



Preface

Taking a quality image of the night sky used to be a daunting task for any photographer and was a valid achievement in its own right. Capturing the beauty of the astronomical objects involved real skills.

In the past, achieving this was always something that engendered pride in the photographer and the admiration of peers. But with the advent of inexpensive digital SLR and CCD cameras, achieving good quality images is now within reach for all astronomers whatever their experience is and is relatively simple to accomplish. And, there are filters that can help them get even better pictures.

Alternatively, there are many amateur astronomers out there who still prefer to observe astronomical objects directly but use filters to enhance their visual acuity and render the objects visible via the medium of sketching. Coloured filters that enhance the visibility of features in planetary atmospheres and surfaces are still commercially available and are regularly offered with some telescopes. “Moon” filters and “solar” filters are still making an impact on new generations of observers who wish to know the sky in as much visual detail as possible.

The manufacturing and supply of filters for astrophotography and visual observing is now a large industry. The purpose of this book is to introduce these filters and give some basic advice on their use and application. This book will serve as a reference point for the observer who wishes to gain experience in CCD or DSLR imaging or in simply looking for faint detail in heavenly objects.

A wealth of material exists on the Internet, from the purchasing of filters through to information on the properties of various astronomical filters. By making these disparate items of information easily accessible in one handy book, the author hopes that the matter conveyed here will be a ready guide to the application and use of filters in visual astronomy and astrophotography.

This work cannot by its very nature as a book keep up with everything available in the market, as new technology or enhancement of current materials goes on continuously. However, it will be a useful source for how to use and properly apply filters to the task at hand. In addition, we have supplied a tempting list of objects to observe or image with such filters. This selection of Astronomical Objects takes into account both the size of the observer's telescope and his or her geographical location, as many Messier objects are included and bright NGC objects across both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere.

The photographs, unless otherwise indicated, were taken by myself.

I hope that you find this book to be a useful addition to your astronomical library.

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