

rials at high temperature and pressure," says Ahrens. Gallagher and Ahrens estimate that the original 1987 shock temperatures from Caltech should be reduced by between 700 K and 800 K, bringing the melting point at 200 GPa down nearer to Boehler's 4000 K. "My hunch is that Reinnie [Boehler] is closer" to the true melting point than the Berkeley group, says Dion Heinz of the University of Chicago, a former student of Jeanloz's. "If Tom's [Ahrens'] work is right, he's heading in that direction."

But even if Boehler is exactly right about the melting point at 200 GPa, it is still a long way to extrapolate to the inner core pressure of 330 GPa. Boehler's extrapolation from his

diamond-anvil work that now reaches up to 200 GPa yields a melting point of 4850 K at inner core pressures, cool by recent standards but still hotter than thought a decade ago. The corrected Caltech shock melting point at 330 GPa is about 6500 K—a thousand degrees below the original report but still way above Boehler's figure. Boehler believes that Ahrens' results may be off because the shock may have temporarily heated the iron beyond its melting point.

Despite the recent refinements to their experiments, researchers in this field continue to be deeply concerned about the reliability of their methods. Other diamond-anvil studies, such as experiments aimed at ex-

ploring electrical conductivity in the deep mantle (*Science*, 29 November 1991, p. 1295), have already highlighted the difficulties with that technique, and shock experiments are also coming under close scrutiny. "It's a tricky problem experimentally," says Andrew Jephcoat of the University of Oxford, who has recently started working with iron in a diamond-anvil cell. "It will take several independent determinations to convince the community." Just how warm the hot Earth is remains to be seen. "We're now in the lower bracket," says Poirier. "It may be 1000 K wide, but it's the lower bracket." But even that reduction is unlikely to cool the debate.

—Richard A. Kerr

HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Keeping Alive the Spirit of Einstein

CAPUTH, GERMANY—When Albert Einstein pondered the nature of the universe six decades ago, he would sometimes slip into his sandals and wander into the quiet woods behind his summer home in this fishing village near Berlin. The pine forest and the house remain, but last month a roaring bulldozer cleared space for a parking lot near the spot where Einstein used to embark on his walks.

The new lot is intended to accommodate the cars of dozens of tourists who come every weekend to snoop around the former home of the twentieth century's most famous physicist. They are the sort of curious visitors that Einstein used to slip out the back door to avoid. Now, some Einstein advocates here find the visitors just as unwelcome, and they are trying to gain possession of the house to make it a center for scholars rather than for tourists.

It is the latest development in a complex ownership struggle that might confuse even the father of the theory of relativity. Built in 1929 with Einstein's life savings, the house fell into the hands of the now-defunct Prussian state after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. Einstein fled to the United States and never saw his home again. Nazi youth groups used the house for years; then the East German government leased it to families after the war ended. In 1979, it was turned over to the East German Academy of Sciences, which renovated it to honor the 100th anniversary of Einstein's birth, and prominent East German physicists used it as a retreat. When Germany reunified, the East German academy was dissolved and the state of Brandenburg took possession (*Science*, 29 March 1991, p. 1557). But a year later Caputh wrested control through a property court. The proud village has put up road signs to direct visitors to the house and included a color photo of it in a tourism brochure.

Caputh may have won a battle, but it has not yet won the war. On the other side are 11

heirs of Einstein's stepdaughter Margot—an unwieldy set of individuals and organizations ranging from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to a New Jersey chapter of the Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Since the fall of communist East Germany, some of the heirs have gone to a German court to press their own claims to the famous house. The court has not yet ruled.



Meeting of minds. Einstein Forum Director Gary Smith wants Einstein's house to be a conference center, not a tourist trap.

The newest factor in this complex equation is the Einstein Forum, a Potsdam-based foundation that the state of Brandenburg established in 1992 to organize conferences and use the house in a way Einstein might approve of. Because Caputh does not have the money to maintain the building, the Einstein Forum pays maintenance and guard costs and in return gets use of the house on weekdays. Now it is working with some of the Einstein heirs to try to gain ownership if the German court rules against Caputh.

The Einstein Forum brings together prominent academics to "stimulate new forms of scholarly interaction" between the humanities and natural sciences, says Gary Smith, a native of Austin, Texas, who di-

rects the forum. Over the past 2 years, the forum has organized interdisciplinary conferences, workshops, and research projects—on topics such as "variations of chaos" and the transmission of knowledge—that are important to scientists as well as other scholars. While his office is in Potsdam, Smith calls

Einstein's house the forum's "central icon." He adds: "Our idea was to borrow the magic of this site."

But some of that magic is in danger of being lost. Smith, for one, thinks tourism—with some 200 visitors wandering through the house on weekends—is a "catastrophe" because it is damaging the structure. "It's a scandal that this summer house is being used

in the winter. There already are signs of damage," including scarred floors.

Smith says he "can't get state money to renovate the house until we really own part of it," so he is trying to persuade the heirs to sell or give their claims to the forum. Recently, Smith says, Hebrew University officials in Jerusalem "agreed in principle to commit their 11.6% claim" to the forum and to help negotiate claims by other Jewish groups amounting to 17%. Smith hopes to resolve the ownership tangle by the year's end.

If the German court and the heirs cooperate, he says the forum may soon be able to rekindle the intellectual traditions remembered so fondly by Erika Britzke, a longtime caretaker of the Einstein House. Britzke likes to dwell on the glory days from 1929 to 1932, when dozens of famous visitors beat a path to Einstein's door, and the physicist wrote his renowned letters to Sigmund Freud about the nature of war. "It's a privilege to unlock the door each morning," she says. "For one of mankind's greatest minds spent so much time here, thinking and working."

—Robert Koenig

Robert Koenig is a journalist in Berlin.