

trum of HE0515-44. There are different ways to produce a void in the forest: a large fluctuation in the gas density of the absorbers, an enhanced UV ionising radiation from nearby QSOs, feedback from forming galaxies or AGN heating the proto-cluster gas. In particular Theuns et al. (2000) have shown how a typical quasar sight-line intersects one protocluster per unit redshift. It is interesting to note that the void B in the spectrum of HE2217-2818 corresponds to a region of above-than-average Doppler parameter (see above), indicating that the gas in the void has been heated. To give a definitive answer about the nature of these voids, deep imaging and follow-up spectroscopy are needed, in order to identify possible AGN and/or galaxies at the redshift of the voids. This is a challenging programme but well within the possibilities of the VLT.

#### 4. Acknowledgements

We are indebted to all people involved in the conception, construction

and commissioning of UVES and UT2 for the quality of the data used in this paper, obtained in the first weeks of operation of the instrument.

#### References

- Ballester P., Modigliani A., Boitquin O., Cristiani S., Hanuschik R., Kaufer A., Wolf S., 2000, *The Messenger*, **101**, 31.  
 Cristiani, S., D'Odorico, S., Fontana, A., Giallongo, E., Savaglio, S., 1995, *MNRAS*, **273**, 1016  
 Cristiani, S., D'Odorico, S., D'Odorico, V., Fontana, A., Giallongo, E., Savaglio, S., 1997, *MNRAS*, **285**, 209.  
 Davé R., Hernquist L., Katz N., Weinberg D.H., 1999, *ApJ* **511**, 521.  
 Dekker, H., D'Odorico S., Kaufer A., Delabre B., Kotzowski H., 2000, *SPIE Proceedings 4008*, 534.  
 Dobrzycki A., Bechtold J., 1991, *ApJ* **377**, L69.  
 Gunn J.E., Peterson B.A., 1965, *ApJ*, **142**, 1633.  
 Hu, E. M., Kim, T.-S., Cowie, L. L., Songaila, A., Rauch, M., 1995, *AJ*, **110**, 1526.  
 Hui L., Gnedin N. Y., 1997, *MNRAS*, **292**, 27.  
 Kim, T.-S., Hu, E.M., Cowie, L.L., Songaila, A., 1997, *AJ*, **114**, 1.

- Kim T.-S., Cristiani S., D'Odorico S., 2000, *A&A* submitted.  
 Kirkman, D., Tytler, D., 1997, *AJ*, **484**, 672.  
 Kulkarni, V. P., Huang, K., Green, R. F., Bechtold, J., Welty, D.E., York, D.G., 1996, *MNRAS*, **279**, 197.  
 Lu, L., Sargent, W.L.W., Womble, D.S., Takada-Hidai, M., 1996, *ApJ*, **472**, 509.  
 Machacek M.E., Bryan G.L., Meiksin A., Anninos P., Thayer D., Norman M., Zhang Y., 2000, *ApJ* **532**, 118.  
 Rauch, M., Carswell, R.F., Chaffee, F.H., Foltz, C. B., Webb, J. K., Weymann, R. J., Bechtold, J., Green, R. F., 1992, *ApJ*, **390**, 387.  
 Sargent, W. L. W., Young, P. J., Bokserberg A. Tytler, D., 1980, *ApJS*, **42**, 41.  
 Schaye J., Theuns T., Rauch M., Efstathiou G., Sargent W.L.W., 2000, *MNRAS*, **318**, 817.  
 Steidel C.C., Pettini M., Adelberger K.L. astro-ph/0008283.  
 Theuns T., Mo H.J., Schaye J., astro-ph/0006065.  
 Weymann, R.J., et al., 1998, *ApJ*, **506**, 1.  
 Williger, G.M., Baldwin, J.A., Carswell, R.F., Cooke, A.J., Hazard, C., Irwin, M.J., McMahon, R.G., Storrie-Lombardi, L.J., 1994, *ApJ*, **428**, 574.

Email address: scristia@eso.org



## The La Silla New Page

### 2p2 Team News

H. JONES

#### Personnel Movements

In September we welcomed new team member Lisa Germany from Australia. Lisa is a new ESO Fellow and has interests in supernovae and their use in cosmological distance determinations.

September, however, was also a month for departures when we said goodbye to long-time team member James Brewer. James was a pivotal member of the 2p2 Team since his arrival at ESO in 1996. He has returned to Canada to take up a position at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada. We wish him all the best under northern skies.

At the start of November, Rene Mendez formally took charge as Team Leader, replacing Patrick François, who will continue working with the team into early 2001.

#### First Stage of BOB-P2PP Software Installation at the ESO/MPG 2.2-m

The first commissioning period for the Broker for Observation Block (BOB) software at the ESO/MPG 2.2-m took place during October 7 to 16. This software will allow the 2.2-m to be controlled through observation blocks

(OBs) in the same way as the VLT, 3.6-m and NTT telescopes. Thanks to the hard efforts of Tatiana Paz, Cristian Urrutia and Eduardo Robledo (of the La Silla Software and Communications Team), the several months of software writing in the lead-up to its first-test at the telescope paid off. During the October test nights it was possible to move the telescope around the sky and execute sequences of short test exposures, using OBs.

Much work is needed to refine and test the code in the coming months, particularly in the way it communicates between the telescope, CCD controller and image acquisition software. Thus, part of the challenge lies in coordinating the separate tasks of these systems, which may be called upon many times during a single sequence.

Additional technical time in November and December will be used to complete the development and testing. In the meantime, a new Instrument Package containing WFI-specific templates for use in P2PP is undergoing revision and testing.

#### Sub-Arcsecond Images with the Wide-Field Imager

On the night of October 19–20, the Wide-Field Imager (WFI) was produc-

ing 20-minute B-band exposures of 0.6 arcsec seeing. This impressive result demonstrates the significant gains that the recent work of Alain Gilliotte and Gerardo Ihle on the 2.2-m image quality have made. In the past, the 2.2-m has exhibited occasional astigmatism under certain pointing conditions (2p2 Team Report, *The Messenger* No. 100). However, recent improvements to the fixed points on which the M1 mirror sits by the opto-mechanical teams on La Silla, have diminished these effects. However, careful focus control is essential to take full advantage of these improvements.

On the same night, the WFI delivered 1.2-arcsec images at an airmass of 1.8, and closely followed the seeing measured by the DIMM seeing monitor.

#### Telescope Information

Remember to consult the 2p2 Team Web pages when you require any information about the ESO 1.52-m, Danish 1.54-m or ESO/MPG 2.2-m telescopes. These are regularly updated with recent news postings and information for new observers. They can be visited at <http://www.ls.eso.org/lasilla/Telescopes/2p2T/>.