

The SAAO 1-m Telescope

A User's Guide

Version 1.2

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Chapter 1

Notes for the reader

This manual is intended to supplement the existing TCS and instrument user's guides, filling the void of information about the telescope and facility, and providing recipes for observing with the telescope-instrument-TCS combination.

For detailed information about the TCS and instrument software, please refer to the manuals listed below, which are available in the warm room, the hostel library, and are linked to on the 1.0-metre section of the following web page:

<http://www.sao.ac.za/observing/operating-manuals/>

- “The UCT CCD Photometer User & Technical Guide, Version 2”, by Darragh O’Donoghue & Phil Charles & Lee Homer
- “SAAO CCD Camera Control Program, version 1.2”, by J. W. Menzies
- “1.0-m Telescope Control Software: A User’s Guide” by Stephen Potter & Hannah Worters

Much of the manual assumes that the user has never before set foot in the dome, and has no local human to guide them. This is particularly true for Chapter 2. **If you are familiar with the telescope, you may wish to skip Chapter 2, but please read Chapters 3 and 9 as some things have changed(!)**. Observing recipes are given in Chapters 4 to 7, which may prove useful as checklists for experienced observers and novice users alike.

Please send comments/requests/omissions to hannah@sao.ac.za.

Chapter 2

A guided tour of the 1-m dome

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce you to the facilities and equipment you will need during your run. The tour begins at the front door of the 1-m dome. To aid orientation, the domes of the 0.5-m, 0.75-m and 1.0-m are aligned East-West, perpendicular to the main road that passes SALT at the Northern end of the plateau and leads to the “Robotic Row” of telescopes in the South.

2.1 Ground floor power & light switches

- The **main power switch** for the telescope and lighting circuits is just inside the second front door on the right. Switch this on when you enter. A red light will illuminate above the switch.
- **Foyer and stairwell light switches** can be found on the same wall, just around the corner to the right, at the foot of the stairs. There is a second switch for the stairwell/foyer lights at the top of the stairs.

2.2 Ground floor facilities

As you enter the dome on the ground floor, you will find the following facilities:

- **Fire extinguisher:** mounted to the wall on the right as you enter.
- **First aid kit:** on a shelf to the left as you enter the dome.
- **Toilet:** through the first door on the left as you enter the dome. The light switch is outside the door on the right. (Don't be alarmed if you discover that these facilities are occupied during the night; the neighbouring IRSF does not have its own toilet.)

- **Kitchen:** located beyond the staircase on the right. It has recently been refurbished and has a sink with running water, a microwave, coffee maker, kettle, toaster, snackwich and an array of cutlery and cheerful crockery. There are jars of teas, coffees, hot chocolate, sugar and creamer. The kitchenware is cleaned daily, except at weekends.

2.3 Upstairs light switches

- **Light switches on the left at the top of the stairs.**
One is for the stairwell/foyer lights; the other for the observing floor incandescents.
- The **switch for observing floor fluorescent lights** is located inside the small door facing the stairs, next to the controls for the air conditioning.

2.4 The Observing Floor

At the top of the stairs, you will find the telescope on the “observing floor”. The North pier is nearest the stairs. Familiarise yourself with the following:

- **Blue console to the right of the North pier.**
You will use this console to slew the telescope to your targets. The telescope power switch and dome rotation controls are also on this console.
- **PC monitor by the blue console.**
This screen displays your target coordinates and current telescope coordinates, for use when pointing the telescope.
- **Observing Floor Control Panel.**
By the North pier there is a grey box labelled “Dome Shutter and Windblind Control”, which has red buttons for opening/closing the dome shutter and raising/lowering the windblind. One must first switch on the telescope power (blue console) and press the top button labelled “Request Local Control” to activate the panel. The red indicator will illuminate when the panel is active. To open/close the dome, push and hold the appropriate button until the shutters stop moving. To raise/lower the windblind, push and hold the appropriate button until the blind reaches the desired height. Operation of the dome lights has not yet been implemented.
- **Yellow hand paddle on the wall facing the stairs.**
As of October 2011, the Observing Floor Control Panel should be used to open/close the dome and raise/lower the windblind, not the yellow paddle.
- **Dome flat lamp switch.** On the North wall, just above and left of the monitor, is a dimmer switch that controls the incandescent lamp used for taking dome flats (see Section 5.2).

- **Emergency stop button.** On the North wall by the dome flat lamp switch is a large red button to press if the drive motors fail to stop. If you have reason to press this, call a technician to investigate.
- **XY-slide reset button.** On the top of the grey box with the emergency stop button is a small blue button to press if the TCS XY-slides fail to respond.
- A red **balance weight** on a rope, which can be hung from an appropriate place below the primary mirror cell if the telescope jumps while tracking (usually when tracking around the zenith).
- Tall and short **wheeled ladders** for hanging the weight and for accessing the reset buttons on the Merlin transputer crates. Make sure the ladders are clear of the telescope while observing (the taller ladder is usually stored on the West side of the observing floor under the catwalk, the other is pushed to the East side of the North pier).
- A **whiteboard**, on the East wall, listing the filter in each position of each filter wheel.

2.5 The Telescope

On the telescope itself, identify the following:

- **Mirror cover handle:** on the East side of the telescope below the primary mirror is a small, black handle. Turn anti-clockwise to open and clockwise to close the mirror shutters.
- **Acquisition/guider box and autoguider camera:** the former is a large black box mounted directly below the primary mirror cell. The XY-slides and acquisition/autoguider camera are mounted on the South side of the guider box.
- **TCS Merlin crate:** above the autoguider camera is a small blue electronics crate. This is the Merlin transputer for the TCS. On the side is a red reset button that should be pressed if the TCS encounters a “Merlin error”.
- **Filter wheels:** The blue metallic box below the acquisition/guider box contains the filter wheel(s), labelled on the East and West sides. Each wheel has 8 filter positions. A list of filters in each position is written on the whiteboard. **Filters must not be removed from the filter wheels.** You will have been allocated the appropriate wheel(s) for your run based on the filters specified in your observing proposal. Please direct any filter-related enquiries to hannah@sao.ac.za.
- **Instrument:** The UCT CCD, STE3 or STE4 (or your own instrument) will be mounted below the filter box.

- **STE3/STE4** has its own blue **instrument Merlin crate** mounted to the cylindrical dewar. There is a red reset button on the side of the crate that should be pressed if the instrument control software hangs, crashes or reports a “Merlin error”. There is no need for observers to fill the dewar with liquid nitrogen; this is done by technicians in the morning and afternoon.
- The **UCT CCD** does not require liquid nitrogen; is peltier-cooled. It has no Merlin crate.

2.6 The Warm Room

The warm room is situated on the East side of the observing floor. The light switch is a dial just inside the door on the right as you enter. Here you have the following resources at your disposal:

2.6.1 Computing facilities

In the warm room, you will find:

- **If using the UCT CCD**, a DOS machine labelled **UCTCCD**, which controls the instrument.
- **If using STE3 or STE4**, a PC labelled **imag40**, running the CCD Camera Control software.
- A thin client with monitor labelled **ltsp** that saves the data from the instrument PC and can be used to run a web browser, ds9, etc. It is possible to download your data to a laptop on the network from this PC (use the command: **sftp ccd40@ltsp.suth** - the monitor is labelled with the password).
- A PC running the **Telescope Control Software (TCS)** for acquisition and guiding. Associated with this are a second monitor on a shelf (which displays the target and telescope coordinates) and **hand paddle** for fine adjustment of the telescope coordinates while acquiring an object.
- A black & white printer, designated **pr40in**.
Print command: **lpr -Ppr40in filename**.
- Several network cables and power sockets for use with laptops.

At present there are no DVD writers, USB ports or DAT drives in the dome for copying data from ltsp. You may request that your data be written to DVD for you at the end of your run by contacting IT staff a few days in advance of the end of your run (email helpdesk@sao.ac.za with e.g. “40-inch data backup” in the subject field). Please specify the filenames (e.g. a123*.fits), the date on which the

data should be copied (Wednesday morning at the end of your run) and when you will be leaving Sutherland/Cape Town, so that arrangements can be made to hand the disc to you.

2.6.2 Operational resources

- The **time server display** mounted on the East wall. The left-hand toggle switch can be used to change the display between SAST and sidereal time.
- Dials showing the **wind speed & direction**.
- A **duty technician** phone number list, on the wall below the time server display.
- Laminated facility **start-up and shutdown recipes**.
- Assorted notices providing information on **telescope limits, weather resources**, etc.

2.6.3 Log books, almanacs, etc.

In the warm room, in labelled boxfiles on a shelf above the TCS monitor, you will find the following resources to help with your observations:

- **Users' guides** for the TCS, UCT CCD and STE3/STE4.
- A triplicate **CCD Camera log book** in which to record details of each image if you are using STE3/STE4. There is no such log for use with the UCT CCD.
- A **Sutherland Almanac**, including bright stars, sunset/rise and twilight times, phases of the moon, etc.
- A copy of **The Astronomical Almanac**.
- A catalogue of photometric **standard stars**.
- An A4 sheet entitled **Sutherland Observing Record**, on which to log the duration of observations, time lost, etc. each night.

2.6.4 General warm room resources

- A **telephone** and a list of internal extensions and emergency numbers (please request a phone code on arrival if you wish to call outside SAAO).
- A new **stereo** compatible with iPods and iPhones, and plays CDs, MP3s from DVDs and USB devices, and has a radio.

- An **air-conditioning unit**, the controls for which are behind the instrument PC, on the wall inside the small door.
- Assorted desk **lamps**.
- A portable **heater** under the desk.

Please do **not** plug lamps or heaters into the UPS sockets!

Chapter 3

Observing Limits

3.1 Meteorological constraints

The dome must be closed when any of the following weather limits is reached:

- **Humidity:** $T_{\text{external}} - T_{\text{dew}} \leq 1.5$
- **Wind speed:** 60 km/h. Dome must be parked **facing into the wind**.
- **Heavy cloud**

3.2 Meteorological information

The following should be used for regular monitoring of external conditions while observing:

- **Relative humidity** and **temperature** are given by the SuperWASP-South Live weather page:
<http://swaspgateway.suth>

and by the SALT Environmental Display:

<http://www.salt.ac.za/html/weather.php>

- Please read the **wind speed and direction** measurements from the dials on the East wall in the warm room. These are the most accurate.
- For assessing sky conditions, SALT operates an **all sky camera**:
<http://timdimm.suth/skycam>
When not in use, please check for cloud outside the dome; do not rely on SuperWASP's cloud monitor.
- SALT also operates a **seeing monitor**, which can be viewed here:
<http://www.salt.ac.za/seeing>

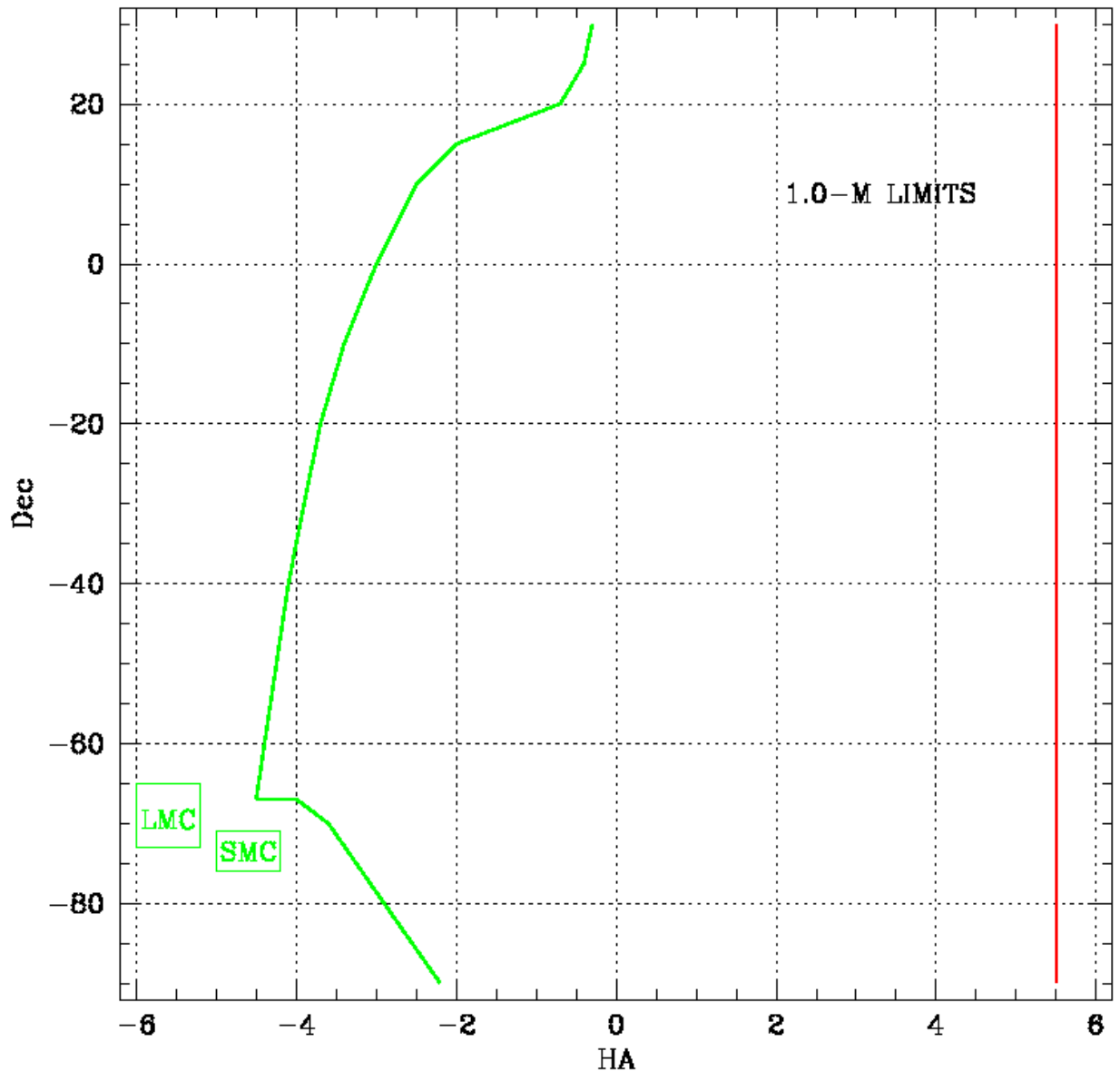


Figure 3.1: 1.0-m telescope observing limits.

3.3 Telescope pointing limits

There are no software or hardware measures in place to prevent the telescope from slewing or tracking into the pier or the catwalk railings. The observer is responsible for preventing such crashes and must keep the telescope within the safe observing limits at all times. **Please watch both ends of the telescope while slewing.** The operational limits are depicted in Figure 3.1.

Chapter 4

Start-up recipes

4.1 Facility start-up procedure

Follow this procedure to prepare the telescope and dome for observing:

1. **Check the weather conditions.** If they are within the limits specified in Section 3.1, continue with step 2.
2. Enter dome and **hook both doors open** to allow good air circulation.
3. **Switch on the main power switch**, just inside the door on the right.
4. **Switch off the lights in the foyer** using the switches to the right of the stairs.
5. **Switch off any other downstairs lights** (kitchen, toilet, etc.).
6. **Switch off the observing floor incandescent lights** (switch at top of stairs) **and fluorescent lights** (switch inside **small** door to warm room).
7. On the blue panel by the North pier, **switch on the telescope power and enable Auto Dome.**
8. **Request control** at the grey Observing Floor Control Panel by the North pier.
9. **Open the dome shutters** by pressing the appropriate red button on the Observing Floor Control Panel. Hold the button in until the shutters stop moving.
10. If necessary, **lower the windblind** using the appropriate button on the Observing Floor Control Panel.
11. **Open the mirror covers** by turning the handle on the telescope anti-clockwise.
12. **Switch on the coordinate repeater monitors** beside the North pier and in the control room above the TCS.

4.2 TCS start-up procedure

4.2.1 If the TCS software is running

If the TCS is up and running (as is usually the case), do the following at the start of the night:

1. **Initialise the XY slides** by clicking Initialize in the “XY Slides Control” panel on the TCS display.
2. **Select the appropriate guide mirror position.**

The guide mirror must be **out of the beam** for:

- skyflats or domeflats
- while integrating with the instrument PC
- autoguiding

The guide mirror must be **in the beam** while:

- acquiring a field with the acquisition camera

The guide mirror can be moved in and out of the beam by clicking the large button above the “XY Slides Control” box on the TCS screen. If the button is red and says “GUIDE MIRROR IS IN BEAM”, clicking it will move the mirror, turning the button green and changing the message to “GUIDE MIRROR IS OUT OF BEAM”. The converse is also true.

4.2.2 If the TCS PC is on but the software is not running

If the TCS PC is alive and responding but the software is not running, it can be restarted by double-clicking on the TCS icon on the desktop and entering the password in the pop-up box (consult local technical staff for the password). You should then follow steps 1 and 2 in Section 4.2.1.

4.2.3 If the TCS PC is switched off or not responding

Please call the duty electronics technician using the phone number displayed in the warm room.

4.3 Instrument start-up procedures

4.3.1 UCT CCD

1. Run through the UCT CCD start-up procedure described in Section 2.2.2 of “The UCT CCD Photometer User & Technical Guide, Version 2”, by Darragh O’Donoghue, Phil Charles & Lee Homer, available in the warm room and linked to from this page:
<http://www.sao.ac.za/observing/operating-manuals/>
2. Change the drive to “f:”, frame transfer mode “on”, and select the required run number, filter, gain and prebin settings (referring to Section 2.3 of the UCT CCD manual).
3. Take a bias frame (**p** → **p**), save it (**d** → **s**), and **check that it saves to /data/40in/uctccd on ltsp.**

4.3.2 STE3/STE4

1. Follow the start-up procedure described in Sections 1 and 2 of the “SAAO CCD Camera Control Program, version 1.2”, by J. W. Menzies, available in the warm room and on this page:
<http://www.sao.ac.za/observing/operating-manuals/>

Important: Ensure that the following are correct in the blue “Details of Run” startup panel:

- **CCD:** select STE3 or STE4
 - **Wheel A & B:** enter “1” into both boxes to enable filter wheels
 - **Next file** number: if this is incorrect, existing images could be overwritten
2. Initialise the filter wheels, move to the desired filter and adjust the prebin or window setting, if required.
 3. Take a bias frame (run a single line module with Repeats=1, Image Type=Bias and Save=Yes) and **check that it saves to /data/40in/imag40 on ltsp.**

Chapter 5

Observing recipes: sky flats & dome flats

5.1 Sky flats

If sky conditions are photometric during morning/evening twilight, you will be able to take sky flats. See Section 5.2 if you need dome flats. Sky flats can be obtained in the following way:

1. Follow the **facility start-up** procedure in Section 4.1.
2. Follow the appropriate **instrument setup** procedure (Section 4.3).
3. **Slew the telescope to the zenith**, with the open dome shutter facing in the opposite direction to the rising/setting sun. Leave the drives in FAST mode (i.e. not tracking).
4. On the TCS, move the **guide mirror out of beam**.
5. On the instrument PC, **select the required filter**. If you need flats in a variety of filters, be sure to cycle through them in the correct order (e.g. UBVRI during evening twilight; IRVBU in the morning). This also applies if you need a range of prebin settings (i.e. start with low binning in the evening; high to low binning in the morning).
6. **With the UCT CCD**, set Gain=1 and adjust the exposure time to obtain counts in the range 10000-25000. Ensure that the letters “f” are included in the object name so that the image is designated as a flatfield in the FITS header. Remember to save each image. Briefly, this is done with the commands **c** → **6**, enter exposure time and object name, then save with **d** → **s**. Change filters with the command **f** → **m**, then specify the wheel and position of the filter required. Refer to Section 2.4 of “The UCT CCD Photometer User & Technical Guide, Version 2”, by Darragh O’Donoghue, Phil Charles & Lee Homer for a more detailed explanation.

7. **Or with STE3/STE4**, click “Expose”, create a module, select “Flat” for the image type, and “Sky” from the pulldown menu beside it. Keep the count rates between 20000 and 50000. Remember to select “Yes” under “Save to Disk”. Snapshots can be used to gauge integration times and can be saved to disk if appropriate. Section 5.1.1 gives a recipe for taking sky flats. See Section 4 of “SAAO CCD Camera Control Program, version 1.2”, by J. W. Menzies, for more detailed instructions on setting up a module.
8. Take a **minimum of 5 flats in each filter/prebin setting** (15 is better), keeping exposure times > 1 s.

5.1.1 Sky flat recipe for the STE3/STE4: Modules

Since all exposures with the SAAO CCD must be performed via a module (except for snapshots), it may seem challenging to set up and edit modules quickly enough to obtain sufficient sky flats during twilight. However, you can do this pretty quickly using the following example:

1. **Before twilight**, set up a module for your first filter and an exposure time of 1 s (do not go below 1 s), with 1 repeat.
2. For evening twilight, perform steps 1-4 of Section 5.1 to setup the telescope and facility prior to sunset.
3. Click the small grey button below the SAAO CCD image display.
4. Shortly before (morning) or after (evening) sunrise/set (~ 10 minutes after sunset for B) click → Exposure time = 1 s. Click to expose.
5. Hover the cursor over the top portion of the image display as the image reads out, and read off the count level in the yellow “ADU” box below the image. Assess how the exposure time needs adjusting to maintain counts of 20000-50000 as the sky darkens/brightens.
6. **During readout** click Expose → acknowledge the error message → module. Click on the desired module → . Adjust the exposure time in the box at the bottom → → → .
7. Enter number of modules = 1, Image Type = Flat → Sky. Save to disk = Yes.
8. When the CCD finishes reading out, click .
9. Repeat steps 5-8 until you have enough flats, or until the counts are too low in that filter.
10. To move onto the next filter, repeat step 6, but edit the filter number as well as the exposure time.

11. Continue steps 5-9 until you have sufficient flats in all your program filters.

With practice, you will easily be able to do this before the CCD finishes reading out in 2x2 (~ 20 s; 1x1 readout is 40 s, so there is plenty of time).

5.2 Dome flats

If poor weather conditions during twilight prevent you from obtaining sky flats, dome flats can be used instead. These can be obtained at any time by imaging a “uniformly” illuminated screen in the dome in the following way:

1. Follow the facility start-up procedure in Section 4.1, but there is no need to hook the outside doors open and **do not open the dome. Remember to open the mirror covers.**
2. Follow the appropriate **instrument setup** procedure in Section 4.3.
3. **Switch on the domeflat lamp** by turning the dial on the wall between the North pier and the blue console.
4. **Rotate the dome** to an azimuth of 180° , such that the lamp on the catwalk illuminates the round, white screen on the dome as uniformly as possible.
5. **Slew the telescope** to $HA = -3^h16^m$ Dec = $-14^\circ37'$
6. **Expose and save** at least fifteen flats for each of the required combinations of filters and binning.

You may need to adjust the dial on the incandescent lamp between filters to achieve manageable exposure times.

Chapter 6

Observing recipes: on sky

The pointing model of the 1.0-metre is good, but not brilliant. It may be necessary to point to a bright star near your target to allow the TCS to calculate the pointing offset in each part of the sky. One set of offsets will be applicable to a range of positions.

6.1 Determining pointing offsets using a bright star

1. Follow the facility start-up procedure in Section 4.1.
2. Using the Astronomical Almanac or Sutherland Almanac, select a bright star ($\sim 4^{\text{th}}$ mag) near your science target (ideally within $\text{RA} \sim 30^{\text{m}}$ and $\text{dec} \sim 10^\circ$).
3. Check that the target and bright star selected are within the observing limits given in Section 3.3.

On the TCS:

4. **Initialise** the XY-slides.
5. Move the **guide mirror into the beam**.
6. Click **TARGET** and type the RA & Dec of the bright star into the appropriate boxes, then click **SET** and **CLEAR**. The coordinates will appear in yellow on the monitors above the TCS and on the observing floor to help you point to the target.
7. Type the **equinox** of the bright star coordinates into the **SET EQUINOX** box and press **ENTER** on the keyboard.

At the blue console by the North pier:

8. Switch the central toggle switches to FAST.
9. Use the yellow RA & Dec buttons to slew to the bright star, watching both ends of the telescope as well as the coordinate display monitor. You should point to within 30 s (RA) and 1-2 arcmin (dec) of your target coordinates.
10. Switch the central toggle switches to SLOW to commence tracking.

Back at the TCS:

11. Set to ~ 2 s and to “Full frame” to take images with the acquisition camera.
12. Use the hand paddle for fine adjustment of the telescope to the star’s coordinates, while watching the image display for the bright star to appear.
13. If the bright star is not apparent, adjust to ~ 10 s and look for light from the star beaming in from one side of the image, revealing its position. Looking through the finderscope might help determine in which direction to move the telescope. If this fails, reduce the exposure time and scan the field systematically in RA & Dec.
14. Centre the bright star on the image and click by the target button.
15. Select \rightarrow “Enter RA & Dec of Star”, then type the **catalogue coordinates** of the bright star into the boxes and press .
16. The RA & Dec zeropoints will be displayed in the message box. Note them down with the HA & Dec as you will need to re-enter them using \rightarrow “Enter Zeros Directly” if the TCS software is restarted, or if you return to this part of the sky after using different zeropoints in a different position. The TCS calculates the difference in zeropoints between different coordinate equinoxes.

6.2 Acquiring a target

1. Follow the facility start-up procedure in Section 4.1.
2. Check that the selected target is within the observing limits given in Section 3.3.

On the TCS:

3. **Initialise** the XY-slides.
4. Move the **guide mirror into the beam**.
5. Click **TARGET** and type the RA & Dec of the target into the appropriate boxes, then click **SET** and **CLEAR**. The coordinates will appear in yellow in the monitors above the TCS and on the observing floor to help you point to the target. (If you cannot see a **TARGET** button, click the **O** in the left-hand corner below the **SET EQUINOX** box.)
6. Type the **equinox** of the target coordinates into the **SET EQUINOX** box and press **ENTER** on the keyboard.

At the blue console by the North pier:

7. Switch the central toggle switches to FAST.
8. Use the yellow RA & Dec buttons to slew to the target, watching both ends of the telescope as well as the coordinate display monitor. You should point to within 30 s (RA) and 1-2 arcmin (dec) of your target coordinates.
9. Switch the central toggle switches to SLOW to commence tracking.

Back at the TCS:

10. Set **Exp Time** to $\sim 2 - 4$ s and **WINDOW** to “Full frame” to take images with the acquisition camera.
11. Use the hand paddle for fine adjustment of the telescope to the target’s coordinates while watching the image display for the target field to appear. Comparison with an 8×8 arcmin finderchart is most helpful.
12. The position should be accurate if you have followed the procedure in Section 6.1, so check your zeropoints. If not, adjust **Exp Time** to search for patterns in fainter stars to compare with your finderchart. If this fails, then reduce the exposure time and scan the field by systematically adjusting RA & Dec.
13. Once the target is identified, position it on the image display such that it falls on the centre of the science CCD.

- For **STE4**, position the star approximately on coordinates (210, 270) of the TCS image display, to coincide with the centre of the science detector (for **STE3**, approximately (180,190)).
14. Move the **guide mirror out** to direct the beam to the science detector.

On the instrument PC:

15. Take a snapshot (STE3/4) or short exposure (UCT CCD) to check the positioning of the target on the detector and adjust using the handset.
- Using **STE3/4**, video mode can be invoked by clicking , entering an integration time, selecting “Video” and clicking . It can be stopped by clicking and . Video mode automatically prebins the CCD, so remember to change back to 1×1 afterwards, if appropriate.
 - With the **UCT CCD**, the command “CE” will start video mode; will stop it.
 - **For a short run of short exposures**, you may set up a module (STE3/4 - see “SAAO CCD Camera Control Program version 1.2”, J.W. Menzies), or a program (UCT CCD - see “The UCT CCD Photometer User & Technical Guide version 2.1”, O’Donoghue, Charles & Homer) and begin to observe
or
 - **For a long run or for exposures > 60 s**, you should locate a guide star and setup the autoguider before integrating on your target.

6.3 Finding a guide star & autoguiding

On the ltsp PC:

- Open a terminal (click the black screen icon on the top menu panel)
- Type `cd /usr/local/saao/40inGuiders`
- Type `source runit`

In the DS9 interface that pops up:

- From the “Analysis” pull-down menu, select “DSS Server”.
- In the “DSS Server” window, click on the “DSS Server” menu and select either “DSS@STSCI” or “DSS@ESO”. SAO no longer connects.

- Enter RA & Dec of target (using colons to separate coordinate units) in 20'x20' field of view and click **RETRIEVE**.
- Once the field image loads with the target in the centre, choose a relatively bright star outside the circle. Place the mouse cursor over the star and read off the **XY slide** coordinates in the grey info area above the image.

On the TCS:

- With the **guide mirror in beam**, click on **Move XY**, then on the target star position in the acquisition image, then on **Zero XY**. This centres the field on the target so that the XY slide coordinates will be compatible with those you read off DS9 for the guide star.
- Move the **guide mirror out of beam**.
- In “Exposures & Guiding” set **ExpTime** ~ 2 s (adjust as necessary).
- In “XY Slides Control”, click **Go To** and enter X and Y slide coordinates of chosen guide star from DS9.
- In “Pointers” click **XY+Win+G** then click the chosen guide star. This will centre the guide star on the image, window the chip and begin guiding.
- To stop or restart guiding (e.g. after brief intervals of cloud), press **GUIDE**

6.4 TCS operations at the end of an observation

At the end of an observation:

- Click **Initialize** in “XY Slides Control”.
- In “Exposures & Guiding” set **WINDOW** to “Full Frame”.
- Move **GUIDE MIRROR** into beam to acquire next target.

At the end of the night:

- In “XY Slides Control”, click **STOP** to cease A/G camera integrations.
- In “XY Slides Control”, click **Initialize** to home the XY slides.

Chapter 7

Shutdown procedures

7.1 End of night shutdown

The usual shutdown procedure at the end of the night is given below. This list is printed on a laminated sign displayed in the warm room for quick reference.

1. Stop instrument & autoguider exposures (TCS PC).
2. Initialise XY-slides (TCS PC).
3. Park telescope at HA= -1h, Dec = 0 in FAST mode (blue console).
4. Switch Dome to MANUAL (blue console).
5. Close mirror covers (telescope).
6. Close dome shutters (Observing floor control panel - listen for beep).
7. Lower wind blind (if appropriate - Observing floor control panel).
8. Switch OFF telescope power (blue console).
9. Switch OFF facility power at exit.

7.2 Closing in bad weather

If any of the weather limits is reached during the night, **perform these steps first** (you may need to slew the telescope to a suitable position in order to access the mirror covers):

1. Close mirror covers.
2. Close dome shutters (listen for beep).
3. Continue with the remaining steps in Section 7.1.

Chapter 8

Logs & record keeping

8.1 STE3/STE4: CCD Camera log book

If using STE3 or STE4, please fill in the triplicate CCD Camera log book for each image obtained, pressing hard enough for your words to register on all three sheets. If you are using the UCT CCD, there is no such log.

The fields are explained as follows:

- **Telescope:** 1.0-m.
- **Focus:** This is telescope focus. You may wish to make a note of the acquisition camera focus for your own purposes.
- **CCD Type:** This will be STE3 if the unbinned detector dimensions are 512×512 pixels, else STE4 for 1024×1024 .
- **CCD temp:** This refers to the “Cu Block” temperature reported in the “Temperature” section of the instrument status panel of the STE3/4 CCD Camera Control software.
- **Filters:** Enter the filter in each position of the two wheels. See Section 2.5.
- **Date and Observers:** are self-explanatory.
- **Run number:** This is a 3-digit number that will apply to your data for the duration of your observing run (unlike the UCT CCD convention). It will be prefixed to your image files, which will be named *nnnnxxxx.fits*, where *nnn* is the run number, *xxxx* is the file number. To determine your run number, check the previous run number in the log book and add 1.
- **File No.** is the number of the image (*xxxx* where the filename is *nnnnxxxx*).
- **Object:** target name.

- **RA & Dec:** it may help you to write here the exact telescope coordinates when pointing to your target, as opposed to the catalogue coordinates. This information, together with the associated zeropoints, will enable you to re-acquire the target quickly in future.
- **Equinox:** of your target coordinates.
- **Start UT:** is reported in the status panel of the CCD Camera Control software, and remains visible until the next exposure is started.
- **Start sidereal time:** can be read from the TCS coordinate display monitors.
- **Int Time:** the exposure time in seconds.
- **Preflash:** this is not required with the current detectors. This box can be used to record the prebin setting.
- **Filter and Seeing:** are self-explanatory.
- **Guide star X Y:** these are the XY-slide coordinates of the guide star used for each observation. Read them from the TCS “XY Slides Control” window while guiding, as they are not necessarily identical to the values you read from DS9.
- **Remarks:** Any applicable notes, e.g. the RA & Dec zeropoints for the specific coordinates used.

8.2 Sutherland Observing Record

There should be an A4 sheet entitled Sutherland Observing Record on the desk in the warm room. If not, please request one via the fault report (see Section 9.1). Please fill out one line of this form at the end of each night of your run, to report on the useful hours that night, and whether any time was lost due to weather or technical difficulties. At the end of your run (or every two weeks, for a long run) please put the form in the End of Run tray in the warm room.

Chapter 9

Fault reporting & assistance

The problems you encounter in the night time will probably fall into one of three categories:

- Minor faults that can be fixed in the daytime – see Section 9.1
- Major faults that prevent you from observing – see Sections 9.1 and 9.2
- User error/confusion – see Section 9.3

9.1 Online fault report

If you encounter a problem with the telescope/instrument/facility, please report it under the heading “1.0m Telescope” on the online faults forum at:
<http://faultreports.sao.ac.za/>

Username: Tel40
Password: SaaTel40

If the internet connection is down, please log the problem in the A4-sized Fault Book, stored in the box marked “Log books” on the shelf in the warm room.

9.2 Technical assistance

If a fault occurs that prevents you from observing, call the appropriate duty technician for assistance. A few key members of Sutherland staff carry cell phones with a 3-digit speed dial number that can be dialled from any phone in the observatory by prefixing the number with two asterisks. You may need the following:

Mechanical technician	**104
Electronics technician	**103
IT technician	**113
In case of emergency:	
Site Manager	**112

Table 9.1: Useful cell phone speed-dial numbers.

9.3 Duty Astronomer

Each week, an observer on one of the SAAO telescopes is assigned to the role of Duty Astronomer. Where possible, this job is allocated to a local observer or a frequent visitor to SAAO. If you need help with something other than a technical fault, the Duty Astronomer should be your first port of call. Note that the TCS in the 1.0-m is almost identical to that at the 1.9-m, so the observer there may be able to help you with any operational difficulties. Remember that there are also manuals for the TCS, UCT CCD and SAAO CCD (STE3/STE4) available in the warm room and on the internet.

The Duty Astronomer is responsible for phoning all the domes at around midnight each night, to check on the observers' well-being. In the event that a midnight call goes unanswered, the Duty Astronomer must visit the dome in question to ensure that all is well.

The Duty Astronomer for a given week should be determined from the rota (it could be you!):

<http://www.sao.ac.za/observing/rota/>

9.4 In an Emergency

In case of accident or emergency, call the Site Manager on **112.
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Chapter 10

End of run

10.1 Feedback form

In order to help us maintain the small telescopes and instruments, please fill in the online feedback form at the end of your run. The form can be found here:

<http://www.sao.ac.za/observing/feedback-form/>

10.2 Data retrieval

At the end of your run, your data may be deleted from ltsp to ensure sufficient disk space for the next observer. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient copies of your data. There are two ways of obtaining your data to take home:

10.2.1 sftp

To copy your data to your laptop by sftp, use the command:

sftp ccd40@ltsp.suth

Enter the password (consult technical staff).

cd /data/40in/imag40 for STE3/4, or

cd /data/40in/uctccd for UCT CCD

mget *annn.fits** or ***annn**.fts**

where *nnn* is the run number; .fits for STE3 and STE4 images; .fts for the UCT CCD.

10.2.2 Request a DVD

You may request that your data (on `ltsp.suth:/data/40in`) be written to DVD for you. If there is an IT technician on duty in Sutherland, you may contact them on **113, else you may email helpdesk@sao.ac.za. Use a suitable subject heading and ensure that you include the following information:

- telescope & instrument
- file numbers (i.e. `annn*.fits` or `annn*.fts`)
- that the DVD should be written on the Wednesday morning at the end of your run (so as to include all your data)
- when you will leave Sutherland/Cape Town

Ensure that you make arrangements to collect the DVD.

10.3 Publishing SAAO data

Authors using observations made at SAAO should include the following note in the Acknowledgements section of each paper: **“This paper uses observations made at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO)”**. This information should be passed on to anyone to whom observations made at SAAO may be supplied.

Authors are requested to notify the librarian at SAAO Cape Town (shireen@sao.ac.za) of any paper they publish using data obtained at SAAO.

Chapter 11

Troubleshooting

1. No control possible from the Observing Floor Control Panel.

- Check that telescope is switched on (blue console).
- Press the “Request Local Control” button on the control panel and retry. The control indicator will illuminate to indicate that the control panel is ready for use. The light will go out 60 seconds after the last button is pressed, but the user still has control via the panel.
- Rotate the dome and retry. If functionality of the control panel failed shortly after a dome rotation, the slip-rings supplying power to the dome may have made a bad contact; further rotating the dome should reestablish the contact.
- Check the Emergency Stop button next to the telescope control panel. Release the Emergency Stop if it is depressed. An indicator on the TCS warns if the Emergency Stop has been pressed.
- Check the circuit breakers in the warmroom control crate. This crate is located behind the access door to the warmroom as you reach the top of the stairs.
- If all of the above fail, it might be possible to operate the dome or wind-blind using the appropriate button on the yellow paddle on the wall at the top of the stairs. If this fails, call a technician.