

those in the proceedings refer to refereed-journal papers, so assuming that that is also true of those not included as well, the information is out there, but not all in one place.) Unfortunately, instead of ‘edited’, ‘collated’ might be more appropriate, as apparently little actual editing was involved. Apart from my usual peevish about language and style, the number here probably setting a new record, there are several other annoying aspects: the list of participants is not in alphabetical (nor, as far as I can tell, any other) order; the author index (there is no subject index) lists some people twice, according to the number of initials; the reference format is not uniform; while it is sometimes good to list the titles of papers and even all authors, that is not the case for such a proceedings volume — some of the reference lists which do (the formats differ) are thus longer than the corresponding contributions; many figure captions refer to colour, though in the book itself all of the many figures are in black and white — unless one is already familiar with the topic, it is hard to guess which colour should correspond to which of the fifty shades of grey\*; hyperlinks (not showing the actual URL nor any corresponding information) are useless on paper.

One can question the value of publishing books of conference proceedings in this day and age, especially if most contributions are essentially condensed versions of refereed-journal papers which will have already appeared before publication of the book (see also my correspondence piece in this issue<sup>7</sup>). (Although, with many journals now on-line-only, books of proceedings might be an alternative to printing a large number of pages for those who prefer reading on paper.) However, for contemporary readers, they can offer up-to-date reviews of rapidly developing fields (many traditional review articles are somewhat out of date by the time they appear), and questions and answers could prove useful for future historians of science, but neither of those is realized here.

Despite my qualms, for me it was an interesting read, and the relatively short length might even be an advantage if the goal is to get a taste of current research in the field. — PHILLIP HELBIG.

### References

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**Astrophysics is Easy, 3rd Edition**, by Mike Inglis (Springer), 2024. Pp. 434, 23.5 × 15.5 cm. Price £24.99 (paperback; ISBN 978 3 031 16804 8).

The third edition of Mike Inglis’s book has been expanded to add extra chapters on exoplanets, relativity, and more on cosmology. Various thought questions have been added in the text along with some more mathematical ones at the end of chapters. In a book of this type obviously only a limited coverage can be given to any one topic but I was disappointed to see that in the discussion of planetary nebulae no mention was given to the fact that some of

\*Each contribution is available *via* its own DOI. According to the notes on the first page of each contribution, some, but not all, are open-access (confirmed by spot checks). Colour figures are thus available on-line.

the shapes are caused by binary nuclei.

The general idea behind the book is to give the reader some idea of the background physics behind the kind of objects they may be observing. As such most chapters include examples of the kind of objects being discussed so that you have something to follow up on. Unfortunately, the coverage of topics has to be shallow as in most cases a whole book would be needed to cover them in much detail. I thought the chapter on amateur spectroscopy was good as this is an area more amateurs are getting into. I am not sure about the chapters on black holes and relativity. These are undoubtedly things that amateurs like to talk about but the detail here is shallow and the subject is complex.

I found a number of minor issues in the book. In the galaxy-cluster section, it is Stephan's Quintet not Stephen's Quintet. Wolf-Rayet stars are very massive stars that will explode as supernovae not planetary nebulae. In the galaxy section lenticular galaxies are mentioned but no indication is given as to how they form. My biggest quibble, however, was Inglis's use of Caldwell numbers in the sections where he gives objects to look at. There is enough of a problem in the literature with the tower of Babel of names for objects without adding another name to objects that already have perfectly good ones. No serious amateur would ever use a Caldwell number as it only adds to the confusion. Inglis also uncritically refers to some of the more extreme observations that are claimed in the (in particular US) amateur community. I would also question the reference section as it is mostly Springer books of variable quality and accuracy.

Given the above I would suggest that if someone wanted an overview of many of the topics the book would work but they would need to find another book to cover the interesting parts of many of the topics. I must admit I liked the earlier editions of the book, this one not so much. — OWEN BRAZELL.

**Essays on Astronomical History and Heritage: A Tribute to Wayne Orchiston on his 80th Birthday**, edited by Steven Gullberg & Peter Robertson (Springer), 2023. Pp. 700, 24 × 16 cm. Price £109.99 (hardbound; ISBN 978 3 031 29492 1).

Wayne Orchiston, who turned 80 in 2023, has a great many friends, and 37 of us have contributed to the chapters of this volume. Though planned several years ago, it was not quite ready for presentation on his birthday celebration, and many months after official publication, many of us are just receiving the complimentary copies that are our second most important reward for contributing. The most important, of course, was the opportunity to say good things about Wayne! Orchiston was the founder of the *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage* and still keeps a few fingers in that pie. He also founded two IAU Working Groups, and has been a leading presence in history of astronomy for many decades. Editor Robertson, after a career in science publishing, went "back to school" and earned a PhD in history of science with Orchiston. Gullberg (also an Orchiston student) recently (2024 May) announced triumphantly that the IAU Working Group he had been chairing was being abolished. Why? Because it is going to become a Commission (C5) on Cultural Astronomy.

What is on these 700 pages? It has been claimed that a complete model of the Universe would have to be as large (and perhaps as old) as the Universe itself. That is, a proper description of this tribute volume would also be 700 pages long, exceeding the capacity of the brown paper envelopes in which *The Observatory* travels to us. But my late Aunt Esther from Missouri said every meal needed seven sweets and seven sour. So here are seven frivolous items