



# Southern Sentinel Observing Session Notes

Observing Session - Wednesday 31st July

Date: 31 Jul 2002 (Local)  
Time: 2230-0000 NZST (UT +12)  
Location: Arataki Visitors Centre  
-- Kms, 16 Minutes from home  
Weather: Cold, No Cloud but with a an occasional light mist  
Seeing: Limiting Magnitude 5.0, transparency 3/5, seeing 3/5  
Moon: No Moon (Third Quarter)  
Equipment: 13.1" F5 Dob with Paracorr, TeleVue Eyepieces, UHC Filter

Wednesday bought clear weather once again to Auckland. I meet five other people up at the Visitors Centre at Arataki in the Waitakares. Guy was there again and so was Gary Skipper from work and Warren Mackie, Jeff Hamer and Steve Farrell. Local lights were a bit of a pain so a search for a slightly better site may be required. Nevertheless, its close and dark to the south.

No wind, not too cold and good skies to the West and South and at the Zenith. The light pollution to the North and East was bad and it was nearly impossible to see anything in the northern horizon. Conversely the southern skies revealed the Coal Sack and both Magellanic Clouds easily. Eta Carinae Nebula was naked eye and so were the globular clusters Omega Centauri and 47 Tucanae.

I structured the viewing to show off the brighter objects and threw in a few objects of each class. With 6 people the time at the eyepiece was limited but it was a more of a question and answer session for the people not looking.

Objects seen were;

Object	Type	Altitude	Magnification	Eyepiece
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NGC 292	Galaxy	28.4°	0x	(None)
Lg Magellanic Cl	Galaxy	16.7°	0x	(None)
M 24	Open cluster	67.2°	0x	(None)
Coalsack	Dark nebula	43.4°	72x	(None)
Neptune	Planet	39.5°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
M 57	Planetary nebula	16.4°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
eta Carinae	Star	27.9°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
NGC 3372	Bright nebula	28.0°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
alpha Crucis	Star	40.4°	107x	TeleVue 18mm Radian
NGC 4755	Open cluster	43.5°	107x	TeleVue 18mm Radian
alpha Centauri	Star	56.0°	107x	TeleVue 18mm Radian
NGC 2070	Bright nebula	16.2°	107x	TeleVue 18mm Radian
NGC 4945	Galaxy	44.4°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
NGC 5128	Galaxy	46.6°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
NGC 5139	Globular cluster	47.6°	161x	TeleVue 12mm Type 2 Nagler
NGC 104	Globular cluster	29.9°	107x	TeleVue 18mm Radian
NGC 3918	Planetary nebula	35.0°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
M 4	Globular cluster	75.1°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
M 17	Bright nebula	64.6°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic
M 27	Planetary nebula	18.8°	72x	TeleVue 27mm Panoptic

The Homunculus was enjoyed as was most objects. I encouraged the first observer to describe what they saw. Probably the last opportunity for the next few months to view

the Eta Carinae Nebula.

The group were excellent and the viewing was light hearted and enjoyable. Often the best observing is where people who have never seen through a telescope see objects like Omega Centauri. It just is something you sometimes take for granted.

Cheers.

Paul Kemp  
13.1" Reflector  
Auckland, New Zealand  
36° 55' 16" South, 174° 43' 30" East

-- The Southern Sentinel --