



THE ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

NEWS LETTER



NAOMI Neptune in H band (1.6 microns). 120-sec integration, using as wavefront reference a star (V~10, top right) which happened to be nearby on the night. Neptune's diameter is 2.3 arcsec. The clouds are prominent in H band because of a strong methane line at a wavelength close to 1.6 micron. Triton is visible near the bottom of the image (see article by C. R. Benn et al. on page 21).

Message from the Director

Dear Reader,

Whilst the telescopes on La Palma keep going strong, a large number of changes are taking shape at the ING. Last winter important decisions were taken by PPARC Council that have a profound influence on the UK's ground-based astronomy programme. As a result, the UK is now a member of the European Southern Observatory, but these decisions also imply a significant shift in the balance of resources. One particular implication is a reduction of funds for the ING telescopes in the future.

In order to offset the reduction of funding from PPARC, a formal partnership with the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias has been agreed. This collaboration will further strengthen international collaboration between the European partners at the ORM, and at the same time reduce the impact of the reduced UK funding.

Nevertheless, the overall reduction in resources enforces a number of important changes at

THE ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

The Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes (ING) consists of the 4.2m William Herschel Telescope (WHT), the 2.5m Isaac Newton Telescope (INT) and the 1.0m Jacobus Kapteyn Telescope (JKT), and is located 2,350m above sea level at the Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory (ORM) on the island of La Palma, Canary Islands, Spain. The WHT is the largest telescope of its kind in Western Europe.

The construction, operation, and development of the ING Telescopes is the result of a collaboration between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The site is provided by Spain, and in return Spanish astronomers receive 20 per cent of the observing time on the telescopes. The operation of the site is overseen by an International Scientific Committee, or Comité Científico Internacional (CCI).

A further 75 per cent of the observing time is shared by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (IAC). On the JKT the international collaboration embraces astronomers from Ireland. The remaining 5 per cent is reserved for large scientific projects to promote international collaboration between institutions of the CCI member countries.

The ING operates the telescopes on behalf of the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) of the United Kingdom, the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO) of the Netherlands and the IAC in Spain. The Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory, which is the principal European Northern hemisphere observatory, is operated by the IAC.



(Continued from front cover)

ING that will not go unnoticed by ING staff or the astronomical community that we serve. In this Newsletter you will read how the changes impact on the service delivered to our user community (see article on page 19).

Another significant development since the previous Newsletter is the creation of a new observatory advisory body. The creation of this advisory group with wide international participation and a wide brief, was proposed during the observatory review last year. I am particularly pleased with the strong membership of this group, and trust

that their experience will help outline future directions of the observatory.

Apart from the unavoidable 'politics' that surrounds the observatory, we are not losing sight of the significant astronomical results that are being produced. The articles based on observations with INGRID, S-CAM, CIRSI, NAOMI and ULTRACAM provide for a number of excellent highlights.

I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter!

René G. M. Rutten

The ING Board

The ING Board oversees the operation, maintenance and development of the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes, and fosters collaboration between the international partners. It approves annual budgets and determines the arrangements for the allocation of observing time on the telescopes. ING Board members are:

Prof. Janet Drew, *Chairperson* – London
 Dr. Wilfried Boland – NWO, Leiden
 Dr. Gavin Dalton – Oxford
 Dr. Ramón García López – IAC, La Laguna
 Dr. Tom Marsh – Southampton
 Dr. Ronald Stark – NWO, The Hague
 Prof. Thijs van der Hulst – Groningen
 Dr. Colin Vincent – PPARC, Swindon
 Dr. Simon Berry, *Secretary* – PPARC

ING Director's Advisory Group

Last year the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes had its second independent international review of the observatory, initiated by the ING Board. The conclusions from the review were very encouraging (for a summary, see the October 2001 issue of this Newsletter). One of the recommendations of the review was that ING should set up a Director's Advisory Group. Such a group would assist the observatory in defining the strategic direction for operation and development of the telescopes. It would also provide an international perspective and act as an independent contact point for the community to present its ideas. This new group replaces the instrumentation Working Group that fulfilled part of this function to date.

Dr Mark McCaughrean (Potsdam) has kindly agreed to chair this new advisory committee. Further members are: Thijs van der Hulst (Groningen), Ramón García López (IAC, La Laguna), Phil James (Liverpool) and Nial Tanvir (Hertfordshire).

The ING Newsletter

ISSN 1575–8958 (printed version)
 ISSN 1575–9849 (electronic version)
 Legal License: TF–1959/99

Published in Spain by THE ISAAC
 NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES (ING).

Apartado 321; 38700 Santa Cruz de La Palma; Canary Islands; Spain.
 Telephone: +34 922 425400
 Fax: +34 922 425401
 URL: <http://www.ing.iac.es/>

Editorial team: J. Méndez, R. Rutten, D. Lennon and Johan Knapen.

Designer: J. Méndez.

Preprinting: Gráficas El Time.

Tel.: +34 922 416651

Printing: Gráficas Sabater.

Tel.: +34 922 623555

The ING Newsletter is primarily published on-line at <http://www.ing.iac.es/PR/newsletter/> in html and pdf format. Notification of every new issue is given by e-mail using the [INGNEWS] mailing list. More information on [INGNEWS] can be found on page 29. Requests for one-off printed copies can be emailed to Javier Méndez (jma@ing.iac.es).

The ING Newsletter is published twice a year in March and September. If you wish to submit a contribution, please contact Javier Méndez (jma@ing.iac.es). Submission deadlines are 15 July and 15 January.