

EDITORIAL:**Tom Boles and 100 supernovae**

As most of us expected, Tom has now reached his 100th supernova found in an external galaxy with the discovery of supernova 2006bk in the galaxy MCG +06-33-20.

The excitement started on receipt of an e-mail on 2006 April 4 at TAHQ from Tom, who is based in Coddensham in Suffolk, England. March had been a totally depressing month for most observers. After a few clear nights at the start of the month, many experienced several weeks of cloud although some were successful during the day with the partial eclipse as seen from the UK.

When the observer is sitting on 99 discoveries, it is very reminiscent of batting in cricket. It is a very nervous time indeed and long cloudy spells add to the frustration. However unlike batting, when fate can stop you ever reaching your 100, Tom merely needed to be patience. As April started, the cloud finally broke up giving him the chance.

The 100th object, of magnitude 16.9, had initially been recorded on ten images secured on a single night centred on 2006 April 3.985UT using a 0.35-m Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and unfiltered CCD. The position of the new object was measured as:
RA 15h 04m 33.61s DEC +35 57' 51.1" (2000), which is approximately 10.6" E and 3.3" S of the centre of the host galaxy.

The suspect was not present on Tom's images of 2005 Sept. 4 or 2006 Jan 28 (limiting mag 19.5) and it was not recorded on DSS II red (1994.338 limiting mag 20.5) nor blue plates (1998.209 limiting mag 21.0 or on the SDSS image). All this added confidence to the fact that this might be the real thing. However with the problem that asteroid, some as yet uncatalogued, can lurk near galaxies, further patience was required until it could be imaged on another night and any possible movement could be eliminated.

A further e-mail received on April 5 advised that Tom had acquired a confirmation image of the apparent supernova on April 4.933UT with end figures for the second night of RA 33.64s and DEC 51.1". The magnitude was similar to that on the discovery images.

These days preliminary supernova announcements initially appear on Central Bureau Electronic Telegrams (CBET's) and number 462 carried the news and the object was designated 2006bk.

Tom originally joined the UK Nova/Supernova Patrol on 1996 November 30. His first discovery was of SN 1997dn in NGC3451 recorded on 1997 October 29 (see The Astronomer E-Circular 1246), illustrating the time to achieve the 100 discovery successes has been remarkably short. No doubt Tom had been inspired by earlier discoveries by patrol members and, in particular, the first found from the UK by Mark Armstrong in 1996 (SN 1996bo). However to keep the necessary motivation to achieve 100 discoveries requires a very dedicated and special effort, especially given the bad weather so often experienced in the UK.

We offer our sincere congratulations to Tom both from his fellow patrol members and from the whole readership of 'The Astronomer'.