



THE ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

NEWSLETTER



The spiral galaxy NGC 7217 in Pegasus. Image obtained using the Prime Focus Imaging Camera at the William Herschel Telescope in B, V and R bands. Courtesy of Mischa Schirmer (ING) and Gilles Bergond (IAA, Granada).

Message from the Director

Dear Reader,

This is the 10th issue of the ING Newsletter. Now 'ten' does not read like a big number, but knowing the effort it takes to produce these Newsletters on a more or less regular basis it is worth a big thank-you to all those people who have contributed over the years! And let me state the obvious: volunteers for contributions are always welcome.

This Newsletter brings a number of important scientific and technical highlights. Worth a mention here are the nice results obtained with the telescopes on La Palma of the collision of the Deep Impact probe on comet Swift-Tuttle. ING's current main instrumentation development project, GLAS, which aims to build a laser guide star for adaptive optics, is summarised in this Newsletter as well. I hope you will find these and several other contributions of interest.

An important event for the observatory took place in July when an independent international

panel of scientists reviewed the functioning and future prospects of the ING. This activity was commissioned by the Board of the ING to evaluate the WHT and INT in a wider international context and provide an independent vision of the observatory's current and future scientific health.

The ING finds itself at an important crossroads for various reasons. Since the previous review of this kind a number of major changes have taken place. For example, measures were introduced to drastically reduce the overall operational cost of the telescopes. Furthermore, developments around the world on large telescopes have resulted in changes in the requirements for the ING telescopes from the user community. And on the organisational side, the international agreements that have formed the basis of the scientific partnership on La Palma for a quarter of a century will be up for renewal in 2009. These issues formed the core of the questions on which