Commissioning of the refurbished HWP was done during the EFOSC1 set-up night of 18 July 1995. Image motion on rotation, ghosts and user friendliness of the control programme were looked at. Total image movement on rotating the plate through 22.5° is less than 0.1 pixel, and when rotating the HWP continuously the resulting image of a pinhole is 1.39″ FWHM compared to 1.37″ when stationary. So the above-mentioned image motion is virtually completely eliminated. Ghosts have been measured on pinhole images in the corners and centre of the CCD. For a level of about 25,000 ADUs in the main images, the ghosts were 3×10^{-4} in the corners, and 9×10^{-4} in the centre. These are acceptable values when compared with typical ghosts produced by high-quality optical filters.

The control programme runs on a PC and is very easy to use; start up is done automatically by switching on the PC (or by resetting it), and the functions of the HWP are controlled by a few softkeys. The plate can be put in or out of the beam, it can be made to rotate continuously for flatfielding, it can be set to any position angle or stepped in fixed steps. A concise operating manual is provided.

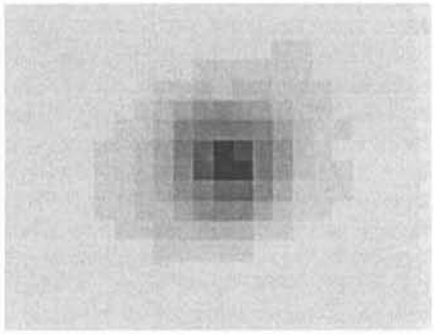
The rotating super achromatic HWP is offered as an option on EFOSC1 from now on.

Superb Seeing on the 2.2-m Telescope with IRAC2

C. LIDMAN

On rare occasions the seeing monitor at La Silla reports seeing below 0.3″. The first half of the night on May 9, 1995, was such an occasion.

The following image shows a star imaged for 30 seconds at K (2.2 μm) with IRAC2b on the 2.2-m during the same night. The pixel scale is 0.14″, the smallest available with IRAC2b, and the FWHM of the image is an incredible 0.24″. At this wavelength, Rayleigh's criterion is satisfied with anangular separation of 0.24″. The observer notes that due to guiding errors it was very difficult to obtain round images in such excellent seeing.



Photometry with EFOSC2

A piece of metal fell on the EFOSC2 collimator on April 20, 1995. As a result of that incident, photometry is not possible in about 1/8 of the chip on the bottom left corner, and possibly more. There may also be a possible problem with scattered light from bright objects that fall on this black spot. Some preliminary tests were performed recently which seem to indicate that flatfielding can be reasonably well achieved. A new collimator has been ordered and should be available by October 1995.

New Autoguider at the 1.52-m

C. OLIVEIRA

A new autoguider has been successfully installed and tested on the ESO 1.52-m telescope. Originally developed at Kitt Peak National Observatory and controlled by a PC, it has been interfaced to the ESO 1.52-m telescope control system. This autoguider incorporates a CCD camera and a Gaussian centring algorithm that determines the position of the guide star with respect to the cross hair. The field of view for the guider camera is 4.1′ × 2.5′. User-controlled integration times can be set from one second to one minute.

During the autoguider tests, successful guiding was possible for stars as faint as $m_v = 18$ (during bright time). Some simple guidelines on how to operate the autoguider can be found in the update of the B&C manual or in the control room of the ESO 1.52-m telescope.

Satellite Pictures Available in the "Meteomonitor" Environment

J. MENDEZ

Satellite pictures are now included in the "Meteomonitor" programme. The daily 18:00 UTC infrared and visible images of the Pacific Ocean and Chile from the US GOES7 satellite are available. To visualise them, select the option "h", and then "i" or "v" for the infrared or the visible one. The infrared South America picture (coming from GOESE and updated every 6 hours) can be obtained by pressing "s". A movie corresponding to the last 30 pictures can be displayed with the option "m".

The Last Trip of the ESO GPO

G. IHLE

The 14th of June, 1995, the GPO started its final trip from La Silla to a storage place in our office in Vitacura.

This could be a dry obituary of a telescope that played a role in ESO's history, but reflects the development of the organisation's astronomy and its instrumentation.

The GPO (Grand Prism Objectif) was designed by Prof. Ch. Fehrenbach as a double astrograph. Twin parallel tubes, each of 4 metre focal length, were