

TELESCOPE TIME

Applying for Time

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It is important that applicants for telescope time familiarise themselves with the latest news on instrumentation and detector combinations on offer, as well as with our scheduling restrictions. PPARC issue the PATT newsletter electronically, about one month before application deadlines, which contains up-to-date information on instrument availability. However for the very latest news and proposal submission procedures always refer to the ING web pages, homepage <http://www.ing.iac.es>. The ING's scheduling constraints were summarised in the first issue of the ING Newsletter and will not be repeated here, please refer to that issue, which is also available on our public information web pages.

What's New

The latter half of 2000 saw the first commissioning run of NAOMI, the ING's natural guide star adaptive optics facility. Unfortunately, this run, plus the first two NAOMI science runs towards the end of semester 2000B, were badly affected by the weather. Further commissioning of NAOMI will therefore take place during semester 2001A. It is anticipated that the ING will release a call for NAOMI service proposals for observations to be carried out in mid-June. For an update on NAOMI capabilities please refer to the article by Chris Benn in this issue.

As reported in the last newsletter, INGRID saw a very busy inaugural semester. This trend seems set to continue, and INGRID is currently undergoing a thorough overhaul in preparation for commissioning new fore-optics in early March. It is expected that this modification will result in improved image quality and better throughput for INGRID. New INGRID sensitivities will be available shortly after the fore-optics commissioning run in March. Also on INGRID, following feedback from observers and quality control checks by ING staff, a software error was discovered which manifested itself as an incorrect observation time recorded in the FITS header. The PIs of all scheduled and

service INGRID programs were notified of the existence of this problem and how to check for and correct the error.

Progress on the the long-awaited new Small Fibre Module for AF2 is excellent and it will be commissioned in July 2001 (see the article by John Telting et al. elsewhere in this issue). As part of the commissioning process we will solicit service programs from the community aimed at exploiting and testing the capabilities of the new smaller fibres. The announcement of opportunity will be distributed later in semester 2001A. Prospective AF2 applicants wishing to make use of AF2 in semester 2001B are reminded that the current Large Fibre Module is not offered for that semester as it will be replaced by the Small Fibre Module. Information on the expected throughput of the new system can be found on the AF2 instrument homepage.

Due to pressure on the GHRIL platform and the need to carry out Rayleigh laser beacon tests early in 2001B, it is likely that INTEGRAL will only be available on the WHT in the second half of that semester. This of course will have important repercussions on the scheduling of INTEGRAL proposals and interested parties should therefore endeavour to select targets for the second half of the semester only. Our more long term plans for INTEGRAL are to continue to offer it into the beginning of semester 2002A but thereafter to decommission it or offer it up for adoption as a private instrument.

The new ING data acquisition system, UltraDAS, continues to be rolled out onto other detectors. The most notable additions to the UltraDAS suite are the ISIS blue and red detectors, which were switched over in January of this year. Despite some teething problems the general impression from observers concerning performance has been very positive, and readout times are much reduced. Please refer to the ING detector information pages at our web site for details. By the end of 2001 we expect all detectors at the ING to be using UltraDAS.

Finally, important progress is being made in porting pipeline data reduction and quick-look software to ING computers. An important milestone in this process was the successful installation of the WFC pipeline software on our new Beowulf cluster at the INT (see the article by Robert Greimel et al. elsewhere in this issue). At the time of writing, tests are also being carried out on WHT Prime Focus data and INGRID data. Our objective is to be able to offer observers the option of requesting pipeline reduced science data as a product of their observing run at the ING.

WHT Development Plans

Summer 2002 will see the start of a major reorganisation of WHT instrumentation necessitated by the move to routine use of Adaptive Optics (AO) instrumentation. Detailed plans are tentative, and still have to be discussed at ING Board level, however we intend to construct a new GRound based Adaptive optics Controlled Environment (GRACE) on the Nasmyth platform currently occupied by UES. GRACE will house all ING AO instruments including NAOMI and OASIS. The current GHRIL side will continue to host WYFFOS and provide a focal station for visiting instruments.

Also, UES will be removed from its current location in the summer of 2002. If sufficient community interest is forthcoming it is envisaged that UES could in future be offered in a fibre-fed mode. Potential applicants for UES are advised therefore that semesters 2001B and 2002A will be the last for which UES will be available at the Nasmyth focus. □

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Important Dates

Deadlines for submitting applications

UK PATT and NL NFRA PC:
31 March, 30 September

SP CAT: **1 April, 1 October**

ITP: **30 June**

Semesters

Semester A:

1 February – 31 July

Semester B:

1 August – 31 January