

emulsion is normally much slower than the standard astronomical infrared emulsion I-N, but by careful treatment (water + very quick dry), IV-N becomes quite a bit faster than I-N. This infrared Schmidt plate was carefully scrutinized by ESO astronomers H.-E. Schuster and R.M. West and they agreed that a very faint, apparently *non-stellar* object was seen right on top of the radio position.

There was obviously need for confirmation and another ESO astronomer, Dr. S. Laustsen, who was working with the 3.6-m telescope immediately agreed to take a corresponding deep IV-N plate with the large ESO telescope. However, since at that date only a blue-optimized Gascoigne corrector was available, it was not clear whether the 3.6-m would do much better than the Schmidt in the infrared. The first 90-min infrared plate was rather dark because of the nearby Moon, but a second 40-min exposure three days later clearly brought out a non-stellar object as

seen on the Schmidt plate. This 3.6-m photo is reproduced here. A further red plate (127-04 + RG 630) barely showed the object, confirming its infrared colour.

Photometric infrared observations were soon after made by Dr. W. Wamsteker of ESO with the 1-m telescope. He detected an infrared source at the same position and the measurements (1.6 to 5 microns) are being reduced. The ESO astronomers are now preparing their observations for publication.

The 1950 position of the optical candidate is R.A. = $13^{\text{h}}43^{\text{m}}23^{\text{s}}.57$; Decl. = $-60^{\circ}09'30''.1$, i. e. in very good agreement with the most recent radio positions of this source. From the infrared photos there is little doubt that we see the very heavily reddened centre of a galaxy, but further observations are obviously desirable in order to learn more details. It will not be easy to obtain an optical (probably infrared) spectrum but the effort would be worthwhile.

Progress Report 3.6-m Telescope

A piece of good news can be reported: the Cassegrain focus of the 3.6-m telescope is operational. The technical staff around the instrument has, it seems, already acquired a considerable routine in getting a piece of equipment to work. It all went very smoothly with the Cassegrain, the mechanical installation, the electronic control, the optical alignment and tests and finally the astronomical tests and further software development.

Like for the prime focus we are testing the Cassegrain photographically by a small-field camera. The first photographs were taken during the night of April 19/20 and a good number of test plates have been taken since then. We

are entirely satisfied with the performance of the instrument and it seems that the optical specifications have been met with a good margin.

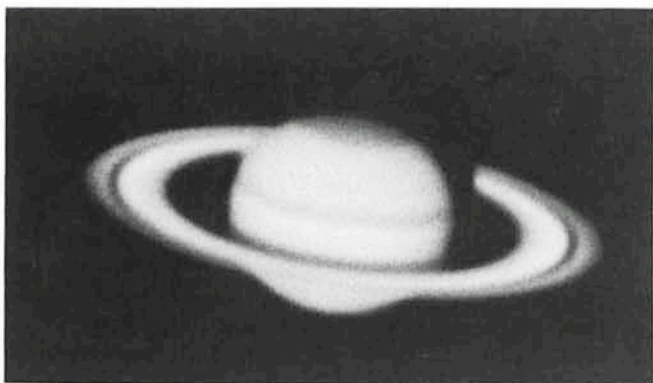
The first Cassegrain instrument, the photometer, will be installed in June. In the meantime we continue mainly in prime focus, which astronomically is more interesting for photographic work.

In prime focus we have by now accumulated some 700 plates of which many are under evaluation by astronomers in the ESO countries.

May 11th, 1977

S. Laustsen

Saturn Photographed at the Cassegrain Focus of the ESO 3.6-metre Telescope



This test photo of the giant planet Saturn was obtained by ESO astronomer Dr. S. Laustsen on April 28, 1977. It is one of the first taken in the Cassegrain focus (behind the main mirror). At the time of the exposure, Saturn was only 30° above the La Silla horizon and the seeing was medium, $2''$. Untreated IIIa-J + GG 385; exposure time 0.06 second.

The distance to Saturn was 9.05 A.U. (1.4×10^9 km) and the planet subtended an angle of 18 arcseconds. Total magnitude $+0^{\text{m}}.5$. Original scale $10''/\text{mm}$.

STAFF MOVEMENTS

Since the last issue of the "Messenger", the following staff movements have taken place:

ARRIVALS

Munich

None

Geneva

None

Chile

Anthony C. Danks, British, astronomer (from July 1, 1977)

DEPARTURES

Munich

None

Geneva

Felix Hoffmann, German, senior technical assistant

Chile

Robert Havlen, American, astronomer

Raúl Villena, Peruvian, senior civil engineer

Manfred Windel, German, technical assistant (mechanical)

ARRIVALS AT SCIENTIFIC GROUP

Takuya Matsuda, Japanese (May 1—July 31, 1977)

Patrice Bouchet, French, "coopérant" in Chile (from April 1, 1977)