Comets in 1984

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The number of cometary reports, 22, given provisional designations during 1984 was one less than in the record year of 1983, although as in 1983 one of the reports proved to be erroneous. Thirteen of the comets were new (as in the record year of 1975), and as many as eight of them were reported – four by the same observers – during an interval of little more than ten weeks during September–November. Six of the new comets proved to be of short period (also as in 1975), although the period of one was only slightly less than the rather arbitrary limit of 200 years. Observations were also made of 13 of the comets of 1983, two of the recoveries of 1982 and one discovery of 1980, as well as of the four 'annual' comets. The grand total was thus 41, as in the record year of 1978.

P/Schwassmann-Wachmann I seems to have been recorded only twice during 1984, on May 3 and June 19, in each case by M.P.Candy and his colleagues at Perth. Negative detections were reported in April and June by J.-C.Merlin (Le Creusot, France, 0.26-m reflector), the limiting magnitude being 13–14.

P/Encke was photographed by T.Seki (Geisei, Japan) on January 27 at mag 17. J.Bortle (Stormville, New York) picked up the comet visually some 36 hr later, estimating mag 11.8 (0.50-m reflector), and similar estimates were made on the 31st by the Dutch observers E.P.Bus and R.J.Bouma (0.25-m reflector). On February 20, C.S.Morris, observing from Whitaker Peak, California, put the comet at mag 9.5 (0.20-m reflector) and noted a tail 3 arcmin long in p.a. 315 deg. A series of astrometric observations were made between February 25 and March 14 at the observatory of the University of the Urals. Morris visually reported a 70-arcmin tail (in p.a. 53 deg) on March 20, the comet's total magnitude being 7.3 (10 × 80 binoculars); the comet had brightened a little more three nights later, when he made the last known pre-perihelion detection. The first post-perihelion detection seems to have been that on April 11 (mag 7.4, 10 × 80 binoculars) by D.A.J. Seargeant (The Entrance, New South Wales), but the Perth observers succeeded in photographing the comet the following morning and on half a dozen other occasions during the following two months. On April 14 A.Pearce (Woodlands, Western Australia, 0·15-m reflector) remarked on a 4-arcmin tail (in p.a. 65 deg), and this observer followed the comet visually until May 4, the magnitude then being 9.4. A valuable series of astrometric observations was also made by A.C.Gilmore and P.M.Kilmartin with the o·6-m reflector at the Mount John University Observatory between April 23 and July 25.

P/Gunn seems to have been observed during 1984 only by R.E.McCrosky

and his colleagues at the Oak Ridge Observatory; exposures were obtained with the 1.5-m reflector on six nights from August 24 to December 24.

P/Smirnova-Chernykh, at perihelion on February 20, was photographed at Oak Ridge at mag 17.0 on January 9, and the comet was also under observation at Perth from the beginning of February. A.Mrkos and Z.Vávrová (Kleť Observatory, 0.6-m Maksutov telescope) followed P/Smirnova-Chernykh during March 20–24, the estimated magnitude being 14.5 on the first night, while estimates by E.Bowell (Lowell Observatory, 0.3-m astrograph) gave mag 15.0 and 15.5 on April 3 and 8, respectively. The comet was still under observation at Oak Ridge in late May and was followed at Perth until June 19.

1982 I (= 1980b), Bowell, was again under observation at Oak Ridge on July 26 and by the discoverer using the 1.8-m reflector and CCD at the Lowell Observatory on September 21. The October 19 Oak Ridge observation was made a record (for a non-periodic comet) 56 months after discovery, and the comet's heliocentric distance was 8.8 AU.

Observations 1980 February 11 to 1984 October 19

1982i, P/Halley, was recorded several times during January 27-30 by H.Pedersen and R.M.West with the 1.5-m Danish reflector and CCD at the European Southern Observatory. Electronographic photometry a few nights later by J.Lecacheux and his colleagues with the Canada-France-Hawaii telescope showed apparent variability over a range of almost 2 mag in a period of 8.2 hr, although this was not necessarily to be interpreted as related to the comet's rotation period. The comet was also detected at V mag 23.6 by M.J.S.Belton and his associates with the cryogenic camera on the 4-m reflector at Kitt Peak on March 4. It was picked up after conjunction by Kiseleev at Sanglok on September 20, and on the 22nd (with confirmation four nights later) Seki, using a o.6-m reflector, became the first amateur astronomer to detect P/Halley at this return, his estimate of the magnitude being 20.5; by late November he was finding the comet to be perhaps 0.5 mag brighter. The first infrared detection, giving a J magnitude of 18.6, was made of P/Halley on December 20 by C.Birkett, S.Green, A.Longmore and J.Zarnecki with the 3.8-m U.K. Infrared Telescope at Mauna Kea.

Observations 1982 October 16 to end of 1984, continuing

1982k, P/Kopff, was observed spectroscopically by Belton on November 1.

Observations 1982 December 20 to 1984 November 1

1983h, P/Johnson, was under observation at Oak Ridge on four nights during the last quarter of the year.

Observations 1983 June 7 to 1984 December 24

1983j, P/IRAS, was observed for the last time at Oak Ridge in February. Observations 1983 June 28 to 1984 February 22

1983k, IRAS, was accidentally discovered as a new comet by K.S.Russell on an exposure by M.Hawkins with the U.K. 1·2-m Schmidt on March 6.

The comet, which was under observation for only four weeks in 1983 July-August and had passed perihelion on 1983 May 2, was not expected to be as bright as mag 20, and no ephemeris had been published. Instead, it was a noticeable object of mag 16 and showed some evidence of a tail. Russell recorded the comet again on March 7, and beginning three or four weeks later observations were also made with the Perth, Mount John and Oak Ridge telescopes. It was followed at Oak Ridge into May.

Observations 1983 July 11 to 1984 May 6

19831, Černis, south of declination -30 deg, was under observation at Perth and particularly at Mount John during most of the year. A Mount John estimate on September 23 gave mag 16.6.

Observations 1983 July 19 to 1984 November 25, continuing

1983m, P/Wolf, faint and generally badly placed at this return, observed on only two nights in 1983, was again detected by recoverer J.Gibson with the 1·2-m Schmidt at Palomar on 1984 September 6 and November 3, and later also by E.Everhart with the 0·4-m reflector at the Chamberlin Observatory's field station near Denver.

Observations 1983 August 1 to 1984 November 23

1983n, P/Crommelin, beginning to brighten rapidly as it approached perihelion, was estimated at (nuclear) mag 18.5 on an Oak Ridge exposure on January 1 and at mag 17.5 by Seki on the 4th. Three visual observers, Bortle, Morris and A.Hale (observing with Morris), judged the comet as around total mag 11.5 on January 21, and perhaps 10.5 on the 25th, when Morris remarked on a tail in p.a. 280 deg. A radio detection of OH 1667-MHz emission was indicated by L.Snyder and associates at Effelsberg on January 27. By the beginning of February the comet had brightened to mag 9.5, and a spectrogram obtained on the 4th by H.Spinrad and P.A.Wehinger (Kitt Peak 4-m reflector and CCD) showed the usual emissions. There was further brightening to mag 8.5 by the middle of the month, and more definite radio OH detections were then made at Effelsberg and also by D.Bockelée-Morvan, J.Crovisier and E.Gérard at Nançay.

As P/Crommelin passed perihelion on February 21 some observers were noting a 20 arcmin tail, and magnitude estimates attained 7.5 from then on and – surprisingly – well into March. The almost immediate post-perihelion fading characteristic of the comet's previous apparitions did not occur, and magnitude estimates were still generally in the range 8.5–9.0 during the last week of March, when the International Halley Watch had requested that intensive observations be made of P/Crommelin as a trial run for the P/Halley campaign. Although the trial was in many ways considered a success, the comet's unexpected brightness seems to have been accompanied by extreme diffuseness, and this adversely affected the quality of both astrometry and photometry. Fading finally occurred immediately after the trial week, and there were no visual detections of the comet at all after April 4, when Morris put the comet at mag 9.8. Astrometric observations by Candy, Gibson and Gilmore continued during April and May, and the comet was last recorded by Gilmore on May 26 and 27.

Observations 1983 August 9 to 1984 May 27

19830, IRAS, which had been so troublesome to observe from the ground in 1983, was picked up after conjunction and some five weeks after perihelion on January 2 by Gilmore at mag 16. The comet was under observation at Perth during February, and astrometry was being conducted at eight observatories in March and April. Visual detections on March 11 by Hale and Morris put the comet around mag 13. A spectrogram obtained by S.M.Larson with the 1.5-m reflector at the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory on May 2 showed only continuum. Three subsequent observations were made at Oak Ridge, and H.Kosai and K.Hurukawa estimated the comet at mag 17 on a plate taken with the 1.05-m Schmidt at the Tokyo Observatory's Kiso station on June 1.

Observations 1983 July 27 to 1984 June 5

1983p, Shoemaker, at declination -33 deg when picked up after conjunction on May 30 at Mount John, continued to move southwards and to be observed only there and at Perth. Gilmore and Kilmartin estimated the comet at mag 17.0 on September 23.

Observations 1983 September 7 to 1984 October 24, continuing

1983r, P/Harrington-Abell, was under observation during the first quarter of the year by Everhart, McCrosky and Candy. On March 1 and 2 Larson recorded the continuous spectrum of a very small coma, but he also noted a narrow tail 30 arcsec long. The last observation was made at Oak Ridge on April 2.

Observations 1983 September 17 to 1984 April 2

1983s, P/Wild 2, was well placed for evening observation from the northern hemisphere during the first few months of the year. Bowell photographed the comet around mag 14.5 on January 4, while an observation by L.Kohoutek with the Hamburg 0.8-m Schmidt at Calar Alto on January 30 made the comet slightly fainter. Morris picked up the comet visually at mag 13.4 on April 4, and he made further magnitude estimates of 13.0 on April 21 and 13.1 on the 23rd. P/Wild 2 was observed spectroscopically in early May by Larson, when the only emission present was due to CN.

Observations 1983 September 18 to 1984 May 2, continuing

1983u, P/Taylor, was consistently estimated at mag 15·5-16·0 by Bowell and Seki in early January, and astrometric observations were also made during the early part of the year by Everhart, McCrosky and Gibson. The last detection was at Oak Ridge on May 3.

Observations 1983 November 3 to 1984 May 3

1983v, P/Hartley-IRAS, the unusual comet with a 21-year revolution period and orbit plane almost perpendicular to the ecliptic, remained generally around mag 10·0-11·0 during the first six weeks of 1984, according to the estimates of several visual observers, some of whom remarked on a tail 10-15 arcmin long. On February 23, however, Bortle was surprised to find that the comet had brightened to mag 7·9 (10×80 binoculars). His subsequent binocular estimates were mag 8·8 on February 27 and March 1,

9.3 on March 8, 9.5 on March 27 and 9.9 on April 2. On that last night an estimate with a 0.32-m reflector gave mag 10.3, and his subsequent reflector estimates were 10.4 on April 9 and 22, 10.5 on April 27, 10.7 on May 2 and 10.9 on May 3. P/Hartley-IRAS was no fainter in early May than it had been in early January, and even an inverse-square law would have suggested fading by two magnitudes. Fading did become more substantial during May: an estimate by Morris on May 27 gave mag 12.2 (0.26-m reflector), and the comet was last photographed by N.S.Chernykh and his colleagues at the Crimean Astrophysical Observatory on the 28th and at Oak Ridge a week later.

Observations 1983 November 4 to 1984 June 4

1983w, P/Clark, was under astrometric observation during the first two-thirds of the year at half a dozen observatories, notably Mount John and Perth, and visual observations by Morris, Hale and Pearce during May to July put the comet around mag 10.5–11.0. According to Maurice Clark (Tambellup, Western Australia, and no relation to the discoverer) P/Clark had faded to mag 12.0 (0.41-m reflector) on August 15, 12.3 on August 22 and 12.9 on September 19.

Observations 1983 December 15 to 1984 September 19

1984a was discovered by William A.Bradfield at Dernancourt, near Adelaide, on January 7.7. The twelfth discovery by this observer, and the first since the end of 1980, the new comet was diffuse and uncondensed, of mag 11, and moving southeastwards in Norma. With a revolution period of about 151 years, the comet was technically a short-period one. The most extensive series of astrometric observations, by Candy and his colleagues at Perth, began on January 9, when the comet's magnitude was given as 13. Gilmore and Kilmartin also observed the comet from January 14 onwards, when they recorded trailed images on a dark plate with the 0·13-m Mount John astrograph. With the 0·6-m reflector they were able to follow the comet until late May, when the nuclear magnitude was around 18.

Observations 1984 January 7 to May 30

1984b was the designation given to an uncondensed cometary image, of mag 12, reported by Michael Clark (discoverer of comet 1983w) on a Harvard patrol plate at Mount John on January 24.5 in the vicinity of *i* Eridani. The comet appeared to have been confirmed on a similar exposure made on January 8 (although this indicated that the motion was unusually small), and a further image was suspected on January 25. The discoverer failed to find the comet on the 27th, however, and searches at other observatories also seem to have been negative.

1984c, periodic comet Neujmin I, was recovered by Gilmore and Kilmartin with the Mount John reflector on February 26. At recovery the object was of mag 18 and had its characteristic stellar appearance. The following night the comet was also observed at Perth, and regular observations were subsequently made at both observatories. A visual detection, at mag 13.6, was made by Morris on August 25, with brightening to perhaps mag 13.2

4 weeks later. As it approached perihelion passage in early October P/Neujmin 1 was definitely cometary, and spectroscopic observations on September 18 and 21 by E.Barker (McDonald Observatory) of a fan extending 0·2 arcmin southeast of the strong condensation showed CN and C₂ emissions. Australian amateur J.Wood estimated the comet at mag 12·5 on October 19 (0·25-m reflector), but Morris was unable to detect it down to mag 13·5 on November 20. Astrometric observations were also made during the last quarter of the year at Oak Ridge.

Observations 1984 February 26 to end of year, continuing

1984d was discovered by Kenneth S.Russell on an exposure by M.Hawkins with the U.K. Schmidt on March 7.7. Of mag 13, the comet was retrograding slowly in Virgo, and the discoverer also located images of it on prism plates taken on March 2 and 4. A new short-period comet, designated P/Russell 4, the object was widely photographed at several observatories in March and April, and Merlin made a visual detection at about mag 15.5 on April 21. A spectrogram obtained by Larson on May 2 showed only continuum, and the last observation was made only five night later at Oak Ridge. Observations 1984 March 2 to May 7

1984e was periodic comet Giacobini-Zinner, recovered by S.Djorgovski, H.Spinrad, G.Will and Belton on April 3·4 using the Kitt Peak 4-m reflector and CCD. Four 2·5-min integrations over an interval of some 20 min yielded a stellar image of (red) mag 22·9 having the expected motion. Confirmation was provided by the presence of two unresolved images on longer integrations by Belton and Wehinger with one of the Kitt Peak o·9-m reflectors five nights previously. Nicely round images, though fainter than mag 24·5 and near the telescope limit, were then located by Pedersen and West on CCD exposures obtained with the I·5-m Danish telescope at the European Southern Observatory on January 28·3. P/Giacobini-Zinner was also observed in July by J.T.Clarke, J.Brodie and P.McCarthy with the Cerro Tololo 4-m reflector and CCD.

Observations 1984 January 28 to July 22, continuing

1984f was discovered by Carolyn and Eugene Shoemaker on May 27·4 in the course of their search programme with the 0·46-m Schmidt at Palomar for unusual minor planets. Their exposures on the same night also yielded 1984 KB and KD, the first Apollo objects to be discovered in the programme. Retrograding in Hercules, the new comet was of mag 14, moderately condensed but with fan-shaped coma structure to the north. Astrometric observations were obtained for several months at a number of observatories, a particularly noteworthy series being that by J.B.Tatum and D.D.Balam with the 0·25-m reflector at the University of Victoria. Mrkos noted brightening from mag 15·4 on June 1 to 15·0 on June 30, 14·5 on July 21–22 and 14·2 on August 17, and the last observation before conjunction was made at Oak Ridge towards the end of September.

Observations 1984 May 27 to September 26, continuing

1984g, periodic comet Wolf-Harrington, was recovered by Gibson with the 1·2-m Palomar Schmidt on June 4·4 at mag 17. Further exposures with a CCD on the 1·5-m reflector during June 8–11 showed a tail up to 50 arcsec long westwards. The comet was followed during July by Everhart, Tatum and McCrosky. Morris judged it visually at mag 12·8 on August 28, 13·3 on October 2 and 13·2 on December 2.

Observations 1984 June 4 to end of year, continuing

1984h, periodic comet Faye, at a difficult location in the dawn, although expected to be quite bright at its perihelion passage in early July, was recovered on CCD exposures by Gibson with the Palomar 1.5-m reflector on June 9.4, 10.4 and 11.4. Because of initial problems with the reduction of these exposures, the recovery had not been considered definite until the comet was independently found visually by Morris at Frazer Park, California, on June 23, 27 and 28. According to Gibson, the object was essentially stellar, of about mag 16.5, although the longer exposures showed a short tail westwards and some coma. The observations by Morris, both in June and in late August, showed the coma to be only slightly condensed and of mag around 12.5. The first available accurate position, secured by Gibson with the 1.2-m Schmidt on July 21, confirmed that P/Faye had in fact also been recorded by him with the same telescope at mag 20.5 on 1983 August 31. The comet faded gradually toward the end of 1984, Bouma giving the magnitude as 13.4 on November 2 (0.41-m reflector) and 14.0 on December 26.

Observations 1983 August 31 to end of 1984, continuing

1984i was the second cometary discovery by Rodney R.D.Austin, of New Plymouth, New Zealand. A condensed object of mag 8 at its discovery on July 8.7, this comet was moving eastwards in Columba at around 10 degrees per day, and prompt action by the individuals involved meant that accurate positions could be measured by Kilmartin at Mount John (on a Damon patrol film exposed by Michael Clark) and by P.Birch at Perth within hours of the discovery. The orbit determined with the help of further observations with the Mount John reflector on the following two nights indicated that the comet was some 0.25 AU away from the earth and that it would move to the north of the sun around its perihelion passage (heliocentric distance 0.29 AU) on August 12. A visual estimate by the discoverer (0·15-m refractor) the morning after discovery gave mag 6.5 and coma diameter 12 arcmin. The Mount John and Perth observers, and also D. Herald near Canberra, continued to make astrometric observations until August 1, and radio observations at Nançay by Gérard and J.P.Drouhin during July 27-29 showed the OH lines at 1665 and 1667 MHz in absorption. Observing with 9 × 63 binoculars at the Siding Spring Observatory, R.H.McNaught noted a tail 2·1 deg long on the 31st, and by August 3 the tail was 3.1 deg long and the total mag 5.1. The comet was comparably bright, but only 0.2 deg of tail could be detected, when this same observer last saw the comet at very low altitude, in twilight haze on August 7. Infrared observations on August 10 by E.P.Ney at the University of Minnesota showed comet 1984i to be about four times dimmer than comet 1973 XII at comparable distances and not to have any evident 10-micron silicate feature.

The comet seems to have been first detected after perihelion by W.C.Morrison (Peterborough, Ontario) and by Hale on August 25, the former observer putting the magnitude at about 6.2 (0.15-m reflector). As the comet moved into a darker sky during the following week several visual observers judged it to be slightly brighter than mag 6. On the 29th R.A.Keen (Boulder, Colorado, 0.32-m reflector) noted both a tail (1.0 deg long in p.a. 290 deg) and an antitail (0.4 deg long in p.a. 80 deg), and Morris reported the main tail as 2 deg on August 29 and September 2. The antitail was subsequently also reported by others, and on September 15 Keen remarked that it was perhaps twice as long as the 0·1-deg main tail. By then the comet had faded to mag 7.0-7.5, and by mid-October to perhaps mag 8.5. In spite of the wealth of visual data in September the photographic record was abysmal, the only astrometric results being obtained by Seki on September 4, McCrosky on the 17th, by Tatum beginning on the 27th and by Mrkos on the 30th. Bouma and Bus were still reporting a tail 0.2-0.3 deg long near p.a. 70 deg on October 30, by which time the comet had faded to about mag 9. Further fading took place during November, although Morris was still estimating mag 10.4 on the 26th. On November 21 the comet was accidentally picked up by the Shoemakers with the 0.46-m Palomar Schmidt at mag 16, but the observation on the 27th at Oak Ridge seems to have been the last made of the object.

Observations 1984 July 8 to November 27

1984j was discovered by Kesao Takamizawa with 20 × 120 binoculars at Saku-machi, Nagano Prefecture, on July 30.5. Near opposition in Capricornus and moving almost due southwards at 13 arcmin per day, the object was of tenth magnitude and unspecified appearance. A confirmatory observation was made the next night by K.Saito at the Tokyo Observatory's Dodaira Station, and during the following night-time hours in California Morris noted the comet as extremely condensed, of mag 9.5 and with a tail extending 4-5 arcmin to the west. After the discovery was known, an accidental image, also showing a short tail to the west, was easily located by E.Helin on one of her survey plates obtained with the Palomar 1.2-m Schmidt on August 1. It still seemed surprising that such a bright and evidently moderately distant comet should first have been noticed in such an accessible part of the sky and with the moon well past new, all the more so since the initial orbit determinations suggested that the comet was a short-period one that could not have been thrown into its present situation as the result of a recent approach to Jupiter. Prediscovery images, showing the comet to be as bright as mag 6.5, were soon found by Seki on exposures with his small-field o.6-m reflector on July 26. P.Wild then reported even earlier prediscovery images from films taken with the 0.4-m Schmidt at the Zimmerwald station of the Berne Astronomical Institute. A July 8 image, consisting of an asymmetric, uncondensed, mag 13 coma and a fan-shaped tail extending about I arcmin to the west, had been noted by this observer at the time but dismissed as a defect because there was no similar image on a film obtained two nights before. After the first orbit of P/Takamizawa became available, Wild had been able to identify the comet on the July 6 film as a distinct nucleus of mag 17 in a very tenous coma.

Moonlight began to interfere strongly with observations in early August, but several observers indicated that the comet remained around mag 9, and D.E.Machholz (San Jose, California, 0.25-m reflector) reported a tail 40 arcmin long (in p.a. 240 deg) on the 5th. The comet was rather well observed visually and photographically throughout August and September, Machholz estimating the magnitude as around 12.0 on September 23 (0.36-m reflector). Oak Ridge observations on October 16 and 18 put the comet at mag 18, and useful positions were determined on the 22nd by E.F.Tedesco with the encoders at the NASA Infrared Telescope Facility at Mauna Kea. The final detections of P/Takamizawa were made at Mount John on three nights during the following month.

Observations 1984 July 6 to November 25

1984k, periodic comet Arend-Rigaux, was recovered as its elongation from the sun increased sufficiently in early August. Gibson recorded stellar images of mag around 18·5 with the 1·2-m Palomar Schmidt on August 7·4 and 8·4, and a longer exposure on August 6·4 showed a hint of a very faint tail extending 1–2 arcmin in p.a. 255 deg. Seki independently noted an image of the comet at mag 18·0–18·5 on a single exposure on August 8·8, and another single image was identified by Everhart some 12 hr after that. Like P/Neujmin 1, P/Arend-Rigaux is a characteristically stellar comet that was making a particularly favourable return in 1984, and further evidence of cometary activity was also to expected as it approached perihelion on December 1. An observation by Bortle on November 22 showed the coma to be as bright as mag 11·8, and rather similar estimates were made by several observers throughout December.

Observations 1984 August 6 to end of year, continuing

1984l, periodic comet Gehrels 3, was recovered by Gibson on Palomar Schmidt plates on August 7.5 and 8.5. The images, stellar within the limits of seeing and guiding, were of mag 20.0-20.5.

Observations 1984 August 7 and 8, continuing

1984m, periodic comet Schaumasse, was recovered by Gibson on September 5.5 and 6.5 as a stellar condensation of mag 19 with a very weak coma. This recovery confirmed the single observation made by E.Roemer with the Steward Observatory's 2.3-m reflector on Kitt Peak on 1976 December 27 (see the 1976 report). No other observations of this 8-yr-period comet had been possible since 1960. Although the faint 1984 recovery came only three months before perihelion, the return was to be very favourable. Dramatic brightening was anticipated, and by the end of October Bouma was finding P/Schaumasse to be as bright as mag 9.5. This brightness was maintained for the remainder of the year, and Morris reported a 3-arcmin tail on December 2.

Observations 1984 September 5 to end of year, continuing

1984n was a new comet discovered by Charles T.Kowal in September on plates taken with the 1·2-m Palomar Schmidt on April 23·3 and 30·3. The images were of mag 15 and almost stellar, but there was a faint but definite

coma. The comet was obviously identical with an object of mag 16·0 recorded by Mrkos at Klet in Virgo on May 2; although the image had been noted as diffuse on the second exposure, Mrkos' object had been given the minor planet designation 1984 JD. After Kowal's discovery Mrkos succeeded in finding further mag 16 images on a pair of plates taken on May 19, and in a situation curiously reminiscent of that of P/Kowal-Vávrová a year earlier, comet 1984n turned out to be a short-period object. Exposures were made for P/Kowal-Mrkos by Gilmore and Kilmartin at Mt John on September 17 and 18, by Gibson and Helin with the 1·2-m Palomar Schmidt on September 18 and 20 by M.Hartley with the 1·2-m U.K. Schmidt on the 22nd, but no convincing images of the comet could be found.

Observations 1984 April 23 to May 19

19840 was discovered by Rolf Meier at the Indian River Observatory, 50 km west of Ottawa, on September 18.0. The new comet was on the border of Serpens Caput and Boötes, a diffuse but condensed object of magnitude 12. As with his three earlier discoveries, Meier detected comet 19840 using a 0.4-m reflector and unusually high power of 56 × and only 82 search hours after his discovery of comet 1980q. Prompt communication enabled Gibson to obtain a sharp but rather weak image of comet 19840 with the Palomar 1.2-m Schmidt within 3 hr of discovery, but further photographic observations the following night at the Oak Ridge, Lowell and Palomar observatories indicated that the object had become significantly more diffuse, a circumstance that was also evident from exposures at these same observatories during September 20–23. The comet was observed at Perth on September 24 and 25. Visual estimates by Morris put the comet at mag 11.3–11.4 on the 23rd and 27th. The only subsequent observations were a pair obtained by Gibson with the 1.5-m Palomar reflector and CCD on October 6.

Observations 1984 September 18 to October 6

1984p, periodic comet Tsuchinshan I, was recovered independently by Seki (using his 0.6-m reflector) on September 4.7 and by Gibson on September 5.5 and 6.5 with the I.2-m Palomar Schmidt. Both observers gave the magnitude as 20.5, and Gibson remarked that in the mediocre seeing the comet's image was weak and near the plate limit. Seki recorded the comet again at mag 19.7 on September 22, but no further observations seem to have been made until November 20-December 5, when it was detected at Oak Ridge and Victoria. On December 23 the comet was being reported visually by Bouma and G.Comello (0.41-m reflector) at mag 12.3-12.4, and on the 31st, two days before perihelion passage, Morris estimated it at mag 10.8. Observations 1984 September 4 to end of year, continuing

1984q was a mag 13 condensed object in Pegasus, discovered by Carolyn and Eugene Shoemaker on exposures with the 0.46-m Palomar Schmidt on September 27.2 and 28.3. Following Gibson's confirmation of the discovery on October 4 it seemed likely that this was another short-period comet, and despite the nearly full moon further observations were obtained on the 5th and 6th, also at Oak Ridge, Victoria and Perth. Prediscovery images were identified by McCrosky on patrol films obtained with the Damon camera at

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Oak Ridge on September 1 and 22. Already receding from both the earth and the sun at its discovery, P/Shoemaker 1 maintained its brightness and was widely observed through November. According to Bouma it was still of mag 13.8 on December 25.

Observations 1984 September 1 to end of year, continuing

1984r was discovered, also by the Shoemakers with the 0.46-m Palomar Schmidt, on October 23.5, as a diffuse and relatively uncondensed object of mag 16, retrograding almost exactly along the ecliptic in Taurus. This extreme apparent great-circle motion made it difficult to decide whether the object was a rather nearby short-period comet or in a retrograde orbit and much more distant, but the latter solution, with the record high inclination of 179.2 deg, eventually prevailed. A magnitude estimate of 17 was made at Klet on November 28, and the comet continued to be under observation at Oak Ridge in December.

Observations 1984 October 23 to end of year, continuing

1984s was yet another discovery by the Shoemakers, this one a mag 12 object with a strong condensation, moving to the south and slightly to the east in Aries when found on October 25.4. Morris noted brightening from mag 11.5 on November 3 to 10.7 on the 20th and 10.4 on December 12. Although still approaching perihelion, and near its closest distance of 0.37 AU from the earth, Morris made the comet slightly fainter on the 23rd, although there was by then a 6-arcmin tail in p.a. 80 deg. Comello reported the tail to be perhaps 15 arcmin long on December 27.

Observations 1984 October 25 to end of year, continuing

1984t was discovered by David H.Levy, a planetarium assistant in Tucson, Arizona, on November 14·1, as a diffuse object of mag 8·5 (0·40-m reflector) moving northwards and slightly westwards in Scutum. The object was confirmed the following evening by McCrosky, Meier, Gibson and Morris, and an independent discovery was made by Michael Rudenko, a computer technician in Amherst, Massachusetts. Rudenko (0·15-m refractor) and Morris both suggested that the comet was as faint as mag 10·5, while Levy's indication that there had been fading by perhaps 1 mag since the previous night was consistent with estimates of mag 9·2–9·7 by McNaught at Siding Spring (12 × 80 binoculars). Levy had spent more than 917 hr comet hunting since 1965, some 57 hr since his independent discovery of comet 1983v; Rudenko had been comet hunting since about 1981.

Estimates by Morris (15 × 80 binoculars) gave mag 8.7 on November 20 and 8.5 on the 26th, and during this time a tail developed and apparently increased from 0.2 deg to 0.5 deg in length. Morris again noted a 0.5-deg tail on December 12 and judged the comet at mag 8.2–8.3 then and on the 23rd and 31st. The northward and slow westward motion continued through perihelion passage on December 14, and the comet remained widely observed as it passed through conjunction more than 50 deg north of the sun during the last week of the year.

Observations 1984 November 14 to end of year, continuing

1984u, the Shoemakers' sixth cometary discovery in under 15 months, was retrograding in Aries, of mag 14.5 with a strong condensation and possibly a short tail to the northeast, when found on a pair of exposures with the 0.46-m Palomar Schmidt on November 21.3. Bowell quickly identified mag 15 prediscovery images on plates taken at the Lowell Observatory on November 18, and with the availability also of Lowell positions from November 27 it became clear that this was another short-period comet. P/Shoemaker 2 was observed by Seki (at mag 16) on November 28 and by Gibson on the 30th, but by the next dark of the moon it was evidently much fainter, and the only definite subsequent observations were obtained at Oak Ridge on December 18 and at the Chamberlin station two nights later, the magnitude then being given as 19.

Observations 1984 November 18 to December 20

1984v was discovered by Malcolm Hartley on exposures with the U.K. Schmidt on November 17.6 and 23.7. Some 3 deg southwest of Rigel on the former night, the mag 15 object was moving slowly away from the star, and its trails were surrounded by a faint halo. Gilmore and Kilmartin estimated the nuclear magnitude at 17 on December 1, and orbit computations showed the comet then to be 4.7 AU from the sun, with reduction to 4.0 AU occurring at perihelion ten months later. Comet 1984v was observed again on December 4 by its discoverer, and observations were also made by Everhart, Gibson, McCrosky and Candy.

Observations 1984 November 17 to end of year, continuing

P/Tuttle-Giacobini-Kresák, due at perihelion on July 28, was badly placed for recovery at this return; single candidate images were noted by Gibson on January 24 (mag 21) and by Seki on July 30 (mag 15·5), but confirmation was not forthcoming. Unsuccessful searches were also made by Gibson for P/Tritton (at perihelion in March) and P/Oterma (at perihelion in 1983 June), but the former was rather badly placed and the prediction uncertain, and the latter not expected to be brighter than mag 21. P/Haneda-Campos (perihelion 1984 December 26) and P/Schwassmann-Wachmann 3 (1985 January 11) were badly placed, and recoveries were essentially impossible.

The following continuation of the numerical designations of comets (in order of perihelion passage) is taken from *Minor Planet Circ*. No. 9389–9390 (1985):

Comet		T		Name	Year/letter
1983	I	J anuary	19.0	IRAS	1983f
	II	March	15.2	P/Bowell-Skiff	1983c
	III	April	2.2	P/Kowal-Vávrová	1983t
	IV	April	7.5	P/Pons-Winnecke	1983b
	V	May	1.3	Sugano-Saigusa-Fujikawa	1983e
	VI	May	2.7	IRAS	1983k
	VII	May	21.3	IRAS-Araki-Alcock	1983d
	VIII	May	22.4	P/Arend	1983q
	IX	June	1.3	P/du Toit-Neujmin-Delporte	1983g

X	June	1.2	P/Tempel 2	1982	d
XI	July	9.8	P/Tempel 1	1982	j
XII	July	21.2	Černis	1983	1
			P/Kopff	1982	k
XIV	August	23.8	P/IRAS	1983	j
XV	November	23.7	Shoemaker	1983	p
XVI	November	28.0	IRAS	1983	0
XVII	December	1.7	P/Harrington-Abell	1983	r
	December	_	,	1983	h
XIX	December	27.8	P/Bradfield	1984	a

The 1976 recovery of P/Schaumasse is designated 1976 XV.

On the following pages some recently computed orbital elements are tabulated. The times are in Ephemeris Time, and the angles are referred to the ecliptic and mean equinox 1950.0. The column headed 'Obs.' gives the number of observations on which the calculation is based, the symbol p indicating predicted elements only; an asterisk means that nongravitational acceleration terms were included.

REFERENCES AND NOTES TO TABLE OF ELEMENTS

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(I) Co-author Chodas.
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 (3) Ibid. No. 451 (1984).
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 (5) Ibid. No. 450 (1984).
 (6) Ibid. No. 459 (1984).
 (7) Ibid. No. 453 (1984).
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(10) IAU Circ. No. 3987 (1984).
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(13) Ibid. No. 449 (1984).
(14) Ibid. No. 462 (1984).
(15) Minor Planet Circ. No. 9425 (1985).
(16) Ibid. No. 9304 (1984).
(17) Ibid. No. 8671 (1984).
(18) Nakano Note No. 460 (1984).
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(21) Minor Planet Circ. No. 9025 (1984).
(22) Ibid. No. 8672 (1984).
(23) Ibid. No. 9213 (1984).
(24) Ibid. No. 8779 (1984).
(25) Ibid. No. 9211 (1984).
(26) Ibid. No. 8287 (1983). \Delta T < 0.01 day.
(27) Nakano Note No. 426 (1983). \Delta T < 0.01 day.
(28) Ibid. No. 469 (1984).
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(31) Acta Astr. 31, 471 (1981). \Delta T = +0.02 day.
(32) Minor Planet Circ. No. 9351 (1985).
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- (35) Ibid. No. 9212 (1984).
 (36) Minor Planet Circ. No. 7659 (1983). ΔT < 0.01 day.
 (37) IAU Circ. No. 3977 (1984).
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 (39) Ibid. No. 9351 (1985).
 (40) Ibid. No. 9214 (1984).

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