

Hi there,

It is some time since I built the Newtonian telescope from your kit, and I thoroughly enjoyed making it. And I have been impressed with the results even in near permanently cloudy Manchester! At first I thought I had a problem with my eyesight when, looking at a planet I could distinctly see four bright dots in a line - two on each side of it. Then it dawned on me that I was seeing four of Jupiter's moons. Very impressive for a £20 telescope! If anyone has any doubts about the potential of such an inexpensive telescope then let me assure them; this is definitely not a toy! It would make an excellent Christmas present for any child who shows any scientific or constructional bent - preferably both. But, and I kid you not - it is not to be sneezed at as a present for adults as well. One thing though; I very soon made up an adapter to mount the tube on a tripod. I can see that the Dobsonian mount does contribute to the pretty appearance, but I do think that it spoils it functionally. No doubt many will go on to buy a "proper" 'scope as I did (the Orion 130ST EQ), but let me tell you: it is not so easy to use, nor as much fun.

But here are two tips, one for making the 'scope collimation easier:

Before making up the eyepiece cap, glue a hexagon of aluminium foil, or better still, plastic mirror to fit centrally and drill a 2mm hole in the centre. This turns it into a useful "collimating cap". This ensures that (a) you look accurately down the axis of the eyepiece and (b) you can see the reflection of the centre of the eyepiece, when collimating the telescope.

The second tip is for anyone who does go on to a bigger telescope:

The Kit eyepieces will fit quite nicely into a 35mm film canister, and the canister fits well into the usual one-and-a-quarter inch eyepiece tube. Ok, the lenses are (probably) not equal to the ones that come with the "big" telescope, but they may be a useful addition to them. So even if the Newton kit does fall into disuse - and mine certainly hasn't - the eyepieces may live on. Thank you for a fascinating project.

Tony Jaques, Manchester, October 2017

(regarding the Dobsonian mount: using the telescope is much easier with our Flat Tripod Adapter 259.FSA, which you can find on our Components page)