Crown Prince of Spain Observes at the William Herschel Telescope

Javier Méndez (Public Relations Officer, ING)

On 2 June the Crown Prince of Spain, His Royal Highness Don Felipe de Borbón visited the observatory on La Palma to lay the first stone of the Spanish 10-m telescope GranTeCan. This important event was celebrated under the cloudless Canarian skies with many important spectators present. The night before His Royal Highness visited the William Herschel Telescope not only to witness observing and meet astronomers, but also to carry out observations himself ! He took an image of the nearby Whirlpool galaxy Messier 51 with the Prime Focus Camera. This was a memorable event for all those present and ING.

The accompanying pictures were taken during the visit on 1 June to the WHT and the 'First Stone' ceremony of the GranTeCan Telescope the following day. ¤

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Arriving at the observatory. Picture credit: IAC.

HRH Don Felipe in the WHT dome. Chris Benn (WHT Manager) explains the telescope optics and instruments. Picture credit: Fotos Dalda.

During the visit, HRH Don Felipe showed his interest in astronomy by asking many questions. The visiting group also included Francisco Sánchez (Director IAC), José Miguel Rodríguez (GranTeCan Project Scientist) and Román Rodríguez (President of the Canary Islands). Picture credit: Fotos Dalda.

Following the visit to the dome, HRH Don Felipe met the observer for the night, Prof Richard Ellis, in the control room. Picture credit: Fotos Dalda.

Richard Ellis explaining his observing programme to look for the Cosmic Shear to HRH Don Felipe. Picture credit: Fotos Dalda.

Chris Benn presents HRH Don Felipe with a collection of discovery images from the ING telescopes. Picture credit: Fotos Dalda.

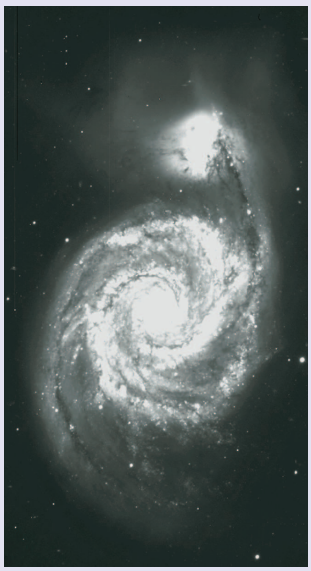

Image of M51 Galaxy obtained by HRH Don Felipe using the new mosaic Prime Focus camera on the WHT. The image was a 300s exposure through the B filter.

10-m GranTeCan telescope 'First Stone Ceremony'. The dome of the WHT is visible in the background. Picture credit: IAC.

Shown on the next page is the Whirpool, or M51, Galaxy. This is a 'true-colour' composite of B, V and R images obtained with the WHT Prime Focus Camera. The B image is the one acquired by HRH Don Felipe. Picture credit: Javier Méndez and Nik Szymanek.