



## **Otto Burkard — pioneer of ionospheric physics and space research in Austria**

**R. Bauer**

Institute for Geophysics, Astrophysics and Meteorology (IGAM), Institute of Physics,  
University of Graz, Austria

Born in 1908 Otto Burkard studied physics at Karl–Franzens–Universität Graz, obtained a high school teaching degree and a PhD in 1933. He started his scientific career at the Technische Hochschule Graz but his strong interest in radio propagation soon led to private work related to ionospheric physics. In this field he habilitated (obtained the full teaching rights) at Karl–Franzens–Universität Graz in 1942. In 1947 he founded the Ionospheric Station with ionosonde operation. The station still exists but engages now in electron content observations by means of propagation effects on satellite signals.

Recognizing the research possibilities of artificial satellites, since about 1960 Otto Burkard extended his research interests to the magnetosphere and to the interplanetary space and was the driving force behind efforts to establish a space research institution at Graz. On 24 April 1970 the Austrian Academy of Sciences founded its Space Research Institute at Graz with Otto Burkard as its first director. Also now, Graz has remained the “Space Capital” of Austria.