André Rousset 1930-2001

André Rousset, who played a major role in heavy-liquid bubble chamber physics at CERN, died on 1 July.

After studying at the Ecole Polytechnique, Rousset joined Louis Leprince-Ringuet’s research laboratory in 1954, collaborating in pioneer cosmic-ray studies at the Pic du Midi de Bigorre. In 1960 he became professor at the Ecole des Mines, Paris, and was nominated a director of Leprince-Ringuet’s laboratory from 1964 to 1969 before moving to CERN to lead work on heavy-liquid bubble chambers. There he managed the arrival of the big Gargamelle chamber, of which he had been one of the major constructors under the direction of André Lagarrigue, and its subsequent use for experiments in CERN’s neutrino beam.

At Gargamelle the weak neutral current was discovered in 1973, signalling the unification of electromagnetic and weak interactions, which merited a Nobel Prize for the theoreticians who had made the prediction. André Rousset was one of the major players in this discovery, along with other physicists of the international Gargamelle collaboration, including André Lagarrigue and Paul Musset. He served as a member of CERN’s Scientific Policy Committee from 1974 to 1980.

Returning to Paris in 1974, Rousset became a governmental scientific advisor, before moving to Aérospatiale in 1985, where he was to remain the chairman’s scientific advisor until 1995. He retained his physics teaching post at the Ecole des Mines until he retired in 1968.

André Rousset was an enthusiastic and dynamic physicist who was gifted with keen intuition and a strong critical sense. His collaborators will remember a warm and cheerful man, full of spirit and humour, with whom it was always very pleasant to work.

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