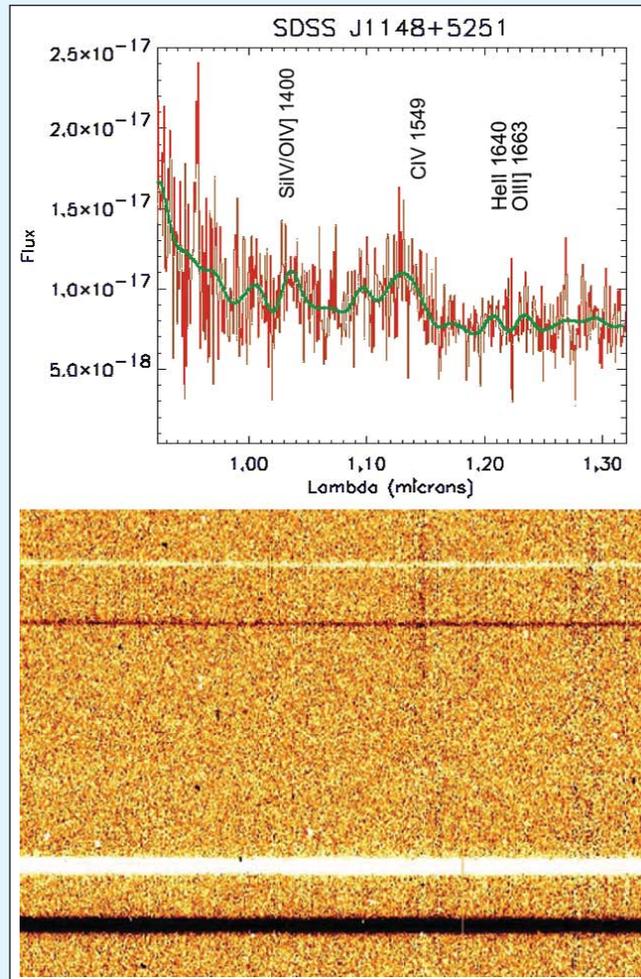




# THE ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

## First Light on LIRIS



Above: Picture of the near-infrared imager and spectrograph LIRIS mounted on the Cassegrain focus of the William Herschel Telescope. Left: LIRIS two-dimensional spectrum of the most distant QSO at  $z=6.41$  (top row). The extracted spectrum is shown in the top left panel. A fit to the spectrum is also shown, where several broad emission lines are identified. The most intense feature is the CIV line, detected with a S/N ratio of 10. The spectrum is the co-addition of 5 frames of 850s exposure time each, giving an approximate total time of 70min. (see article by J. A. Acosta Pulido et al. on page 15).

## Message from the Director

Dear Reader,

Change and evolution are signs of progress, but are not always without pain. The situation at the ING telescopes is evolving rapidly. The process of restructuring, focussing on making the ING run at a much reduced cost while still delivering top-class service to the astronomical community is our form of evolution. The process will result in a smaller but stronger observatory, based on a strong team of engineers and astronomers. Moreover, new international relations are being developed, that will set the scene for the future.

An important milestone was reached on May 6th, with the signing in Tenerife of the new

international agreement for the operation of the ING telescopes between PPARC, NWO and the IAC. Our new relationship with the IAC holds the prospect of stronger future collaborations in scientific programmes and projects. With this partnership, Spain gains nearly 10% of the available telescope time. In return, the financial contribution from the IAC offsets cost savings that were required from the side of the UK. Moreover, the IAC is constructing a world-class IR spectrograph, LIRIS, for the William Herschel Telescope that will be offered to all users of the telescope, thus adding to the scientific capability of the telescope.

## 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). 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)

With this agreement ING has found a new balance with its three partners that will bring scientific benefits for all astronomers as well as a positive outlook towards a strong collaboration with our Spanish colleagues. The article in this Newsletter by the Director of the IAC, Prof Francisco Sánchez, sets out the clear vision on this new collaboration from the Spanish perspective.

A second important result of international collaboration in recent months has been the development of a very large proposal requesting funds to the European Community under the

Framework-6 programme. Many areas of observational astronomy are combined within this proposal, named OPTICON. The ING telescopes play a prominent role in the part of the proposal that aims to foster access to the various telescopes on a truly European scale.

This Newsletter again highlights a number of scientific successes through excellent articles. Also progress on various projects is reported here. I trust you will enjoy this issue.

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 J Drew, *Chairperson* – ICL  
 Prof T van der Hulst, *Vice Chairperson* –  
 Univ. of Groningen  
 Dr G Dalton – Univ. of Oxford  
 Dr R García López – IAC  
 Prof T Marsh – Univ. of Warwick  
 Dr R Stark – NWO  
 Dr C Vincent – PPARC  
 Dr S Berry, *Secretary* – PPARC

### The ING Director's Advisory Group

The Director's Advisory Group (DAG) assists the observatory in defining the strategic direction for operation and development of the telescopes. It also provides an international perspective and act as an independent contact point for the community to present its ideas. DAG members are:

Dr M McCaughrean, *Chairperson* –  
 Astrophysikalisches Institut Potsdam  
 Dr M Balcells – IAC  
 Dr P A James – Liverpool John Moores Univ.  
 Dr N Tanvir – Univ. of Hertfordshire  
 Dr E Tolstoy – Univ. of Groningen

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