Giorgio Brianti retires

After a 40-year career spanning the whole of CERN’s history, Giorgio Brianti retired from the Laboratory at the end of April. As well as having overseen many major projects, Brianti’s dedicated work for CERN’s next major machine, the LHC, scheduled to become operational in 2004, means his contributions will continue to be evident.

Joining the infant Laboratory in 1954, Brianti was initially involved in industrial liaison, a theme to which he subsequently returned. After work on the magnets and then controls and instrumentation for the new PS proton synchrotron, he moved on to operations. In 1964 he became leader of Synchro-Cyclotron (SC) Division, at a time when the SC, CERN’s first machine, was being substantially upgraded and its role extended for the ISOLDE on-line isotope separator.

In 1967 he took charge of the team building the Booster, a new synchrotron to inject beams into the PS. As well as fulfilling its immediate objective of improving PS performance, the innovative design of the Booster and its astonishing adaptability are still paying dividends. Built to operate at 800 MeV, it has shown its ability to attain 1.4 GeV and has impressively demonstrated how it can handle the gymnastics needed for future LHC beams.

When John Adams was forming his team to build CERN’s next major proton synchrotron, the SPS, Brianti’s skills were eagerly sought, but with continuing responsibilities for the Booster, he transferred to the SPS later, to take charge of the complex preparations for its experimental areas, initially for fixed target work. In 1976 he became Deputy Leader of SPS Division, moving on to lead the Division the following year. During this time he supervised the imaginative work required to convert the SPS for historic role as a proton-antiproton collider.

In 1981 he became Technical Director at a time when the challenge of developing the technology for CERN’s future requirements demanded increasing cooperation with industry. With the LHC emerging as the Laboratory’s major long-term objective, in addition to his Directorship duties he put in much dedicated effort to prepare the way for this technically demanding machine. Superconducting magnets, long one of Brianti’s pet ideas, were brought to