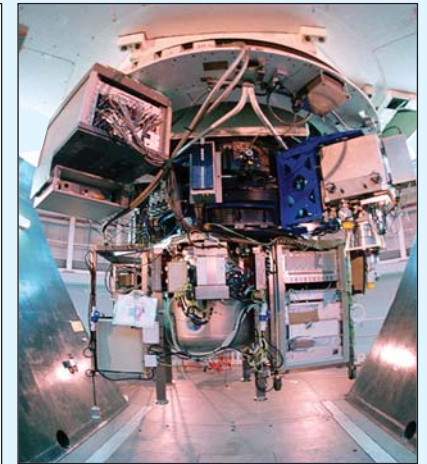
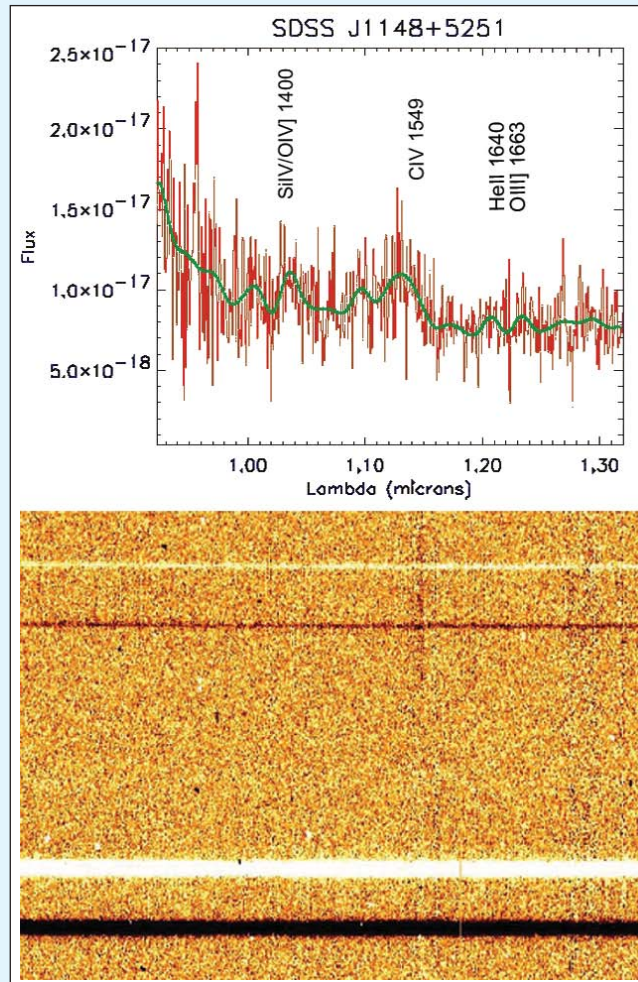




THE ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

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.