

Photoelectric and electronographic photometry of the globular cluster NGC 1851

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Accepted 1987 November 2. Received 1987 October 30; in original form 1987 April 22

Summary. The colour–magnitude diagram for NGC 1851 is presented to a limit of $V = 21.0$ mag, approximately 2 mag below the main-sequence turn-off point, on the basis of *UBV* photoelectric photometry and electronographic *BV* photometry. The main-sequence turn-off parameters are $(B-V)_t = 0.40 \pm 0.03$ mag; $V_t = 19.45 \pm 0.1$ mag. From the location of the horizontal branch stars, the apparent distance modulus to the cluster has been estimated as 15.45 ± 0.2 mag. An age of 15 ± 3 Gyr has been assigned to the cluster from the fitting of Vandenberg & Bell theoretical isochrones.

1 Introduction

In order to establish whether or not globular clusters were formed during the collapse of the protogalaxy it is necessary to establish whether they all have almost the same age and primordial helium abundance (Eggen, Lynden-Bell & Sandage 1962; Searle & Zinn 1978). This involves obtaining colour–magnitude diagrams (CMDs) below the location of the main-sequence turn-off point, and chemical abundances of stars for as many globular clusters as possible. To achieve these aims, a considerable observational effort has been made during the last few years, but no photometric study to the turn-off point of the relatively nearby cluster NGC 1851 has been made. NGC 1851 is particularly well suited for this type of work because it is a populous cluster in an uncrowded field with low reddening. The present work gives a first determination of the main-sequence turn-off point, using photoelectric and electronographic data. These data were obtained just prior to the widespread introduction of CCD cameras for this type of work; although they are of lower accuracy than the best CCD data, they do serve to determine the location of the main-sequence and to show that the age of NGC 1851 is consistent with that of other globular clusters.

2 Previous work on NGC 1851

The southern globular cluster NGC 1851 (CO 512–400) has been investigated a number of times photometrically and spectroscopically; Stetson (1981) has discussed in detail existing earlier work

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on the cluster. Kinman (1959) and Harris & Racine (1979) indicated that NGC 1851 is a moderately metal-poor cluster, and Zinn & West (1984) give $[Fe/H] = -1.36$ on a scale where $[Fe/H] = -0.71$ for 47 Tuc, -1.40 for M5, -1.54 for NGC 6752 and -1.69 for M3. Recently Hesser *et al.* (1982) have published spectroscopic observations of 18 stars in NGC 1851 and found that 3 out of 8 bright red giants possess extremely strong CN bands at the wavelengths 3883 and 4216 Å. Variables in the cluster region have been studied by Liller (1975) and Wehlau *et al.* (1978, 1982). The cluster contains 22 RR Lyrae variables, enough for useful comparison with the relatively small number of RR Lyrae-rich clusters. Various photometric studies by Alcaino (1969, 1971, 1976) indicate values ranging from 0.10 to 0.34 mag for the reddening $E(B-V)$, and from 15.15 to 15.50 mag for the apparent distance modulus $(m-M)$. Stetson (1981) has published a CMD based on a large sample of stars brighter than $V \approx 18$ mag. He gives a low value of reddening, $E(B-V) = 0.02 \pm 0.02$ mag and a distance modulus, $(m-M)_0 = 15.39 \pm 0.23$ mag. He points out that the cluster CMD is normal for its metal abundance although the distribution of stars on the horizontal branch is slightly peculiar in the sense that it covers a wide range of colours and has a distribution with peaks towards either end of the observed colour range. The main motivation for making a new CMD was that none of these studies went faint enough to reach below the main-sequence turn-off point.

3 Observations and reductions

The observations obtained for the construction of the CMD can be divided into two groups, the *UBV* photoelectric photometry and the *BV* electronic measures.

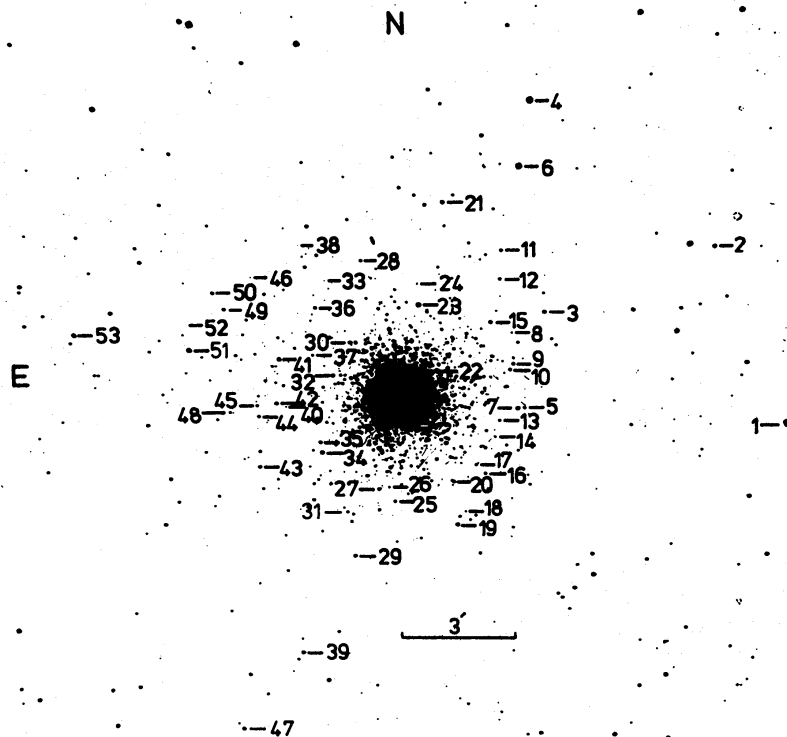


Figure 1. Identification chart for photoelectrically observed stars. This and Fig. 2 are reproduced from a 45-min photographic *V* plate taken with the 3.9-m AAT.

3.1 *UBV* PHOTOELECTRIC PHOTOMETRY

Fifty-three stars in the cluster region were observed photoelectrically in the *UBV* system between 1970 December to 1972 May, as part of a series which was intended to provide a homogeneous set of broadband photometric data for several of the closest southern globular clusters. The observations were made using standard 2-channel and 1-channel photoelectric photometers on the Australian National University's 1-m and 0.4-m telescopes at Siding Spring Observatory. The observations of faint cluster stars were tied each night to a set of local standards near the clusters, and these in turn were tied to Cousins' (1973) E-region standards on the best photometric nights. Further details of the equipment, observing procedures and accuracy of the data for stars with $V < 16$ mag are as described by Cannon & Stobie (1973) for ω Centauri. For stars with $V \geq 16$ mag, the details of the observing procedure and photometric accuracy are as described by Cannon (1981). The observed stars are identified in Fig. 1 and their *UBV* photoelectric data are listed in Table 1.

Stetson (1981), on the basis of 18 common stars between his photometry and the present,

Table 1. *UBV* photoelectric photometry for stars in NGC 1851.

Star	V (mag)	(B-V) (mag)	(U-B) (mag)	n	t	Remarks	Star	V (mag)	(B-V) (mag)	(U-B) (mag)	n	t	Remarks
1	9.56	1.05	0.91	8		std	31	16.39	0.06	0.14	1	50	
2	13.96	1.04	0.68	1			32	14.35	1.17	-	1		
3	13.41	1.68	1.98	2			33	18.33	0.76	-	1	200	
4	11.44	0.56	0.05	8		std	34	13.21	1.67	1.51:	2*		
5	15.47	1.02	0.93	1			35	14.35	1.14	0.89:	2*		
6	11.73	0.59	0.01	8		std	36	14.92	1.11	0.75	1		
7	13.40	1.58	1.51:	2*			37	16.87	0.00	-0.16	2*	100	
8	17.26	0.84	-	1	50		38	18.34	0.83	-	1	200	
9	14.91	0.85	0.43	2			39	14.34	0.95	-	1		
10	14.82	1.17	0.91	2			40	17.24	0.74	-	2	75	
11	15.16	0.86	0.24	2			41	13.59	1.44	1.49	2		
12	15.60	0.62	0.03	2			42	13.80	1.48	1.40:	2		
13	16.22	0.61	-	2	60		43	14.51	1.22	1.31	1		
14	16.80	0.94	-	2	100		44	14.87	1.04	0.90:	2*		
15	14.04	1.28	1.34	2			45	15.87	0.23	0.14	1		
16	15.35	0.99	0.71	3*			46	17.95	0.68	-	1	100	
17	15.80	0.94	0.38:	3*			47	13.42	1.54	1.73	1		
18	17.25	0.67	-	1	50		48	16.78	0.05	-0.07	1	25	
19	14.27	0.55	0.05	1			49	14.91	0.83	0.58:	2*		
20	14.49:	0.88:	0.47:	1		double	50	14.97	0.72	0.05:	2*		
21	13.52	1.58	1.77	2			51	13.18	0.73	0.24	2		
22	13.16	1.62	1.10	1			52	18.49	0.43	-	1	200	
23	13.28	0.72	0.15	2			53	13.83	1.79	2.15	1		
24	17.01	0.76	-	2	75								
25	15.88	0.87	-	1									
26	17.22	0.86:	-	2	150								
27	16.57	0.02	-0.21:	2*	100								
28	16.10	0.16	0.16	2	100								
29	14.66	0.73	0.05	1									
30	14.22	1.27	0.85	1									

Column 5 gives n , the number of nights of observations. In the case of local standards (std), n is the number of nights used in the tie-in to *UBV* standards. An asterisk indicates one less *U* observation. t is the integration time in seconds for stars with $V \geq 16$.

concluded that the two sets of photometric observations agreed very well. Twenty stars in common between the present photometry and Alcaïno's early (1969) photometry yield $\Delta V = -0.11 \pm 0.06$ mag, $\Delta(B-V) = -0.09 \pm 0.07$ mag, $\Delta(U-B) = -0.10 \pm 0.11$ mag in the sense (present - Alcaïno), which are very large differences in comparison with the quoted photometric errors. However, Alcaïno (1976) himself later found similar offsets compared with his 1969 data. The present photometry has only four stars common with his photometry, which yield $\Delta V = 0.01 \pm 0.03$ mag and $\Delta(B-V) = 0.015 \pm 0.019$ mag.

3.2 BV ELECTRONOGRAPHIC PHOTOMETRY

The electronographic observations for NGC 1851 were carried out with the 1.5-m Danish Telescope at La Silla, Chile in 1979 November and 1981 October, using the 8-cm McMullan electronographic camera and Ilford L4 emulsion. The details of the observational material are given in Table 2. In addition, a number of flat field exposures were obtained on the twilight sky during each observing run. The electronographic films were scanned on the RGO PDS microdensitometer using the techniques described by Penny (1984). The higher precision and measuring speed of this machine and automatic nature of its operation make it a useful tool for photometric studies of large numbers of stars. For the flat field exposures, a scan speed of 23.5 mm s^{-1} and a $24 \mu\text{m}^2$ measuring aperture were used with $20 \mu\text{m}$ steps. The measured scan area in a 2048×2048 raster was chosen in such a way that it covered the entire cluster field under investigation. For the reasons mentioned by Penny (1984), the NGC 1851 exposures were scanned at a slower speed of 5 mm s^{-1} with an $11 \mu\text{m}^2$ measuring aperture using $10 \mu\text{m}$ steps. For NGC 1851 itself, 10 areas (marked R1-R10 in Fig. 2) of 512×512 raster size were scanned. The areas were chosen in such a way that each contained a few photoelectric standards and also were situated in regions which were neither overcrowded nor located very far from the cluster centre and hence have not included appreciable numbers of field stars. In order to measure the clear film level and to check on zero-point drift during measurement, the scan was made in the MULTI SEGMENTED mode of the PDS. In this mode, the scan was automatically interrupted 16 times for flat field exposures and 4 times for cluster exposures in order to perform a 30×30 raster on a reference area of the film which was exposed to cathode background flux, but not to the sky. The STARLINK programs written by Penny were used to convert the raw PDS measures into images with pixel values linearly related to the incident photon flux. The methods used in the above programs have been described briefly by Penny (1984). PDS scans for the flat fields were also reduced in the same way, and were then smoothed. The NGC 1851 exposures were then divided by these flat fields. During

Table 2. Electronographic film data of NGC 1851.

Film	Exposure (min)	Filter	Date
25.7.8	55	<i>B</i>	1979 November 21
25.7.9	45	<i>V</i>	1979 November 21
25.7.10	1	<i>B</i>	1979 November 21
25.7.11	1	<i>V</i>	1979 November 21
25.8.12	10	<i>B</i>	1979 November 22
25.8.13	10	<i>V</i>	1979 November 22
25.8.14	20	<i>B</i>	1979 November 22
25.9.10	20	<i>V</i>	1979 November 23
27.8.8	60	<i>B</i>	1981 October 27
27.8.9	60	<i>V</i>	1981 October 27

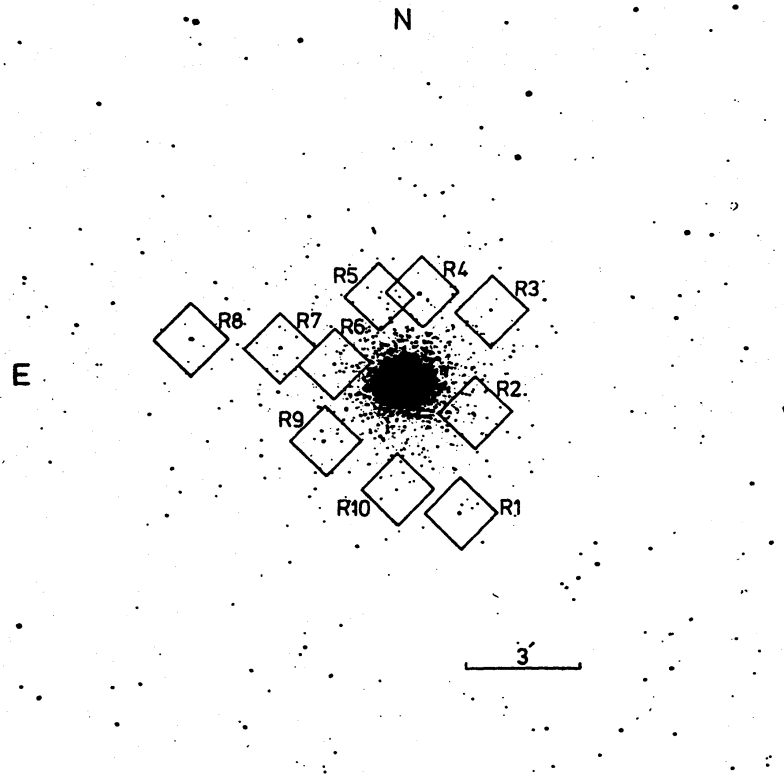


Figure 2. Identification chart for the regions R1–R10 scanned using PDS on the electronographic film.

the above processes, the alignment of the various films was made, using three cathode fiducial marks. The B and V flat fields show maximum overall variations of less than 10 per cent.

The star magnitudes were estimated by profile fitting. By means of a 2-dimensional iterative linearized least-squares analysis, stars on each exposure were fitted with a 2D Lorentz profile. We have also applied a small correction to the PDS magnitudes, described in detail by Penny (1984). The colour equation of the camera was determined from the stars observed by Stetson (1981). For this purpose stars brighter than $V = 15.0$ mag were used because for fainter stars the photometric errors are relatively large. For these stars electronographic magnitudes are estimated from the 1 and 10 min exposures. $(V - V_{eg})$ versus $(B - V)$ and $(B - B_{eg})$ versus $(B - V)$ are plotted in Fig. 3 and a least-squares straight-line fit is also shown, where the subscript 'eg' refers to electronographic

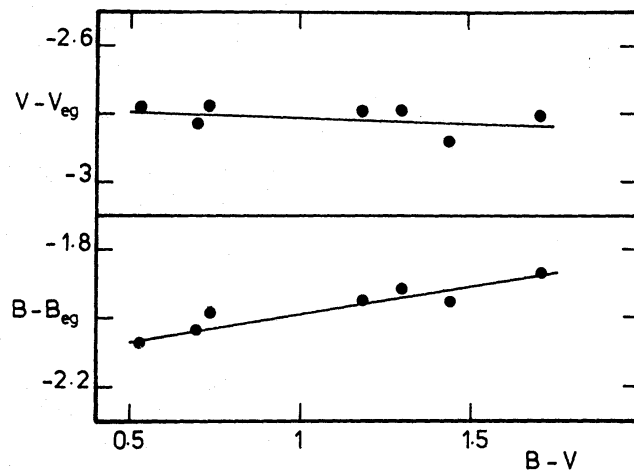


Figure 3. Plot of $(V - V_{eg})$ versus $(B - V)$ and $(B - B_{eg})$ versus $(B - V)$. Solid lines represent the best-fit straight lines using least-squares solutions.

Table 3—continued

Star	$\Delta\alpha$	$\Delta\delta$	V (mag)	B-V (mag)	N_V	N_B	Star number Stet- son	Fig. 1	Star	$\Delta\alpha$	$\Delta\delta$	V (mag)	B-V (mag)	N_V	N_B	Star number Stet- son	Fig. 1		
Region 9																			
1	590	-233	19.75	0.64	2	3			97	485	-215	16.24	0.79	2	2	161			
2	572	-233	19.29	0.45	3	3			98	490	-212	20.10	0.52	2	2				
3	578	-239	19.56	0.46	3	3			99	489	-210	19.97	0.49	2	2				
4	578	-241	20.30	0.80	2	2			100	495	-215	19.68	0.63	3	3				
5	562	-247	18.00	0.73	3	3	166		101	501	-213	17.74	0.74	2	2				
6	555	-241	19.50	0.69	3	3			102	512	-210	19.45	0.47	3	3	163			
7	548	-260	17.06	0.83	3	3			103	528	-198	20.09	0.58	3	3				
8	558	-266	19.11	0.52	3	3	167		104	554	-199	19.61	0.31	2	3				
9	534	-265	20.22	0.41	2	2			105	549	-195	19.65	0.51	3	2				
10	529	-262	19.67	0.48	2	2			106	521	-190	20.50	0.49	3	2				
11	525	-264	20.10	0.49	3	2			107	514	-184	18.25	0.71	3	3				
12	535	-272	20.20	0.43	3	2			108	508	-190	19.87	0.43	3	2				
13	529	-274	19.59	0.46	2	2			109	512	-194	19.73	0.46	2	2				
14	521	-271	19.46	0.44	3	2			110	528	-184	17.72	0.64	3	3				
15	519	-271	20.27	0.75	2	2			111	491	-201	17.81	0.78	2	3				
16	521	-274	19.73	0.50	3	2			Region 10										
17	525	-276	17.45	0.75	4	3	171		1	441	-324	20.15	0.46	2	2				
18	530	-283	16.24	0.86	2	3	172		2	433	-322	19.05	0.48	2	2				
19	520	-292	19.08	0.44	3	3			3	434	-326	19.70	0.43	2	2				
20	517	-281	19.69	0.41	3	2			4	418	-316	19.21	0.52	2	2				
21	513	-279	19.48	0.42	2	3			5	415	-320	20.03	0.61	2	2				
22	510	-286	19.54	0.51	2	3			6	412	-322	20.01	0.44	2	2				
23	496	-278	19.64	0.50	2	3			7	416	-327	20.49	0.59	2	2				
24	508	-271	19.22	0.44	2	2			8	413	-330	19.70	0.43	2	2				
25	510	-265	20.31	0.48	2	2			9	409	-349	20.20	0.60	2	2				
26	510	-262	19.37	0.48	2	2			10	389	-363	19.60	0.32	2	2				
27	508	-259	19.24	0.45	2	2			11	382	-356	19.03	0.47	2	2				
28	505	-258	19.44	0.42	3	2			12	390	-349	19.05	0.41	2	2				
29	503	-269	17.58	0.77	4	2	170		13	381	-349	19.30	0.49	2	2				
30	500	-267	19.49	0.29	3	2			14	375	-343	19.01	0.43	2	2				
31	496	-265	18.78	0.66	3	3			15	373	-338	19.52	0.43	2	2				
32	490	-271	20.19	0.38	3	3			16	377	-338	20.26	0.55	2	2				
33	486	-267	19.74	0.45	3	2			17	398	-330	19.86	0.52	2	2				
34	489	-264	19.96	0.50	2	2			18	391	-327	19.58	0.46	2	2				
35	484	-260	20.21	0.34	3	2			19	396	-322	20.53	0.54	2	2				
36	479	-261	19.54	0.52	3	3			20	405	-305	19.00	0.51	2	2				
37	489	-253	20.06	0.44	3	2			21	400	-296	18.87	0.64	2	2				
38	493	-250	20.04	0.52	3	2			22	382	-308	20.40	0.64	2	2				
39	490	-248	19.18	0.43	3	3			23	377	-318	20.54	0.64	2	2				
40	499	-244	19.72	0.59	2	3			24	375	-325	19.59	0.47	2	2				
41	503	-244	19.03	0.44	2	3			25	367	-328	18.78	0.41	2	2				
42	500	-254	19.98	0.49	2	2			26	366	-331	19.33	0.50	2	2				
43	513	-252	19.37	0.48	3	3			27	358	-326	15.90	0.93	2	2	195	25		
44	519	-253	19.54	0.44	2	3			28	360	-332	20.67	0.58	2	2				
45	525	-256	19.61	0.49	2	2			29	367	-338	20.51	0.65	2	2				
46	528	-254	20.55	0.57	2	2			30	366	-344	20.08	0.47	2	2				
47	529	-248	18.81	0.64	3	3			31	358	-342	20.59	0.40	2	2				
48	542	-245	19.74	0.44	3	3			32	364	-352	18.61	0.67	2	2				
49	542	-242	19.50	0.46	3	3			33	362	-356	20.52	0.45	2	2				
50	541	-237	19.14	0.52	3	3			34	372	-359	19.15	0.32	2	2				
51	539	-231	16.48	0.86	5	4	165		35	369	-361	19.67	0.50	2	2				
52	548	-230	19.43	0.49	3	3			36	357	-372	19.61	0.44	2	2				
53	561	-233	20.40	0.62	3	2			37	357	-367	20.24	0.54	2	2				
54	564	-227	20.86	0.55	3	2			38	360	-361	20.74	0.67	2	2				
55	567	-224	20.25	0.36	3	3			39	351	-353	19.94	0.56	2	2				
56	567	-215	19.85	0.51	3	2			40	338	-373	20.48	0.54	2	2				
57	555	-203	19.43	0.43	3	3			41	324	-357	18.69	0.60	2	2				
58	552	-207	20.69	0.66	2	2			42	329	-354	20.51	0.44	2	2				
59	546	-205	20.47	0.56	3	2			43	334	-350	19.27	0.46	2	2				
60	545	-201	20.65	0.43	2	2			44	339	-344	19.98	0.51	2	2				
61	542	-205	20.33	0.73	2	3			45	348	-337	20.32	0.42	2	2				
62	536	-209	19.74	0.42	3	2			46	341	-337	19.55	0.47	2	2				
63	537	-213	20.27	0.66	2	2			47	347	-330	20.58	0.47	2	2				
64	522	-217	14.38	1.20	2	2	164	35	48	337	-330	19.63	0.50	2	2				
65	537	-224	19.97	0.42	3	3			49	334	-324	19.50	0.42	2	2				
66	543	-222	19.53	0.55	3	3			50	332	-327	19.32	0.41	2	2				
67	512	-246	19.99	0.46	2	2			51	334	-338	20.03	0.49	2	2				
68	519	-235	13.19	1.75	2	2	168	34	52	330	-339	19.85	0.46	2	2				
69	509	-231	20.17	0.21	2	2			53	326	-339	19.46	0.37	2	2				
70	505	-235	18.83	0.62	3	3			54	321	-338	18.81	0.58	2	2				
71	497	-231	19.67	0.53	3	2			55	326	-334	19.70	0.33	2	2				
72	493	-232	19.18	0.42	2	2			56	350	-365	20.08	0.52	2	2				
73	494	-234	20.20	0.59	3	3			57	308	-348	19.56	0.45	2	2				
74	491	-234	19.70	0.45	2	3			58	303	-348	19.08	0.36	2	2				
75	481	-243	19.66	0.59	2	3			59	297	-331	19.46	0.37	2	2				
76	480	-244	19.73	0.21	2	3			60	301	-330	19.53	0.41	2	2				
77	475	-246	19.82	0.67	3	2			61	309	-324	19.68	0.37	2	2				
78	475	-255	19.57	0.41	2	2			62	298	-324	19.07	0.53	2	2				
79	468	-254	19.74	0.55	2	2			63	292	-327	19.95	0.42	2	2				
80	467	-251	19.88	0.55	2	2			64	295	-321	19.44	0.46	2	2				
81	462	-253	19.48	0.28	3	2			65	291	-319	20.43	0.57	2	2				
82	468	-247	18.78	0.65	3	3			66	304	-318	20.43	0.48	2	2				
83	457	-249	19.84	0.49	3	3			67	327	-313	16.47	0.89	2	2				
84	460	-246	20.36	0.40	3	2			68	336	-309	19.46	0.42	2	2	196			
85	477	-237	16.23	0.94	2	2	169		69	342	-309	19.03	0.33	2	2				
86	477	-236	19.37	0.42	2	2			70	354	-313	19.42	0.33	2	2				
87	467	-229	19.21	0.38	2	3			71	357	-314	20.09	0.37	2	2				
88	484	-228	20.49	0.59	3	2			72	350	-320	20.09	0.42	2	2				
89	489	-226	19.47	0.25	3	2			73	356	-306	20.46	0.74	2	2				
90	486	-222	16.91	0.03	3	3	162		74	364	-303	19.57	0.62	2	2				
91	492	-221	18.93	0.52	2	2			75	368	-301	17.19	0.78	2	2	199	26		
92	479	-222	20.62	0.55	2	2			76	362	-287	19.63	0.30	2	2				
93	475	-226	19.51	0.45	3</														

data. The equations derived for the fit were:

$$V = V_{eg} - 0.03(\pm 0.03)(B-V) - 2.79;$$

$$B = B_{eg} + 0.15(\pm 0.02)(B-V) - 2.14.$$

Electronographic photometry possesses several important advantages over conventional photographic photometry, e.g. linearity of response, high detective quantum efficiency, high storage capacity and dynamic range, etc. However, Hawkins (1979) and Stewart (1979) found that there may sometimes be non-linearity in electronographic photometry. They found that this non-linearity occurred with film where a form of low density saturation was taking place, probably due to the lack of developable grains in a particular batch of nuclear emulsion. The problem was solved successfully following discussions with Ilford, the manufacturer, and using a system of quality checks at Royal Greenwich Observatory (*cf.* Hawkins 1981) and no further evidence for non-linearity has been found. The laboratory measurements by Kron, Ables & Hewitt (1969) and Kahan & Cohen (1969) as well as the direct comparisons of electronographic and photoelectric magnitudes by Walker & Kron (1967) and Penny (1976, 1984) have shown that the electronographic systems are linear over the expected range. The linearity of the present electronographic system has been confirmed by Hawkins (1981).

We used the BV magnitudes of stars measured from short exposures to tie the electronographic magnitudes measured on deep exposures into the standard BV system. The zero-point has been tied within an accuracy of ± 0.02 mag. Table 3 lists the difference in right ascension ($\Delta\alpha$) and declination ($\Delta\delta$) measured in arcsec with respect to star 3 in Fig. 1; the electronographic BV magnitudes and the number of measurements of each star. The positions were derived from a UK Schmidt Telescope photographic plate by tying in the (x, y) positions of the electronographic stars to SAO stars in the plate. The differential positions are accurate to 1 arcsec.

The internal accuracy, estimated from the scatter in the individual measures of different exposures, is $\sigma = 0.04$ mag, both in B and V passbands, for stars brighter than $V \approx 19$ mag and

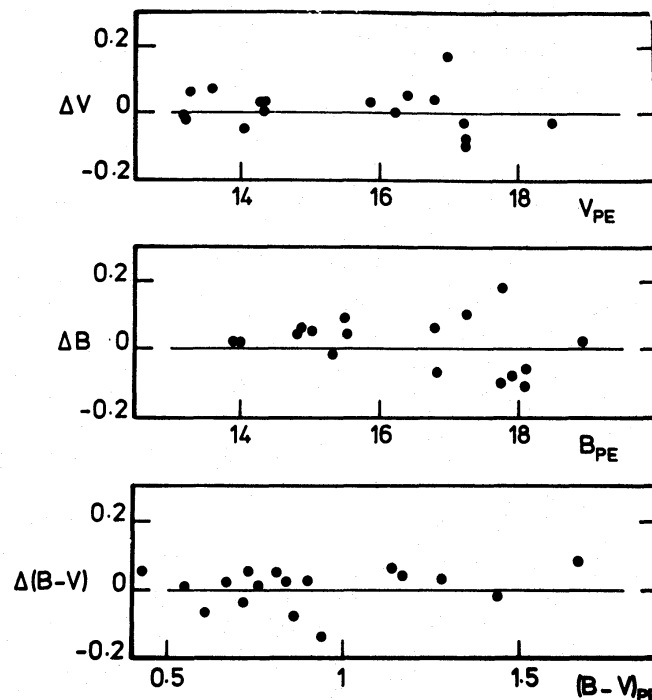


Figure 4. Comparison of photoelectric magnitudes with the electronographic ones. ΔV , ΔB and $\Delta(B-V)$ are the differences in the sense electronographic minus photoelectric.

increases for faint stars, becoming 0.07 mag both in B and V at $V \approx 21$ mag. Near the turn-off point, the error in $(B-V)$ is 0.10 mag, if one allows for the errors in the zero-point and colour coefficients of the transformation equation, but it increases for fainter stars and becomes ≈ 0.15 mag at the limit of observations. A comparison of present estimates with Stetson's (1981) photoelectric observations based on nine stars in the range of $V = 13.2-16.5$ mag gives standard deviations of ± 0.033 mag and ± 0.025 mag for ΔV and $\Delta(B-V)$ respectively, while the same with his photographic BV magnitudes based on 81 stars in the range of $V = 13.2-17.8$ mag yields $\Delta V = 0.02 \pm 0.08$ mag and $\Delta(B-V) = 0.00 \pm 0.08$ mag.

Apart from the stars used for deriving the colour equation, 17 stars in Table 3 have photoelectric BV magnitudes [see Table 1 and Stetson's (1981) photometry]. Fig. 4 compares photoelectric magnitudes with electronographic ones and confirms the linearity of the present electronographic system.

4 The colour-magnitude diagram

Fig. 5 shows the CMD for the cluster NGC 1851. In this diagram we have included the photographic data by Stetson (1981) because the present photoelectric and electronographic data have only a few stars brighter than $V = 17$ mag. The photoelectric and electronographic data are shown by large and small filled circles respectively, and the photographic data by open circles. Some of the brighter stars have been observed spectroscopically subsequently by us. These and Hesser *et al.* (1982) observations indicate that several have radial velocities incompatible with cluster membership. These stars are marked in Fig. 5. Overall there is good agreement between

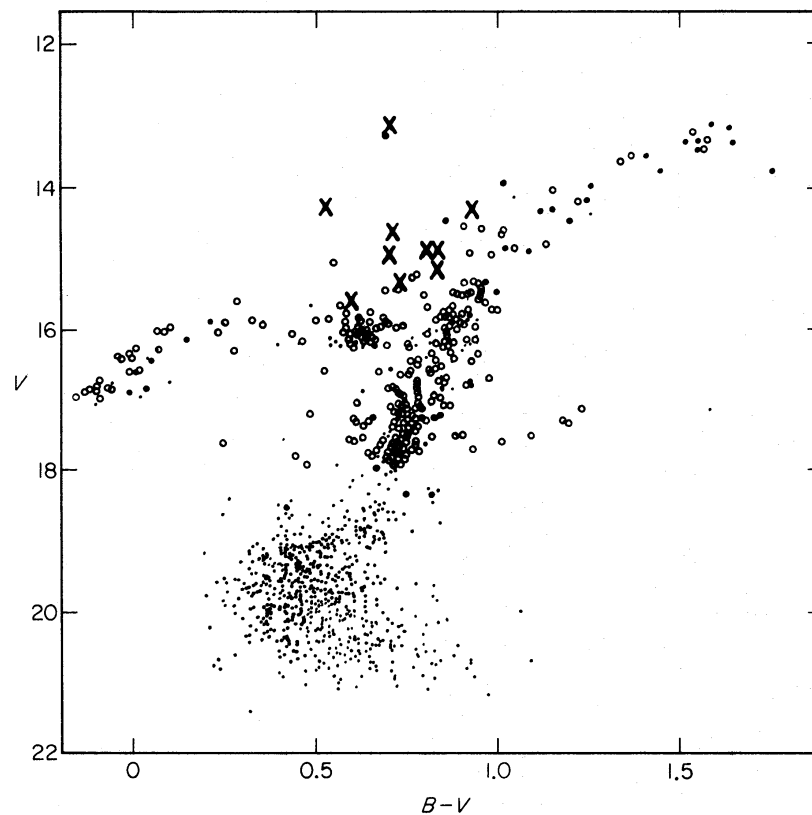


Figure 5. Colour-magnitude diagram for NGC 1851. Open circles represent the Stetson's (1981) photographic data. Large and small filled circles represent respectively the photoelectric and electronographic data. Stars having radial velocities incompatible with cluster membership are denoted by crosses.

the present photoelectric and electronographic data and the photographic data for the giant and subgiant branches, and towards the red end of the horizontal branch. However, the present observations of the blue end of the horizontal branch appear to be somewhat bluer than in Stetson's (1981) photographic data. It may be due to the fact that the photoelectric sequence used for calibrating the photographic observations has only very few stars in that region.

Recently Ratnatunga & Bahcall (1985) have predicted the number of field stars in the direction of NGC 1851. This has been used to estimate the number of field stars present in the CMD of the cluster. The electronographic observations are spread over ≈ 18 arcmin² while photographic observations (Stetson 1981) have been carried out in a radius of 6–7 arcmin with respect to the cluster centre. On this basis 20–25 field stars are expected for $V < 17$ mag and 31 stars for $V \geq 17$. This constitutes a contamination of only 3 per cent, which is much too small to affect the conclusions of this paper.

We find the turn-off point (defined as the bluest point reached on the main sequence) to be at $(B-V)_t = 0.40 \pm 0.03$ mag, $V_t = 19.45 \pm 0.1$ mag. If we adopt $E(B-V) = 0.02$ mag (Stetson 1981), we obtain $(B-V)_{0t} = 0.38$ mag. The various CMD morphological parameters (Sandage 1982) that have been regarded as abundance indicators are:

$$(B-V)_{0,g} = 0.86 \pm 0.03 \text{ mag};$$

$$\Delta V = 2.38 \text{ mag};$$

$$S = 4.1;$$

$$\Delta V(\text{TO-HB}) = 3.3 \pm 0.1 \text{ mag}.$$

These values are in good agreement with earlier estimates, for example $(B-V)_{0,g} = 0.87 \pm 0.03$ mag, $\Delta V = 2.4$ mag and $S = 4.2$ given by Stetson (1981) and $\Delta V = 2.5$ mag by Alcaino (1976). The apparent magnitude of the horizontal branch (HB), estimated directly from

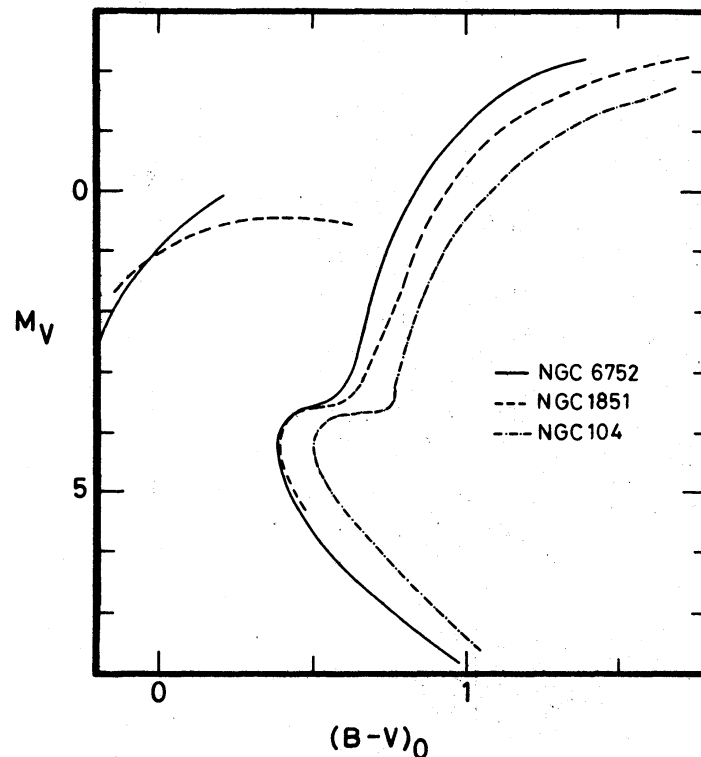


Figure 6. Comparison of the mean locus of NGC 1851 with other well studied globular clusters NGC 6752 and 104.

the plot yields $V_{\text{HB}} = 16.05 \pm 0.2$ mag. Assuming $M_V = 0.6$ mag for the HB, the apparent distance modulus ($m-M$) is 15.45 ± 0.2 mag, which implies $(m-M)_0 = 15.39 \pm 0.3$ mag if we adopt $A_V = 0.06 \pm 0.04$ mag. The same value for the distance modulus has been found by Stetson (1981).

Recently, with the help of modern observing techniques, in particular using CCDs, accurate photometric observations down to the MS have become available for several galactic globular clusters. This makes possible comparison of the mean locus of the CMD of NGC 1851 with some of these well observed clusters. In Fig. 6, we compare the mean locus of the CMD of NGC 104 and 6752 with that of NGC 1851. The loci of NGC 104 and 6752 have been taken respectively from the CCD photometry by Penny & Dickens (1986) and Hesser *et al.* (1987). For these clusters, the distance moduli and $E(B-V)$ values used for deriving M_V and $(B-V)_0$ are also taken from the same work. Overall the location of the mean locus of the cluster NGC 1851 lies between those of NGC 104 and 6752 as expected from the different metallicities quoted in Section 2.

For cluster age estimation, Vandenberg & Bell (1985) theoretical isochrones have been used. Most of the studies which have used these isochrones to fit new CCD data for globular clusters (*cf.* Hesser *et al.* 1987 and references therein) have found it necessary to shift the theoretical loci by $\delta(B-V) = 0.03$ mag in the redward direction in order to obtain the best match to the data. Vandenberg (1986) has also mentioned that more likely the predicted temperatures of the

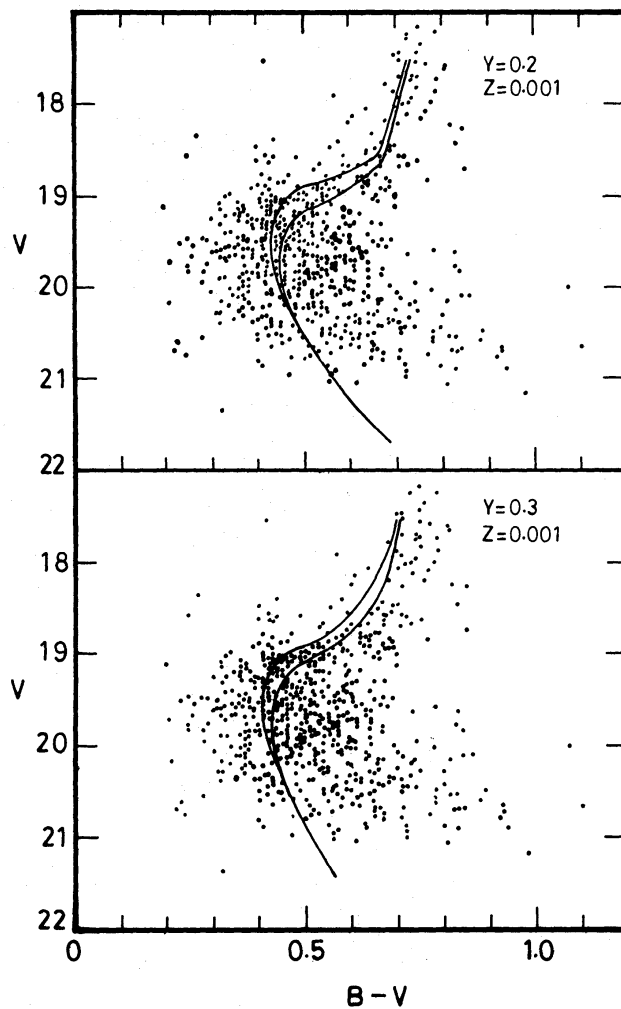


Figure 7. The main-sequence and subgiant portion of the colour-magnitude diagram overlaid by the best-fitted Vandenberg & Bell (1985) isochrones for $Y=0.3$, $z=0.001$ and $Y=0.2$, $z=0.001$. For each composition, isochrones for ages of 14×10^9 and 16×10^9 yr are shown, where the younger age is the brighter and bluer.

models are hot and suggests a similar correction. Hence, we have also applied this correction to the Vandenberg & Bell (1985) isochrones and then fitted to the data by eye, in the region of the turn-off point and subgiant branch for different values of Y and age. There seems to be a small discrepancy between the best-fit isochrone and the data near the sample limit, and only observations to a fainter limit can clarify the situation. Clearly NGC 1851 would be a good target now for high-precision faint star photometry using a CCD camera. The best fit isochrones are shown in Fig. 7. Diagrams for two different values of Y are given, and that with $Y=0.2$ appears to be the best fit to the observations. On this basis an age of 15 ± 3 Gyr is estimated for the cluster NGC 1851. This is identical, within the error, to most recently derived ages of other globular clusters based on the same set of theoretical isochrones (*cf.* Hesser *et al.* 1987; Vandenberg 1986 and references therein).

5 Conclusions

Present analysis leads to the following conclusions:

- (i) The present CMD extends previous observations to about 2 mag below the turn-off point.
- (ii) The overall shape of the CMD is consistent with the intermediate metallicity of the cluster and agrees with the Vandenberg & Bell (1985) theoretical isochrone for $z=0.001$, $Y=0.2$ and the appropriate cluster age.
- (iii) Comparison with theoretical isochrones gives an age of 15 ± 3 Gyr, which is in good agreement with the ages given for other well studied galactic globular clusters (Peterson 1986). In addition to this, the difference between the luminosities of the horizontal branch and turn-off point for NGC 1851 is 3.3 ± 0.1 mag, a value very close to the 3.4 mag found by Sandage (1982) and Peterson (1986) for several other clusters. In this light, we can conclude that the present work supports the classical dynamical model of our Galaxy proposed by Eggen *et al.* (1962) and, on the basis of this age estimate, that the Hubble constant cannot be higher than about $60 \text{ km s}^{-1} \text{ Mpc}^{-1}$.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their thanks to Dr C. D. Pike and Dr A. J. Penny for their help and valuable suggestions during the scanning of the electronographic film at RGO and also later on during the reduction. One of us (RS) thanks the Royal Society of London for providing financial support through the Nuffield Foundation. Help from and discussions with Dr P. J. Godwin are also gratefully acknowledged.

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