



A cost effective low power eyepiece anyone can make

From Mr Simon Dawes, Crayford Manor House Astronomical Society

Lenses for film SLR cameras can be picked up relatively cheaply, sometimes for free. I had a few lying around and have recently been experimenting with a 'standard' 50mm SLR lens to see if it could be used as a low power telescope eyepiece. Converting the camera lens to an eyepiece was a relatively straightforward job, that even the most incompetent DIYer (like myself) was able to perform; it simply required fixing a suitable barrel to the lens in order to connect it to the (Crayford) focuser.

The lens was oriented such that the end that normally connects to the camera body faces 'outwards' towards the observer's eye. The old lens I was using had levers protruding where they originally connected to the camera's control mechanisms; as these could be potentially dangerous in the dark, they were removed with a hacksaw. A cover made from the front lens cap with a hole cut in it

was used to finish the lens off neatly, glued in place (an alternative would have been to use the lens rear cover with an appropriately sized hole to look through, but this had gone missing). To connect the barrel to the front of the lens I used a flanged 1.25" OD tube from some long forgotten astronomical accessory found at the bottom of my 'it might be useful one day' junk box and glued it in place with epoxy resin.

Performance

Having little or no optics knowledge, I wasn't really expecting great results, so when I first turned the eyepiece onto an astronomical subject I was bowled over. The eyepiece pro-



duces bright, colour free, flat images with great eye relief and a wide field of view (compared to my 32mm Plössl), making objects such as M45, that are normally best viewed with binoculars, accessible to my telescope. Indeed the general consensus of members of Crayford Manor House Astronomical Society, who have used the eyepiece, is

positive, followed by astonishment when I tell them it was free!

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Observing Saturn this apparition

From the Director of the Saturn Section

I read with interest the letter from Alan Heath and Paul Abel in the June *Journal* (120(3), 2010) comparing the visibility of the major belts seen on Saturn, both visually and by digital imaging techniques. It is certainly possible to process images so that features can appear of higher contrast than seen visually. This process does have its place, in that it can sometimes be used to enhance faint features.

I must agree with the points made by David Arditti in the August *Journal* (120(4) 2010), *i.e.* the majority of imagers who contribute to the Saturn Section do try to produce images that appear as seen visually. The Section observational archive contains many such images, some of which are shown on the Section web site. Further, in conducting the analysis for the apparition reports, care is taken as much as possible to differentiate the appearance of any feature shown in an identified high contrast image compared to that shown in an image with a more 'natural' look or even visually.

The arrival of digital imaging techniques has given amateurs a powerful tool that has enabled them to detect features at higher resolution. This has been of great benefit for Saturn where many features are of low contrast. A good example of this is that in recent apparitions, amateurs with medium apertures have been able to image a number of spots on Saturn at a variety of latitudes. Many of these spots may have gone undetected except by those observing visually with much larger apertures.

In their letter, Alan and Paul say that they

Miss Botley and the Grangers

From Mr Storm Dunlop

I am compiling a biographical memoir on Cicely M. Botley for the BAA, the RAS, and the History Group of the Royal Meteorological Society. Apart from astronomical and meteorological topics, where her facts were always correct and given with impeccable references, Miss Botley submitted letters and other contributions to numerous journals on an extraordinary range of subjects, ranging from the behaviour of dogs to opera. She was an inveterate correspondent of *The Times* until the outbreak of World War II. All women of her age (39) were expected to undertake either voluntary or 'directed' work during the War. Any information as to what she may have done during those years – when she effectively fell silent – would be of the greatest interest.



Cicely M. Botley

photographs, group or individual, in any form (print, transparency or negative) would be of interest.

A friend is also collecting information on Mr and Mrs Granger, well-known (like Miss Botley) for their attendance at BAA meetings in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Although there must be numerous photographs of the wasp-waisted Mrs Granger, does anyone have a photograph of Mr Granger (with or without the cat)? It is probably too much to hope that anyone has a picture of the Grangers, the motorcycle-sidecar combination that they used and the cat. (For the uninitiated: apparently Mrs Granger rode the motorcycle, Mr Granger and the cat were in the sidecar.)

If anyone has any anecdotal or other material, or photographs of these former members, I should be pleased to hear from them.

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1 Eather R., *Majestic Lights*, American Geophysical Union, Washington, 1980, p.40
2 Moore P. A., *J. Brit. Astron. Assoc.*, 102(3), 168 (1992)

strongly encourage visual observing, which is also strongly encouraged by the Saturn Section. Certainly the Saturn apparition reports are based on both visual and digital observation, and this approach will continue into the future as long as each type of observation is made.

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Adjectival nouns

From Mr Ian Ridpath

In the 2010 August *Journal* Michael Covington writes about what he calls the 'nominative takeover', *i.e.* the use of degenerate forms such as 'Alpha Orion' for 'Alpha Orionis', and wonders why this occurs. One obvious explanation is that the authors were too young to have attended a school that taught Latin. The other is the general inattention to correct spelling these days.

Perhaps of equal concern is the current fashion for placement of nouns as though they were adjectives, as in 'the Tycho crater' or 'the Andromeda constellation'. This back-to-front construction seems to have crept in from the United States, probably introduced by writers and editors unfamiliar with traditional astronomical terminology. To see why it is wrong, try writing 'the Betelgeuse star' or 'the Jupiter planet'.

Now that this erroneous construction is embodied in NASA press releases I suppose it is too late to turn back the tide, but I trust that British astronomical magazines and journals will not perpetuate it.

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