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A WEBSITE OF DEEP-SKY OBJECTS

The subject of my website, www.klima-luft.de/steinicke/index_e.htm, is deep-sky objects, i.e. galaxies, galactic nebulae and star clusters. The main topics are: historical information and catalogues, modern data and visual observing. About 15,000 objects are listed.

The first topic starts with the discovery. For an individual deep-sky object this covers: discoverer, date, instrument, observing method and location. Moreover, the publication of the discovery, later observations, descriptions, drawings, cataloguing and the object's physical nature (or even existence) are treated. The basic sources are historical catalogues of nebulae and star clusters by Messier, William Herschel (three catalogues), John Herschel (Slough-, Cape- and General Catalogue), Auwers and Dreyer (New General Catalogue, Index Catalogue). These works were revised and enlarged to include the listed information. The presented datasets are the result of research that started in the 1980s. Of central importance are Dreyer's famous NGC and IC, listing 7840 and 5386 objects, respectively. Additionally, historical information about 172 contributing persons is presented, covering biographical data, observed objects, literature, portraits, and pictures of instruments and observatories. Upcoming important anniversaries involving observers, discoveries and events are listed day-by-day.

The second topic concerns modern data for all NGC/IC objects and many additional ones, presented in the author's "Revised New General and Index Catalogue". For each object, magnitudes, surface brightness, sizes, verified position for 2000.0 and type are given. Moreover, the dataset contains more than 42,000 cross-identifications from 82 modern catalogues of galaxies, nebulae and star clusters. The Revised NGC/IC is used by leading sky chart programs, freeware software, and telescope drives.

The third topic concerns visual observations by the author with telescopes of various apertures, e.g. to simulate the historical situation and to investigate controversial objects. Additionally, lists of special observing targets are presented (e.g. peculiar galaxies, quasars or galaxy groups). A brief "astronomical biography" is included, showing the author's membership of astronomical organisations, observing sites and instruments. Finally there are compilations of all the author's talks since 2000 and publications since 1997 (about 150). These include books, articles, reports and reviews. Nearly all papers can be read online (html or pdf). Unfortunately, most of them are in German and presented on the German version of my website.

WOLFGANG STEINICKE