material. That’s how everything began. From this time onwards I was attracted by philatelic material about space.

When I came to the Theatre of Zurich in 1965 as an actress my interest in space philately was still going on. Almost by chance in a street hobbies market in Zurich I met Teddy Dahinden who introduced me to other collectors of Weltall-philatelie (the term used in Swiss-German for “space philately”). “Weltallsammlern”, or “space collectors” at that time were interested in all philatelic material related to space research and exploration by unmanned and manned space flights. “Astrophilately” was not yet born. As the group grew, we started to regularly meet in a restaurant in Zurich every first Friday of the month.

At the beginning of 1969 we decided to set-up in Zurich



Beatrice speaking with Antoni and Umberto (right) at the FIP congress in Portugal in October 2010: see *Orbit* for January 2011 pages 16 and 17

the Gesellschaft der Weltall-Philatelisten (Society of Space Philatelists) and Dr. Dahinden was elected President. It was a success.

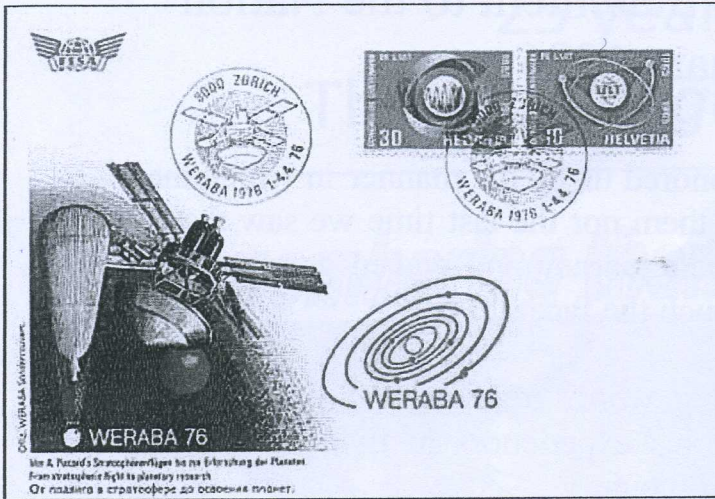


The following year we organized in Zurich the first WERABA (Weltraum-Briefmarkenausstellung or Exhibition of Space Covers) with 28 exhibitors coming from 5 Countries to participate with their own collections.

Dahinden presented a memorable conference under the title “what is astrophilately?” where he defined the boundaries of the new discipline: a sort of “symbiosis of Philately and Techniques”. Three years later, 61 exhibitors and 28 youth participated in WERABA 2 (1973). The number of exhibitors kept on growing, and at WERABA 3 (1976) there were 83 exhibitors and 18 youth contributors”.

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 23



“So in mid 70s astrophilately had reached a critical mass. How did you arrive at setting-up a specific class?”

“It was quite a winding path, not lacking in obstacles. Dr. Dahinden used to be in contact with Roland Kohl, president of FISA (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Aerophilatéliques), that in 1980 had established its internal Astrophilately Commission, with its own regulation.



At the same time Dr. Dahinden, who in 1976 had been appointed President of the Swiss Philatelic Federation, became a Member of the FIP Board. As FISA was more open towards the new discipline, he fostered an agreement between FIP and FISA. The immediate visible result was the first FIP-FISA astrophilately exhibition LURABA held in Luzern in 1981, putting together the 20 years of successful unmanned and manned space flights of the USSR and USA.

It was the first time that FIP had sponsored an Astrophilately Exhibition. Most of the philatelic materials on space didn't fit in with the regulations of



the existing classes. The Federation was however resisting as they couldn't see the need for a separate class. They felt that Thematic Philately was already able to satisfy the instances of space collecting.

It took years before FIP recognised the necessity of founding an independent Astrophilately Section with Special Regulations and Guidelines. At the FIP Congress in Rome in November 1985, in the context of the ITALIA'85 International Philatelic Exhibition, a motion of the FIP Board to create a Section for Astrophilately within the Commission for Aerophilately was approved.

FIP Board member Dr. Teddy Dahinden, Aerophilately Juror and Coordinator of the Commission for Aerophilately became also Coordinator of the Section for Astrophilately. I was appointed by the FIP Board as Leader of the Section. It was not a “Commission” and I was not a “President” and instead of a Commission Board, I had a “Working Committee” of four Members. I had to submit to the President of the Aerophilately Commission all official paper and information of the Section before forwarding them to delegates.

But, ...at least, Astrophilately had started on its own way...”

Beatrice (now aged 80) used to be – and still is – an actress. Our interesting and pleasant conversation goes on for a couple of hours. The development of what happened from there onwards is well summarized in the website of FIP-Astrophilately, prepared by the President Igor Rodin, (also an ASSS member) in its page: “The 25th Anniversary of the FIP Section for Astrophilately”

see (http://astrophilatelist.com/index/history_of_the_section/0-950)