

## UK Schmidt Telescope (UKST) News from ROE

### 1. Return of UKST plates to ROE

The Plate Library of the Royal Observatory Edinburgh operates as both permanent archive and lending library for all plates taken with the UKST. Over 15,000 plates have been taken since the telescope came into operation in 1973. Many plates have been sent 'on loan' to astronomers all over the world on the understanding that they would be returned to Edinburgh once the project was complete. It is regrettable that too many of the Library's stock have been 'on loan' for surprisingly long periods of time. We ask everyone who has UKST plates (including glass and film copies) which are no longer required to return them to ROE as soon as possible. It is to everyone's advantage for plates to be absent from Edinburgh for the shortest realistic time, for the following reasons:

- 1) About half the recent requests received for UKST material can be satisfied by the loan of existing plate material. This results in a considerable saving in telescope time and means that more projects can be satisfied if new originals do not have to be taken. Long delays often occur when plates are not to hand in the Library.
- 2) Plates are best stored under conditions such as those at Edinburgh. Some plates are suffering from microspots; these can be treated and selenium toned once they are returned to Edinburgh. This process prevents the spread of these flaws.
- 3) Many of the plates will become more valuable with time as they will form 'first epoch' plates for many future studies. It is also impossible to predict when any one plate may become exceptionally useful due to the exposure having been made at a particular time or in a particular waveband.
- 4) On several occasions ROE has received a request to borrow an existing plate and has then been unable to trace either the plate or the borrower, usually due to the borrower moving to another institute.

Hence, we ask everyone who has UKST plates (including glass and film copies) to return them to ROE as soon as they have completed their project. If necessary, we can supply suitable boxes for the safe shipment of the plates and can send these boxes to any address on request. We also ask users who change address and wish to take their plates with them to inform us in order to prevent plates getting lost. If anyone finds UKST plates which have no obvious owner, please contact us and arrange shipment to Edinburgh. Users in Australia may, of course, return their plates to Coonabarabran rather than to Edinburgh.

### 2. Equatorial (EJ and ER) Surveys and Atlases

As at 15th June 1992 282 fields have an A-grade accepted for the EJ survey and 211 fields have an ER A-grade. The total number of fields in the survey is 288.

The first issue (50 fields) of the EJ Atlas on film has been sent to over 50 customers and the second instalment (also of 50 fields) will soon be ready for despatch. The anticipated completion date is 1994. We remind readers that this film Atlas can still be ordered from UKSTU, ROE at a cost of £4,000 with payment to be made by instalments. Please contact us for a copy of our special order form.

We will shortly begin the copying of the ER Atlas onto glass. Once production has begun it becomes increasingly difficult to accept further orders. Any potential customer who would like this atlas should contact UKSTU, ROE as soon as possible.

### 3. Magellanic Cloud Mini-Survey

The UKST is taking plates in various colours on 12 fields covering the SMC (fields 28-9, 50-1) and LMC (fields 32-3, 55-7, 84-6). It is planned to photograph all fields in the following wavebands: U, B, V, OR, (Short)R, I and with the prism. Each set will be copied onto film and the sets of 12

can be purchased individually at a cost of £250 per set. Orders can now be placed for three of the sets; OR, SR and L. The OR consists of sky-limited IIIa-F exposures taken with an OG590 filter. The I and SR sets are made using the same originals as the SERC I/SR Atlas of the Milky Way and Magellanic Clouds (90 minute IV-N + RG715, 15 minute IIIa-F + RG630).

The B<sub>1</sub> set will be made from new originals exposed in dry nitrogen and will therefore be more uniform than the films included in the ESO/SERC Southern Sky Atlas. It is hoped that this set will be available by 1994. We would be particularly interested in hearing from anyone interested in the U and V sets as this would help in scheduling the telescope to obtain the original plates.

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