

TELESCOPE TIME

Applying for Time

Danny Lennon (Head of Astronomy, ING)

The coming year, 2006, will see important changes taking place at ING which will provide new opportunities for observers. The WHT will acquire a laser guide star for its adaptive optics system. IDS is likely to be offered once more on the INT, along with Ultracam, a high speed CCD camera. More details of these and other enhancements, are discussed below.

The Ground layer Laser Adaptive optics System (GLAS) project should come to fruition during the latter half the year, opening up most of the sky to high spatial resolution integral field spectroscopy with OASIS and infrared imaging with INGRID, both using the NAOMI adaptive optics system. This project is described in the article by René Rutten on page 11 of this issue, where further details on its expected performance may be found. At the time of writing, on-sky commissioning of GLAS is scheduled for early in semester 2006B and as a consequence the ING expects to release an announcement of opportunity for large programmes which can exploit this new facility during that semester. OASIS itself continues to perform well although at the time of writing the 33mm enlarger (pixel size 0.42", field of view 12.0"×16.7") is not yet commissioned. For the latest information on this enlarger please contact Chris Benn (crb@ing.iac.es).

Applicants for adaptive optics programmes are reminded that their programmes are currently being carried out in service mode and in the event that AO observations are not possible we will switch to a TAC approved backup programme with either ISIS or LIRIS, depending on which is available. For this reason, if AO applicants have their own backup programme they must include this in their telescope application proposal to be judged in competition with other AO backup proposals. For all ISIS backup proposals, applicants *must* use the default ISIS dichroic (the new Barr 5200 dichroic).

At the Cassegrain focus the new ISIS dichroic is performing well, users please note that this is now the default dichroic and proposals requesting an alternative must include a justification for their choice. The throughput of the ISIS image slicer has proved to be rather disappointing and pending the results of an investigation into the causes of its poor performance it is not yet being offered to observers. The introduction of the new

observing system software for ISIS, the Auxiliary port camera and the A&G box has proved to be very successful. It has been well received by visiting astronomers since it now enables the creation of observing scripts for ISIS, a feature which improves both efficiency and reliability. Other developments on the ISIS front during 2006 will include further testing of the new L3 CCDs which may provide an opportunity for offering a high-speed spectroscopic facility with ISIS.

The Prime focus instruments, AF2 and PFC are also benefitting from the software improvements to their observing system. In addition, AF2 has had a major upgrade of its fibre positioning software with a new release on a Linux PC platform providing improved speed and reliability. For example, a complete setup of fibres at the telescope now takes less than 20 minutes. Furthermore, the fibre configuration software, previously only available on a Sun/Solaris platform has now been successfully ported to a Linux platform.

LIRIS continues to perform very well, the high resolution ($R=2500$) *K*-band grism has now arrived and its efficiency will be quantified during the commissioning in early 2006 with a view to offering it for 2006B (though it may be available for service during 06A). The high resolution *H*-band grism is scheduled for the end of 2006, while funding has now been secured by the IAC for the high resolution grisms for *Z* and *J*. In principle, coronagraphy and both imaging and spectro-polarimetry are possible with LIRIS however all these three modes need further characterisation which will take place during semester 06A. Interested parties should contact the LIRIS instrument specialist, Mischa Schirmer (mischa@ing.iac.es), for the latest news on LIRIS. Finally on LIRIS, it is expected that the multi-slit mode will be offered more widely to users although the logistical and scheduling problems entailed by this still need to be addressed.

The INT will see substantial changes in 2006. It is expected that semester 06B will likely see the return of the Intermediate Dispersion Spectrograph (IDS), while the high speed CCD camera Ultracam (<http://www.shef.ac.uk/physics/people/vdhillon/ultracam/>) may also be offered on the INT. Essentially these two instruments will be competing for time with the Wide Field Camera (WFC) with the following restrictions: no single instrument will be scheduled on the INT for a block of

IMPORTANT

APPLYING FOR OBSERVING TIME:
http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/observing/INGinfo_home.html

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

UK PATT

15 March, 15 September

NL NFRA PC

15 March, 15 September

SP CAT

1 April, 1 October

ITP

<http://www.iac.es/gabinete/cci/>

SEMESTERS:

A: 1 February – 31 July

B: 1 August – 31 January

SUBMITTING A SERVICE PROPOSAL:

<http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/observing/service/service.html>

SUBMITTING AN OVERRIDE REQUEST:

<http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/observing/overrides.html>

APPLYING TO USE A NEW VISITOR

INSTRUMENT:

<http://www.ing.iac.es/Astronomy/observing/NewVisitorInstruments.html>

APPLYING FOR OPTICON EU FUNDING:

<http://www.otri.iac.es/eno/>

time of less than 4 weeks, though of course each block may consist of smaller individual programmes of 1 week or more in length. IDS will be offered with the 235mm camera only and with an EEV 2k×4k detector but with the usual choice of collimators and gratings for each observing run. Ultracam will be supported by the Ultracam team from Sheffield and as compensation for their efforts in providing the instrument and support the Ultracam PIs, Dhillon and Marsh, must be allowed co-authorship on publications resulting from these observations. Further details of these and other restrictions will be released during the course of 2006. The intention is clearly to encourage large programmes with these instruments. Another development for the INT is that we have now acquired three new red-shifted $H\alpha$ narrow band filters for the WFC which will be commissioned early in 2006. Please refer to the WFC web pages for the most recent information or contact the instrument specialist, Romano Corradi (rcorradi@ing.iac.es). □

Danny Lennon (djl@ing.iac.es)