



THE ISAAC NEWTON GROUP OF TELESCOPES

NEWSLETTER



Filamentary H α emission in Cygnus, observed as part of the INT WFC Northern Galactic Plane photometric H α survey (IPHAS). The colour scheme is red for H α , blue for the Sloan r' band, and green for Sloan i' band. As this is a significantly reddened region, as well as nebulous, there are many stars coming through strongly in the i' band, appearing here as a background of green stars. Colour image courtesy of Mike and Jonathan Irwin (IoA, Cambridge). For more information see the article by Janet Drew et al. on page 3.

Message from the Director

Dear Reader,

In the previous issue of this Newsletter I reported on the initiation of a project for the development of a Rayleigh laser guide star beacon, GLAS, for the WHT. Since then much work has gone into this project, and an important milestone was passed in January with the successful completion of the Preliminary Design Review. The positive outcome of that review implies that the project now moves towards the final design stage, and real money can now be spent on hardware. For example, the solid-state laser system will be purchased shortly. GLAS is a complex and demanding development, with exciting science

prospects that make this project worthwhile; watch this space !

Another key event that will take place during the summer of this year is an independent international review of the ING, commissioned by the ING Board. The high-profile committee of four world-renowned astronomers will focus specifically on the medium-term future of the observatory. The views of the wider astronomical community —your views— will play an important role, and to that effect a community questionnaire has been released to provide an easy input channel. Until May 31st input can

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 2350m above sea level at the Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory on the island of La Palma, Canary Islands, Spain. The WHT is the largest telescope of its kind in Western Europe.

The construction of the ING telescopes was 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)

be provided through:
http://www.ing.iac.es/AboutING/questionnaire_form.html.

In this issue of the Newsletter you will find a fine cross section of science results obtained from the telescopes. But let me point you also to the contributions by S. Hameed that so nicely captures the excitement of conducting astronomical observations, and the one by N. Douglas on a very special public outreach activity.

I end this introduction with two sad notes: Our friend and colleague, Charles Benneker, passed away in October last year. Charles had worked at the observatory for over a decade, specialising on electronics systems and instrument

control systems. Charles will be dearly missed and not be forgotten by his friends and colleagues. A commemorative plaque will be located on the WHT.

We were equally shocked to hear that Emiliós Harlaftis died as the result of a tragic accident. Emiliós had spent several years working at the observatory as support astronomer. After moving back to the UK, and later to his home country, Greece, he always kept close scientific and personal ties with the observatory on La Palma. He will be remembered for his contribution to science and his unconditional enthusiasm for astronomy and the observatory.

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* – University of Groningen
 Dr G. Dalton – University of Oxford
 Dr R. García López – IAC
 Dr P. Crowther – University of Sheffield
 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 acts 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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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.