

Date: 2002 May 07/08**Time:** 21.00 → 02.00 Local time**Location:** Ekerö
Stockholm**Temperature:** About 5 - 10°C.

Observation report #5

This day Leif and I decided that we should try to do some serious astrophotography, at least 10 minutes long exposures. The night started with testing Leif's first telescope, a 114mm Newtonian. I didn't expect to see much as the mark of the telescope was a little "unsure". But hey, the views of Jupiter were nice. I could see three bands, and some minor details. Considering how much he did pay for the scope I thought it was good value. After testing this scope we started setting everything up.

Leif wanted to use his superwedge tonight so it took us some time extra to get ourselves up & running. This time we were serious about getting a good polar alignment. I tried the drift-method, and I was lucky the first time as there was no noticeable drift at all, so my first "rough" polar alignment was dead-on. Beginner-luck or what? Leif on the other hand, was not so lucky. After some frustrating time I thought that his polar alignment would do. But when trying the GOTO of his telescope, the objects didn't appear in the FOV. Leif got more frustrated. I myself thought that I could start searching for M13, the only "easy" object I could think of that moment. After finding it, I enjoyed myself observing it for a while. In the background I could hear Leif grunt about his polar alignment ;)



Leif's cat joining us when setting up the telescopes

I started setting up the photography equipment. When set up, I was about to focus. This was not easy. Actually it was so hard it could get. Firstly, I thought I would break my neck when looking through the viewfinder of the camera while the telescope is pointing up requires some very athletic positions. Secondly, the stars are so dim/small in the viewfinder it was hard to see anything at all. I then thought; "But hey! I was lucky when I polar aligned, maybe I will have the same luck here with focusing?". I rough focused and hoped for the best. I shouldn't. The results were not satisfactory.

Guiding was not one of the funniest things I have done in my life. The brightest guide star was so dim I could barely see it, and the illuminator was way too bright for it so I had to turn it on/off all the time. Now I realize why there are pulse-illuminators (these MUST be great to use). From this day I have now understood that manual guiding is very...demanding? Leif had problems even seeing stars through his off-axis guider, so we gave up the whole idea for today. I got two 10-minute exposures of M13, but not more than that. Both turned out to be way out of focus. Leif on the other hand got some nice short (1 and 3 min) piggyback exposures.



The whole setup