

## **Introduction**

There has never been a better or more exciting time to venture into astronomy. Our global economy and mass manufacturing techniques have made telescopes and other astronomy related equipment cheaper and better than ever before. The amount of information out there on astronomical objects is immense and easy to access. Unfortunately this can be as much curse as benefit as the amount of data can be overwhelming. That is where this book comes in.

Visual astronomy can be as simple as walking out your back door one night and looking up. Indeed many people start with nothing more than their curiosity. Sure, you can acquire expensive telescopes and build your own domed observatory but most of us get a lot of enjoyment out of this hobby with much less.

This book is aimed at the person who has the curiosity but is just starting out. You probably do not even have a telescope yet, or if you do, you just got it. You may have no idea what to look for in the sky and less idea of where to look.

I am taking a little different approach and will be covering less about what is out there, but more of what you need to know to explore on your own. There are plenty of fantastic books and software to help you find objects to observe. What I want to do is get you where you know what to do and have the right equipment to use once you know where to look for something.

To get there we will explore how things work and discuss many different types of equipment. Don't worry, it isn't difficult.

I would like to thank my wife, without whom this book would not exist, and all the people who helped make it a reality.