

Reflecting on the usefulness of the Hidden Treasures competition, we can say that it undoubtedly has served to further increase the visibility of ESO and its data. Almost thirty of the submitted images have some potential to be released publicly, and half a dozen were so impressive that they will become ESO Photo Releases over the next few months. It is also interesting that four of the best

of the datasets had already been identified by our team prior to the competition, and were at some stage of processing, showing that the ESO Science Archive has few hidden gems remaining.

References

Haines, C. P. et al. 2006, MNRAS, 371, 55
Patat, F. et al. 2010, A&A, in press, arXiv:1011.6156

Links

¹ This work is carried out using the purpose-built software developed in-house called the ESO/ESA/NASA FITS Liberator, available at: http://www.spacetelescope.org/projects/fits_liberator/.

² To follow ESO's social media accounts access: <http://www.facebook.com/ESOAstronomy> or http://twitter.com/ESO_Observatory

³ The web page of the competition is at: <http://www.eso.org/public/outreach/hidden treasures>

Fellows at ESO

Andrea Ahumada

I have always been fascinated by astronomy. As a young girl, when I watched the first episode of *Cosmos* (by Carl Sagan), I had a dream: to become an astronomer. Now, after almost 30 years, I am writing these lines as an ESO fellow. This achievement was possible because my parents and my oldest sister were pivotal in my career: they believed in me and supported my dreams.

Cordoba (Argentina), where I was born, has a long and proud history in astronomy, so, I had the opportunity to study astronomy at the FaMAF (Facultad de Matematica, Astronomia y Fisica), and finally, under the supervision of Professor J. J. Claria, I obtained my PhD at the National University of Cordoba (Argentina) in 2004. Since then, my main topics of research have been Galactic open clusters and star clusters of the Magellanic Clouds. During my career, as an observational astronomer, I have been able to observe with many different telescopes, and fortunate to go from small (at the Bosque Alegre Observatory, Argentina) to big ones (at Paranal Observatory). I remember the first time that I visited those telescopes, I was fascinated!

I joined ESO in April 2008, and as an Argentinian, I only had to cross the Andes to come to Chile. With functional duties



Andrea Ahumada

at Paranal Observatory, where I work with the world's most powerful telescopes and instruments, I have learnt new technical skills, with the opportunity to observe, in the same night, with different techniques, a large spectrum of astronomical objects, from comets to very distant objects, such as gamma-ray bursts. During the night shifts, I am the support astronomer for Antu's (UT1) instruments. After all this time in Paranal, I still continue to be amazed at how unique it is to spend a night there.

Working at ESO has been very beneficial for my development as a scientist, providing me with important opportunities to advance in my research and to expand my network of scientific collaborations, while continuing with the old ones. ESO

has also given me the opportunity to do outreach. I feel that I am lucky to do what I do for living, so outreach is very important to me, because in this way I can give something back to people.

In two months I will move to Bologna Observatory (Italy) for my fourth year as an ESO fellow. This is a wonderful scientific opportunity for me because I have started working on the BOCCE (Bologna Open Clusters Chemical Evolution) Project. In Bologna there will be new challenges, and I am very happy about having the chance to live in Italy, where my great-grandparents came from.

While I am writing this, my last *turno* at Paranal is coming up soon. I feel strange and a little sad to be leaving. Most of those whom I have met in Santiago and Paranal are really nice people; working here I had the opportunity to make new friends, and also I had the chance to meet Juan Manuel. Memories of the three years that I have spent in this beautiful country will stay for ever in my heart.

Bram Venemans

When I was around 12 years old, I became interested in astronomy for the first time. Amateur astronomers had organised a public viewing of a lunar eclipse, which made a big impression

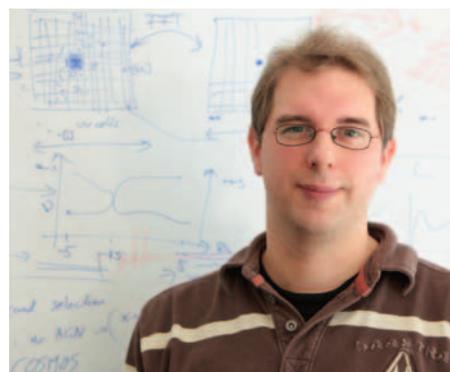
on me. Unfortunately, growing up in the light-polluted city of Amsterdam, often the Moon was the only object visible in the sky at night. I kept my interest in astronomy alive by reading lots of books, with topics ranging from a detailed description of the Solar System to the theory of the Big Bang. When I went to university, I had no doubt what I wanted to study, and in 1995 I started my undergraduate studies in astronomy at the University of Leiden. During the first few years of study I somehow was very certain I would finish my degree and start a career outside the academic world. This assumption turned out to be completely wrong ...

My ideas for the future radically changed when I was doing my Master's project at the Leiden Observatory. The research consisted of reducing multicolour imaging data. Shortly after choosing my project, my supervisor asked me whether I wanted to go for an observing run with the NTT on La Silla. Although scientifically the observing run was not a huge success (lots of clouds!), I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Exploring various ways to get the best results and to make new discoveries fascinated me and by the time I finished my Master's thesis, I was determined to pursue a career in astronomy.

After finishing my degree in 1999 at the Leiden Observatory, I went to the University of Cambridge for a one-year Master's in astronomy working at a more numerical project. In 2000 I returned to Leiden to start my PhD project. The aim was to study the environment of powerful radio galaxies at redshifts between two and five by searching for overdensities of Lyman- α emission-line galaxies. My project got off to a flying start, as three months into my PhD our group received confirmation that our VLT large programme had been accepted. This meant that I had the opportunity to visit Paranal several times to obtain all the data I needed for my thesis. The observations went really well, giving me more than enough results to write several papers and to fill my thesis. After defending my PhD thesis in 2005, I went back to Cambridge, this time to work as a research associate at the Institute of Astronomy. My work there focused on studying galaxies and quasars at the highest redshifts ($z > 6$), using, amongst others, data from large public surveys like SDSS and UKIDSS.

As nearly all my research made use of large amounts of ESO data, applying for an ESO Fellowship was the obvious next step for me. Currently, I am in my third year as an ESO Fellow working in

Garching. One of the great things about being at ESO is the possibility of attending many of the large number of interesting workshops and talks that are organised in the area each year. Besides continuing to study very high redshift objects, working at ESO also gives me the opportunity to be involved in the E-ELT project. I find it very exciting to be able to contribute to a project with such importance for the future of European astronomy. As an undergraduate student on my first observing trip I was thoroughly impressed by the size of the mirror of the NTT, so I can hardly imagine how it will be to stand next to a 42-metre telescope in (hopefully) a few years from now!



Bram Venemans

Personnel Movements

Arrivals (1 January–31 March 2011)

Europe	
Drouart, Guillaume (F)	Student
Lakicevic, Masa (SRB)	Student
Riesel, Jürgen (D)	Administrative Clerk
Sartoris, Barbara (I)	Student
Schmid, Erich (D)	Software Engineer
Westmoquette, Mark (GB)	Fellow
Chile	
Barria, Daniela (RCH)	Student
Gorgeot, Florian (F)	Student
Jager, Henderikus (NL)	System Engineer
Jones, David (GB)	Fellow
Lieder, Stefan (D)	Student
Pozzobon, Matteo (I)	Senior Mechanical Engineer
Rioseco, Diego (RCH)	Legal Advisor

Departures (1 January–31 March 2011)

Europe	
Dremel, Günther (D)	Administrative Clerk
Feng, Lu (VR)	Student
Jalali, Behrang (IR)	Student
Müller, André (D)	Student
Nilsson, Kim (S)	Astronomer
Völk, Elisabeth (D)	Secretary/Assistant
Chile	
Andreoni, Gaetano (I)	IT Quality Assurance Manager
Emmerich, Alejandra (RCH)	Secretary/Assistant
Gallegos, Leonardo (RCH)	Telescope Instruments Operator
Gutierrez, Flavio (RCH)	System Administrator
Lassalle, Jacques (F)	Safety Engineer
Lira, Luis Felipe (RCH)	Legal Advisor
Planesas, Pere (E)	Test Scientist