

2.24 *Young astronomer in Denmark 1946–1958*

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This is a personal account of how I became an astronomer. Fascinated by the stars and planets in the dark sky over Lolland, an island 100 km south of Copenhagen, the interest in astronomy was growing. Encouraged by my teachers, I polished mirrors and built telescopes with generous help from the local blacksmith and I observed light curves of variable stars. Studies at the Copenhagen University from 1950 gradually led me deeper into astronomy, especially astrometry (the astronomy of positions), guided by professor Bengt Strömgren and my mentor dr.phil. Peter Naur. I was lucky to take part in the buildup of the new observatory at Brorfelde during the first difficult years and the ideas I gathered there have contributed to the two astrometry satellites Hipparcos and Gaia launched by the European Space Agency (ESA) in respectively 1989 and 2013. – The account contains notes about Danish astronomers and the observatory, but it is not meant to be a history of Danish astronomy; it is my personal memoirs.

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