Fifty years ago the AO was founded by a group of 13 visionary surgeons in Biel in Switzerland. These ‘founding fathers’ came together to create ideas and technology to improve patient care in the field of traumatology and diseases of the musculoskeletal system. Their success truly transformed surgery, changing lives.

Today’s AO wants to pay tribute to these pioneers. Throughout 2008, the AO is celebrating the achievements of its founders, and those who later carried the torch, in a fitting manner with a variety of events.

**Exciting array of international events**

To help ensure this will be a memorable year, a 50th Anniversary Steering Board began working on the celebration at the end of 2005. Many exciting activities have been planned all over the globe. Some of these are annual events, with a
Being sent as a young resident in 1985 to the Jubilee AO Davos Course by Harald Tcherne, I was deeply impressed by a perfect course organization and for me up until that point, an unseen level of didactics, presentations, and practical exercises. However, when asked to remember specific details I was mostly impressed by three circumstances:

1. Being able to get a photograph showing Maurice Müller together with me and my colleagues (see below).
2. Riding uphill together with Martin Allgöwer in the same compartment on the Parsenn ski trail. Martin wore a bobble cap and talked with us about skiing techniques.
3. Having received a Swiss watch as a present on the occasion of the Jubilee AO Davos Course, I entered the Davos swimming pool thanks to a sponsored sports ticket with about 25 fellow participants to check the water resistance of the watch in a practical experiment...the watch turned out to be completely waterproof and is still in perfect shape today!  

Tim Pohlemann

On the occasion of his 90th birthday, Friday, March 28, 2008, Maurice Müller, an AO founding father, unveiled a commemorative plaque at the Hotel Elite in Biel, where the AO was founded. A meeting of the Board of Directors and Academic Council also took place there the same weekend. The Jubilee Trustees Meeting will be held in Davos in June, where a special car-free evening in the town will help cement the AO’s special relationship with the townsfolk of Davos.
The AO Alumni Association is contributing to the celebrations by replacing their triennial event with three events to be held in Greece, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates.

Amirah Blackmore is the Anniversary Manager based in Switzerland with responsibility for coordinating the celebrations around the world. “The jubilee year will be a celebration of the past while looking forward to the future. This is reflected in the slogan to be used throughout 2008 which is: the first 50 years. This wording ensures that the AO is seen as a forward-looking organization.”

Special website keeps members up to date
A special anniversary website has been commissioned and is the best method to keep up to date with the many events related to the celebrations. It can be viewed at www.aofoundation.org/anniversary or by following the link from the AO’s home page. Content is being added all the time as events happen so it is advisable to check back frequently over the course of the year.

While the focus within the AO quite rightly is on the scientific aspects, the anniversary celebrations are a unique opportunity to highlight the role interpersonal relationships have played over the
How to access the TK-System

The AO appreciates feedback on existing instruments and implants and welcomes input to solve unmet clinical needs. New ideas are introduced to the System of Technical Commissions (TK-System), in which over 120 highly specialized surgeons from around the world work on new solutions. They form Expert Groups in the respective areas of medical specialty, which are professionally supported by teams of engineers, researchers and other specialists from the AO and its commercial partners.

To initiate discussion of new ideas, we ask for a description of the clinical problem being addressed and for suggestions on how to approach it. Technical drawings and first prototypes are made according to the proposal and presented to the specialists; together with them, the proposal’s potential is evaluated and improvements and alternative approaches are discussed.

If the submitter’s innovation is successfully completed, they will be involved as a faculty member in AO teaching activities that ensure proper training of the new device. The overall process is described on the AO website at www.aofoundation.org (see AO in-depth; Activities; AOTK; Expert Groups).

Ideas may be proposed via e-mail at aotk@aofoundation.org or by approaching any member of the TK-System directly. For specialists involved in the relevant area, please look under Expert Groups (as above). If the project is not pursued we guarantee that intellectual property rights are wholly respected.