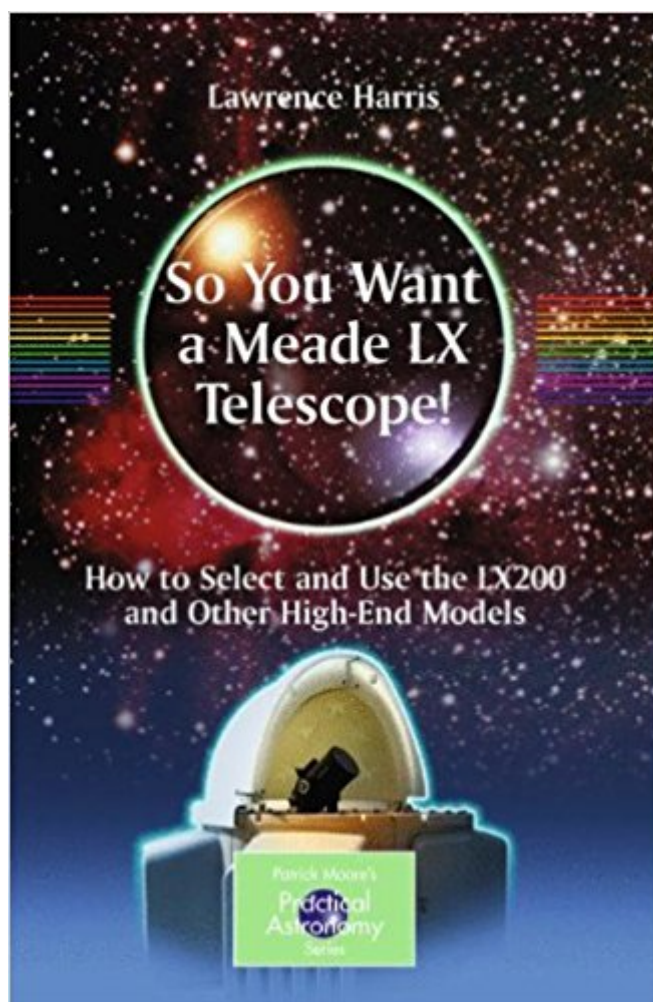


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# So You Want A Meade LX Telescope!: How To Select And Use The LX200 And Other High-End Models (The Patrick Moore Practical Astronomy Series)





## Synopsis

Computers and Astronomy Perhaps every generation of astronomers believes that their telescopes are the best that have ever been. They are surely all correct! The great leap of our time is that computer-designed and machined parts have led to more accurately made components that give the astronomer ever better views. The manual skills of the craftsman mirror grinder have been transformed into the new-age skills of the programmer and the machine maker. (The new products did not end the work of craftsman telescope makers, though. Many highly skilled amateur/professional opticians continued to produce good-quality mirrors that are still seen today.) Amateur-priced telescopes are now capable of highly accurate tracking and computer control that were once only the province of professionals. This has greatly increased the possibilities of serious astronomy projects for which tailor-made software has been developed. Add a CCD camera to these improved telescopes (see Chap. 3), and you bring a whole new dimension to your astronomy (see Fig. 1. 1). Look Before You Leap! But first, a word of caution. Unless you are already familiar with astronomy and basic telescopes, it is not wise to start spending large amounts of money on a well-featured telescope. Such an instrument might otherwise be subsequently abandoned due to a perceived overcomplexity coupled with a waning interest.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the reviews: "This book is a lot more than the main title suggests since it helps a

prospective telescope purchaser select and use the LX200 and other Meade models. | This is an ideal book for those already owning a Meade telescope and especially as a stimulus to get existing telescopes out of mothballs and back into use. | the book majors on the Meade LX range it will be of value to other GOTO-telescope users. I will be referring to my copy on a regular basis. • (Tom Boles, The Observatory, Vol. 131 (1220), February, 2011)

The revolutionary computer-controlled Meade LX200 series of telescopes was introduced in 1992 and represented a giant step forward in technology. The series was an instant success, and Meade LX200 telescopes have since sold in huge numbers compared with many other astronomical telescopes! The LX200s are extraordinary telescopes capable of producing amazing results, but managing them can be a chore. *So You Want a Meade LX Telescope!* includes the essential hardware operations and reviews the best of the many software packages available to aid you in the setting up and use of the telescope. Typical results and various ways to achieve these results are given in detail, so readers can know what to expect from construction to image. Also included are reviews of essential accessories such as CCD cameras and the latest "active optics" units. This book gives readers the benefit of Harris's many years of experience as both a professional astronomer and owner of Meade LX telescopes, including the top end LX400. For anyone owning or considering buying a high-end Meade telescope, this book is the most valuable accessory you can buy!

Mostly about expensive software you should (have) bought back in 2007! What little technical information is hardly worth cost of the book, I usually just refers you to the owners manual. More useful information on the internet.

If, like me, you are a relative beginner and visual observer who uses your Meade LX200 in alt/az mode, and don't have an experienced mentor living nearby, you will likely find one or two dozen tips in this book that will help you. That made it worth buying for me. I always dog-ear any of a book's pages with useful information and figure that if a book has at least 10 dog-ears it was worthwhile. This book ended up with 13, so it "passes." Almost half of the book's 230 pages are about software, primarily for astrophotography. I'm a visual observer, at least for now, so half the book didn't matter to me, at least not yet. I've had my Meade LX200 for a couple of years and still have lots to learn. There's no group of amateurs locally, Meade users or otherwise, so my only support group has been "The Google" and a few forums. The problem with that is there is almost always too much

information to sift through to find answers, and when you find them you can't be certain they are correct. I have found a few websites, like Mike Weasner's, that share a lot of useful, accurate information. But I still needed more. If I had an experienced mentor living next door, using the same telescope, I wouldn't need this book. But I don't. Instead, the book acted like a mentor with a lot of simple tips I guess I should have known or figured out, but didn't. Here are a few of the author's tips: Minimize image shift - by regularly winding the focuser fully in and out to help evenly distribute the grease along the shaft; minimize backlash - by making your final focus twist a push so that the mirror moves away from the rear of the scope; set a lower maximum speed - The scope's default goto speed is at maximum, so any use of the goto option moves your scope at top speed - and nothing, apart from a badly balanced scope, is more likely to quickly wear out your gears. These are very simple tips that everyone with a Meade LX 200 should know the day they buy their telescope. I didn't, so I'm glad I found a mentor who shared these and dozens of other simple but useful tips. It wouldn't be right for me to share all of his tips here, but here are some more topics I found useful: A simple way to figure out which screw needs to be adjusted next when collimating; getting more out of your Autostar II handbox using Smart Mount Technology; improving goto accuracy during an observing session well after your initial alignment; balancing your telescope. Plus, if you plan to move on to adding a wedge, software, and imaging equipment, the book has even more to offer. I don't know how valuable that information is because I'm not there yet. The bottom line for me: Even though half of the book does not apply to me today, I got enough practical information I could use right away to justify the cost and reading time. However, even though I'm an avid physical book reader, and generally find the Kindle too limiting due to the difficulty in highlighting the most important stuff (i.e. - read that I can't "dog-ear" pages) I'd recommend this one for your Kindle. That saves a few bucks for a book you need to refer to once in a while but a book you don't need to look at on your bookshelf every day.

this is certainly a useful and well written text, but it does not live up to its title, does not fill an important need within a brand category such as meade telescopes, and does not recognize the specific categories of amateur and semipro astronomers or the way they approach a telescope. my comments emphasize the disparity between the book's title and contents, and the fact that the contents are in fact highly specialized: they certainly don't tell you how to select a telescope! the first heading on the first page is "computers and astronomy," and roughly 150 of the book's 230 pages consists of chapters such as "essential software for basic operations," "software adjustment of polar alignment," "autoguiding," "using advanced software" and so forth. another 40 pages is devoted to

balancing and polar alignment, the different types of telescopes, generic telescope accessories, updating firmware, telescope retailers and online user groups. I judge only about 30 pages or less than 15% of the book is actually concerned with Meade specific products or guidelines for their use. It's a shame, because the Meade user manual appears to have been written by a retired engineer, full of facts but meager with guidance. What is the best way to position the tripod on unpaved soil, or use the GPS system, or update location or time information, or autoalign the scope? When autoalignment fails, why does that happen? How should one transport the scope, or store it (batteries left in, or taken out?), care for the optics, or clean dirty optics? How does one ventilate or cool down the scope prior to viewing? What specifically does "advanced coma free" (ACF) optics mean, and how specifically do ACF optics differ from Newtonian, Cassegrainian or Ritchey-Chretien optics? What are the best eyepieces to use for different circumstances, and which are the recommended manufacturers? On all these practical and highly important issues, both Harris and the manufacturer user guide have nothing at all to offer. The other drawback is that astronomers come in flavors: the big divide is between the visual observers (with their lifetime checklists of the Messier 110 or Herschel 400) and the astrophotographers (with their CCD cameras); the visual observers divide further into variable star, near earth object or deep sky observers, to name only three. Each group prefers different strategies for organizing their night time viewing, right down to the ways they use star atlases and sky software to plan out the sequence of galactic locations and viewing times for objects they intend to observe and the eyepieces or filters they will use. These activities are all software related: Harris says nothing about them. Worse, in the 30 pages where he does talk about Meade products, he rather annoyingly speaks of the Meade LX400 (which he owns) as the "top of the line" scope, and the LX200 as "also very good", omitting the more obvious and important facts that Meade no longer makes the LX400 scope, the LX400 actually *must be* computer controlled and, because of its shorter focal length and larger secondary mirror, is better suited for astrophotography than visual observing. Again, this book has quite a lot of useful and well presented information on aligning, collimating and controlling a telescope with computer software and the primarily photographic application of a telescope operated by computer. For any information outside that narrow bailiwick ... you're still stuck with the Meade user guide.

If you're just starting out in Astronomy or you're moving up from a dime store telescope, this will not exactly give you the answers you might be looking for because there's just a lot of things to consider about your first or next telescope. After reading this, you'll still want to talk to members of your local Astronomy club. No matter how many books you read, the bottom line depends on what you want to

do with the telescope -- and you can't do everything with just one telescope. This book will explain why.

The topics in this find book other than care and treatment of the LX series of Meade scopes is somewhat redundant and indeed incomplete if you want a general primer. Read Harrington's Star Ware first.

Great reference for anyone starting out as an amateur astronomer. Very detail and complete. Helped me set up my observatory.

Patrick Moore's book is a great find and I could have used it years ago but even today I find the information and presentation perfect for me as an owner of a Meade 10" LX200GPS. Great book very informative and packed with useful information.

Lots of facts, but author seems more interested in bragging about his equipment and past purchases. You might be better served by sticking to Google Searches...

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