the original plate, both were there, so they were at least not due to the copying process. Just to be sure, she then had a quick look at the corresponding blue and red Atlas plates and quickly discovered that one of them belonged to a planetary nebula. A check in the available catalogues identified this object as NGC 6826 (PK 083+12.1). While the outer, filamentary nebula is well visible on the blue and red plates (Figs. 1a and 1b), only the central part can be seen on the infrared plate (Fig. 1c).

But what about the other object? Although it looks very similar to NGC 6826 (albeit somewhat fainter) on the infrared plate (Fig. 2c), at this position there is only a faint star on the two other plates (Figs. 2a and 2b)! How can such a faint object be so bright in the infrared? Here it should be remembered, that the photographic IR waveband covers the 7000–9000 Å interval, i.e. it is quite close to the red band. A check in the computer catalogues at ESO did not provide any identification with a known object. In particular, there is no IRAS source listed in this direction.

So what is it? A plate fault on the infrared plate or a real object with a very strange spectrum? Or did it experience a most unusual outburst when the infrared plate was obtained? We do not know. Just in case one of the Messenger readers would like to have another look to solve this riddle, here is the approximate position: R.A. = 19 13 01; Decl. = +49 19.5 (2000.0).

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