



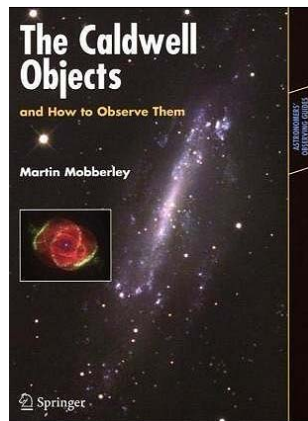
The Caldwell Objects and how to observe them

by Martin Mobberley

Springer-Verlag, 2009. ISBN 978-1-4419-0325-9. pp xiv+273, £24.99 (pbk)

The one astronomical image that I treasure more than any other is my first attempt at the edge-on galaxy NGC 4565: it is over exposed and the tracking leaves something to be desired, but quite unexpectedly this dramatic flying saucer occupied my screen. Having acquired a very light sensitive big-pixel ST6 I had imaged the available Messier objects and turned to the NGC catalogue. After a series of pedestrian images, Caldwell 38 then burst onto my screen. The Caldwell catalogue did not exist at this time but, as he has in so many other ways, Sir Patrick identified the need and satisfied it.

Asked to review Martin Mobberley's *The Caldwell Objects and how to observe them* you will not be surprised to learn that I am a fan of the subject from the outset. Mobber-



ley is an experienced author and this shows through straight away in the early pages, where he guides the reader through the type of object to be found in the catalogue in a very readable and uncomplicated fashion. His schedule of the objects gives, for each one, comprehensive and useful information in a manageable way: the introduction of historical facts here and there adds to the interest. Dedicated astronomer that he is, Mobberley writes as one who has personally suffered all the setbacks that strike amateurs as they wind their way from polar aligning a mobile telescope, to star hopping, to the vagaries of endeavouring to sketch an oh-so-transient deep space object: then on to

the myriad of problems that assail CCD imagers as they struggle to secure compatibility between all the assorted components of the imaging menagerie. This breadth of experience qualifies the author to give clear cut advice on how to go about your chosen way of assessing the Caldwell Objects.

Mobberley has no qualms about criticising Patrick for the inclusion of some of the fainter objects in the catalogue: I incline to

support his views here, but would certainly not come to a conclusion until hearing Patrick's response to the charges laid.

I do wonder if, in another life, Mobberley was qualified as an optometrist or ophthalmic surgeon as he weaves the story of the way light is processed by the human eye, but he does it all in an easy form. It was probably not his decision to print the titles to the illustrations in a smaller typeface but the older reader would prefer the main typeface throughout.

In conclusion, a well balanced, expert and practical book with which to arm oneself before setting about the Caldwell Objects, which will appeal to amateur astronomers at all levels of experience. In his usual style the author introduces some humour into the text but not in the riotous amounts he is sometimes capable of. I recommend you buy *The Caldwell Objects and how to observe them*.

Gordon Rogers

Gordon Rogers has been taking astronomical images with a CCD camera since 1994. He specialises in long exposure pictures of known deep space objects and has constructed the Crendon Observatory with an Ash dome at his home, fifteen miles east from Oxford. In Sir Patrick Moore's Practical Astronomy series he has recently written My Heavens, setting out his experiences in this field.