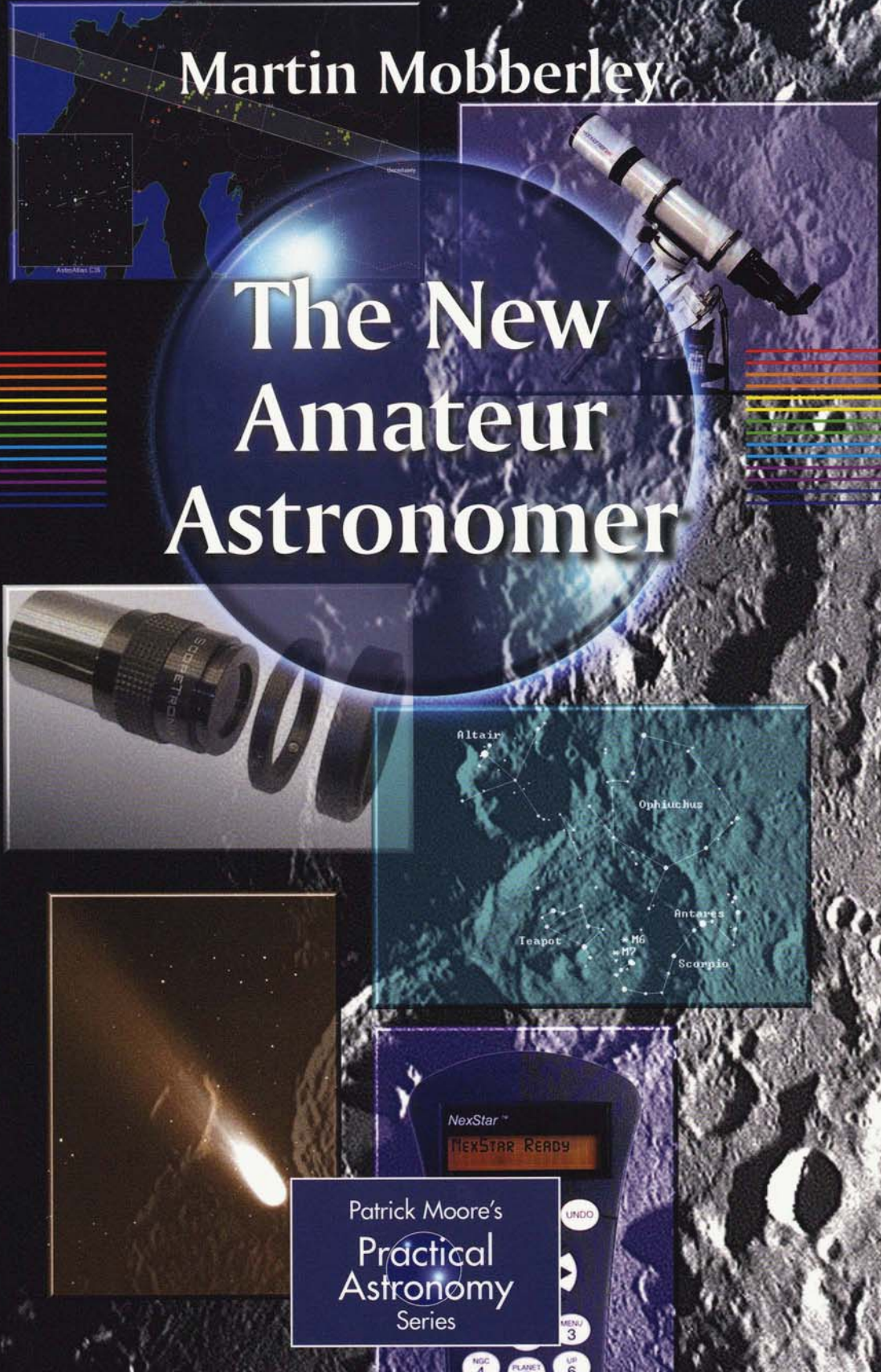


Martin Mobberley

# The New Amateur Astronomer



Patrick Moore's  
Practical  
Astronomy  
Series



UNDO

MENU 3

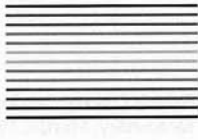
NGC 4

PLANET 5

UP 6



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Martin Mobberley

With 124 Figures



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Cover illustration: Background: The Theophilus region of the Moon imaged by Mike Brown of York, England (see Chapter 6).

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# Preface

It was a book that initially inspired me to observe the night sky: Patrick Moore's *Observer's Book of Astronomy* (1968 edition). The things that really caught my eye in that book were the superb planetary paintings by the late Leslie Ball and pictures of 1960s amateur telescopes: Henry Brinton's 12½-inch reflector, Patrick's 12½-inch reflector and run-off shed, and J. Hedley Robinson's observatory at Teignmouth.

I was ten at the time, but I knew that one day I wanted to get planetary images like those sketched by Leslie Ball, wanted to own a good telescope, and wanted to write a few books like Patrick. Thirty-five years on, my ambitions have not changed at all, but technology has moved on. Amateurs are now achieving what professionals achieved in 1968, both in terms of limiting magnitude, resolution, and discoveries! The "new" amateur astronomer still strives for the best telescope in his or her backyard, but can now observe in the warm, using CCDs and robotic telescopes. My feelings about that first astronomy book have stayed with me, and I firmly believe that amateurs are still principally inspired by spectacular planetary, cometary, and deep-sky images. I also believe that pictures of observers and their equipment are essential in any book about observing the night sky. There are plenty such images here.

The biggest challenge for any writer in this field is to decide at what level to pitch the book. The other problem is what to leave out; publishing, like everything else, is governed by economic constraints. I hope I've got the balance right because, above all, this book is intended to inspire determined beginners and experienced observers alike. I have split the book into two parts, dealing with the basics and equipment first and then moving on to the observers and their techniques.

Complete beginners will want to read Chapters 1 to 3, but the experienced observer has my permission to start at Chapter 4!

Above all, I want this book to encourage and lead the potential new amateur astronomer on a voyage of discovery, ultimately emulating the remarkable people discussed in Part II.

Good luck on your voyage.

Martin Mobberley  
Suffolk, United Kingdom  
July 2004

# Acknowledgments

I am indebted to many fellow astronomers who have freely donated images to this book. It is a policy I have always adopted myself; if anyone wants to use my images, they can have them – just drop me a line; I'm flattered that others want my images! To be honest, most amateur astronomy books would not be commercially viable if not for the generosity of amateurs in this way. But, even though I knew how generous my fellow astronomers were, I was staggered by the speed and enthusiasm with which they flooded me with their pictures!

I am indebted to the following astronomers:

Ron Arbour; Mark Armstrong; Tom Boles; Mike Brown; Denis Buczynski; Ron Dantowitz; Brad Ehrhorn; Andrew Elliott; Ray Emery; Nigel Evans; Steve Evans; Sheldon Faworski; Maurice Gavin; Ed Grafton; Karen Holland; Guy Hurst; Nick James; Chris Kitchin; Brian Knight; Weidong Li; Jan Manek; Pepe Manteca; Hazel McGee; Michael Oates; Arto Oksanen; Donald Parker; Damian Peach; Terry Platt; Gary Poyner; Tim Puckett; Gordon Rogers; Michael Schwartz; Greg Terrance; Roy Tucker; and James Young.

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I must also thank my parents for their support: in particular, my father's help in all my astronomical endeavors.

Finally, my thanks must also go to John Watson (London) and Louise Farkas (New York) and their respective teams at Springer, without whom this book would not exist at all!

Martin Mobberley  
*Suffolk, United Kingdom*  
July 2004

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