

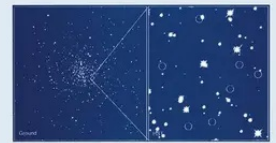
White Dwarfs

The study of white dwarfs has been steadily growing during the last years and now is a mature field extending its influence over many others. Since white dwarfs are long lived objects, they can be used to obtain information about the history of the Galaxy. The simplicity of their structures enables them to act as precise particle physics laboratories and the extreme conditions reached at their surfaces allow us to test the equation of state and to study the behavior of matter under conditions impossible to be reached in terrestrial laboratories. Nevertheless, white dwarfs are still challenging astrophysicists. Many questions, ranging from the determination of fundamental parameters to the evolution of their outer layers, are still waiting for a satisfactory answer. The European Workshop series on White Dwarfs started in 1974 as a consequence of the effort and enthusiasm of Professor Volker Weidemann. The existing proceedings of these meetings, together with those corresponding to the IAU Colloquia held in Rochester (1979) and in Hanover (1988), provide a unique opportunity to follow the development of this field. We hope that the present volume will provide a representative snapshot of the state of the art in 1996. In this sense we are very indebted to all the participants that have sent their contributions according to the instructions (this clearly excludes everybody beyond three sigmas from the standards).

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