

PREFACE

IAU Colloquium 148 entitled "The Future Utilisation of Schmidt Telescopes" was held at the Institute of Technology in Bandung, Indonesia, from 7–11 March 1994. The conference was attended by nearly ninety participants from twenty-one countries. During the five days of the meeting, nearly a hundred talks and poster papers were given, covering a wide range of technical and scientific topics, related to Schmidt telescopes. This volume presents the papers given at the conference.

The idea for an international meeting on Schmidt telescopes grew from discussions held between Russell Cannon (Anglo-Australian Observatory) and Bambang Hidayat (Institute of Technology, Bandung). From these discussions, three broad aims were identified. The first aim was to review past and current uses of Schmidt telescopes to provide an overview of the very wide range of astronomy which has been done with Schmidts. The second aim was to look at the future uses of Schmidt telescopes in the light of present and future technology. Difficulties with the supply and cost of photographic materials on the one hand, and the recent advent of large format, very sensitive CCDs on the other, has already led to dramatic changes in the way that some Schmidts are being used. A major issue is to what extent CCD technology will replace existing photographic techniques. Another recent technical innovation is the use of optical fibres for multi-object spectroscopic surveys. The use of photographic data too has been transformed with high speed measuring machines which generate vast quantities of digitised data. The third, and parallel aim of the conference was to develop international cooperation in the use of Schmidt telescopes and in the distribution of digitised data, particularly within the Asian-Pacific region. The location of the conference in Bandung, Indonesia, provided an ideal setting for this purpose.

The papers in this volume have been grouped into fourteen sections which cover topics including the use of CCDs and optical fibre feeds in Schmidt telescopes; the major Schmidt surveys; the digitisation and archiving of survey data; the use of multi-epoch plates for proper motion and parallax studies and for co-addition of plates; and a wide range of astronomical topics from stellar astronomy and the structure of our Galaxy, to external galaxies and large-scale cosmological studies.

Many individuals and organisations helped make the meeting a great success. We thank the members of the Scientific Organising committee for arranging an excellent scientific programme and the Local Organising committee for their smooth and efficient running of the meeting. Several outings and cultural events were arranged, including a reception held by the Vice-Governor of West Java, and a visit to the Bosscha family tea plantation and these were much enjoyed. The participants also enjoyed several musical and dance performances from different regions of Indonesia. The meeting was made possible by generous financial assistance from a number of organizations and individuals and these are acknowledged in the welcome speech by Bambang Hidayat. Finally we thank all the participants for attending the meeting, for the many stimulating talks and discussions, and for their contributions to this volume.

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