

Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS), these surveys provide a detailed picture of the structure of galactic halos as function of galaxy type and environment. KIDS and VIKING have already uncovered quasars at $z > 6.5$, with three candidates spectroscopically confirmed (talk by B. Venemans).

S. Smartt presented PESSTO, the spectroscopic public survey aimed at exploring the physics of supernova explosions and a detailed study of transients, unusual, and currently unknown, types of variable sources. The targets for this survey come primarily from the La Silla–QUEST variability survey described by C. Baltay (see the article on p. 34).

Pipelines, data mining and survey data products

The last session of the workshop was dedicated to pipelines, data products and data mining. The KIDS team with Astro-WISE has an integrated data handling system presented by G. Verdoes-Kleijn, while R. Smareglia presented the data handling and archiving system of PESSTO. The six ESO public surveys with VISTA rely on the data processing carried out in the UK centres, Cambridge Astronomical Survey Unit (CASU) and the Wide Field Astronomy Unit (WFAU) in Edinburgh, and the latter was presented by N. Cross. The workshop closed with the presentation of M. Romaniello on the ESO Phase 3 process for the reception, validation and publication of data prod-

ucts from ESO public surveys and large programmes (see also Arnaboldi et al., 2011), and a live demo by J. Retzlaff of the new ESO catalogue query interface, now deployed in the ESO Science Archive Facility.

References

Arnaboldi, M. et al. 2007, *The Messenger*, 127, 28
 Arnaboldi, M. et al. 2011, *The Messenger*, 144, 17
 Cirasuolo, M. et al. 2011, *The Messenger*, 145, 11
 de Jong, R. 2011, *The Messenger*, 145, 14
 Ramsay, S., Hammersley, P. & Pasquini, L. 2011, *The Messenger*, 145, 10

Links

¹ Conference web page: <http://www.eso.org/sci/meetings/2012/surveys2012.html>

Retirement of Preben Grosbøl

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On 31 October, exactly half a year after Klaus Bense's retirement (Ballester & Péron, 2012), Preben Grosbøl, the other father of ESO's former MIDAS image processing system, retired, marking the end of an era. Preben's contributions to develop and promote MIDAS, ranging from specialised numerical algorithms to fundamental over-arching concepts, were central to the success of MIDAS (and its predecessor IHAP). However, his lifetime achievements go far beyond that. The third of a century of his affiliation with ESO was devoted to the support of many other initiatives to serve optimally the community's needs for efficient, reliable and versatile data reduction capabilities.

Preben was born in Denmark and obtained his PhD from the University of



Figure 1. Preben Grosbøl at his retirement party at ESO Headquarters receiving a framed photograph from the Director General Tim de Zeeuw.

Copenhagen in 1977. For his thesis, he worked closely with George Contopoulos in Thessaloniki, Greece, where he also met his wife Barbara. Throughout his scientific career, Preben studied the properties of spiral galaxies: structure,

dynamics, star formation and evolution. He combined careful optical and infrared observations with detailed theoretical model calculations; the results have materialised in several dozen refereed publications. After his retirement, Preben

plans to further focus on unravelling the spiral and central bar pattern of the Milky Way, thereby continuing the scientific restlessness that already drove him well before enrolling at university.

Preben was one of ESO's first postdoctoral fellows and for one year (1979/1980) was still based in Geneva, where ESO was hosted by CERN. He has been Head of the Image Processing Group, the Science Data Analysis Group, and the Data Pipeline Group. For several years, he was Deputy Head of the Data Management Division, and eventually even moved to submillimetre wavelengths and the ALMA Division in Garching. He chaired the OPTICON Network 3.6 on Future Astronomical Software Environments and the IAU FITS Working Group. Preben was a member of numerous ESO internal working groups, often as chair, always as one of the most active and knowledgeable players: the Computer Coordination Group, VLT User Software Advisory Group, VLT Data Flow System Working Group, Data Interface Control Board to name just a few that have laid the foundation for ESO's leading position today

in supporting users of complex ground-based observing facilities.

As a highlight, he was one of the recipients of the 21st Century Achievement Award from the Computerworld Honors Program presented to ESO (2005). Preben also showed remarkable judgment in anticipating major technological developments in the IT markets: database systems, operating systems and hardware for astronomical data processing. His pioneering efforts to introduce new working concepts such as configuration control, object-oriented programming, software modelling tools, etc. further consolidated the results. Although Preben's knowledge in these matters was hardly rivalled, he always approached new themes in a team-based fashion and in an open and cooperative spirit. This combination earned him the deep respect of everyone working with him and made him an effective leader.

As in the instrumentation area (D'Odorico et al., 1991), Preben was one of the first to realise that ESO would maximise its efficiency not by doing everything in-house

but by serving as a catalyst and focus of community-based efforts. Among other initiatives, this was achieved through a series of well-attended ESO/ST-ECF Data Analysis Workshops and the infrastructure enabling VLT/I instrument consortia to deliver software modules suitable for integration with ESO's data flow system, which ultimately aims at the delivery of science-ready data products.

A farewell party was held at ESO Headquarters on 30 October 2012, where, on the one hand, many people expressed their regret at Preben's departure but, on the other, convinced themselves that he is leaving full of energy for new undertakings, not just scientific and technical ones. Many words of warm personal and professional appreciation accompany Preben Grosbøl.

References

- Ballester, P. & Péron, M. 2012, *The Messenger*, 148, 52
 2005, *The Messenger*, 120, 52
 D'Odorico, S., Beckers, J. & Moorwood, A. 1991, *The Messenger*, 65, 10

Announcement of the

ESO Public Survey Catalogue for Ultra-VISTA available from the Science Archive Facility

The Ultra-VISTA¹ survey, targeting a sub-area of the COSMOS field, represents the deepest of the six near-infrared ESO public imaging surveys, which are currently being executed at the Visible and Infrared Survey Telescope for Astronomy (VISTA). The first release of the new infrared source catalogue in the COSMOS field is now accessible from the ESO Science Archive Facility through a new powerful user interface for querying and data download.

The Ultra-VISTA *Ks*-selected [5σ limit $Ks = 23.7$ AB mag] matched source catalogue contains 331 077 sources observed in *Y*-, *J*-, *H*- and *Ks*-bands over the full "deep" survey area of 1.8 square degrees,

with narrow-band NB118 observations covering the "ultra-deep stripes" area.

The catalogue was prepared by the Ultra-VISTA team for the first catalogue release (DR1) and delivered through the ESO Phase 3 system² for publication to the ESO community. It is now accessible from the Science Archive Facility through a new dedicated user interface with powerful search options and download capabilities³. The ESO Catalogue Facility complements the existing functionality by adding the possibility to query catalogues by content using positional and non-positional constraints. To this end the catalogue data is stored in a dedicated data-base system

from which the data are extracted on request, according to the constraints and output format specified by the user.

Additional Phase 3 catalogue data, which are being submitted by VISTA public survey teams, will soon be made available through the ESO Catalogue Facility.

Links

- ¹ Ultra-VISTA survey homepage: <http://www.ultravista.org/>
² ESO Phase 3 data releases: http://www.eso.org/sci/observing/phase3/data_releases.html
³ ESO catalogue facility query interface: <http://www.eso.org/qi>