

Documenting a milestone in AO history

The AO publishes a commemorative book on its first half-century.



1 August Guggenbühl with his copy of the AO anniversary book.

2 Richard Bird, Amirah Blackmore and Sandro Isler.

A thoroughly engaging and informative book specially commissioned to celebrate the AO's 50th anniversary, entitled "Transforming Surgery, Changing Lives: The First 50 Years of the AO", has proved very popular since its launch at the Anniversary Gala Party in Davos in June.

This hundred-page, hardcover book provides a comprehensive introduction to all aspects of the AO, from its earliest days and the unique contributions of the 13 founding fathers, through its development from a Swiss to a global organization, to its current structure, activities and objectives, together with pertinent discussions on its future.

The AO's ubiquitous sense of family and fellowship, its unique spirit, and the abiding principles and values put in place by its founders resonate on its pages.

"One highlight was interviewing the legendary Maurice E Müller, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday, at his home in Bern. His daughter, Janine Aebi-Müller, reminded him that it was important to drink enough liquids and asked if he would like some tea. 'No,' he replied in Swiss German, 'I would prefer Campari.' So, we all proposed a toast and I clinked glasses with the man who started it all...." *Richard Bird*

The result of 16 months of creative effort, the book is a valuable reference and memorable keepsake, appropriate for AO 'old-timers' and newcomers alike—and for an external audience, a first-time insight into a groundbreaking organization whose excellent work and dedication benefit patients the world over.

Crafting a book with such broad appeal proved a challenging but ultimately successful task for a devoted and enthusiastic team of collaborators, including the book's writer, Richard Bird.

"As I began this project, I was struck by how few people outside specialized surgical fields knew the compelling story of the AO. At the same time, the concept called for subject matter for AO insiders as part of the 50th anniversary celebration. It was a tough balancing act.

"I was fortunate to have the guidance and support of an excellent project manager and editorial team led by Jim Kellam, as well as graphic artists who immediately grasped the layout concept and infused it with their creative talent," Bird says.

Graphic designer Sandro Isler came up with a dynamic design that marries text, original interviews, and humorous anecdotes with photographs both old and new, whimsical sketches, and colorful illustrations so that the result is authoritative yet warm and welcoming.

It's a book that rewards each reader in a uniquely personal way. For AO Foundation Anniversary Manager Amirah Blackmore that meant learning what the AO spirit means to surgeons around the world. "As long as the friendship and sharing prevail, the AO's future will be assured and thereby benefit us all," she says.

The book was distributed to Trustees during the Trustees Meeting in June, and will be given to AO employees, faculty active around the world in 2008, AO Alumni members at regional courses in Dubai, UAE, and Chiang Mai, Thailand, to the AO's industrial partners, and on special request from health authorities.

A book teaser will appear on the AO website at www.aofoundation.org in September, where the book will be available to order at a cost of CHF 50.- plus packaging and postage. eig