

Container and Equipment Report: ERA AGM May 2025

Container:

The space within the container cage was expanded to accommodate equipment donations by moving the bulkhead outwards by one frame (approx. 0.7 m). The bookcase was moved to accommodate this.

There were a few condensation issues with the TS20 mirror during the year. The mirror has a tendency to act as a cold spot during temperature changes and the lower 2 ventilation ports can bring in warmer wetter air, particularly during sunnier early mornings. A solution has been trialled successfully, installing one way “flap valves” on these ports to minimise the ingress of air from just above ground level. Instances of the TS20 mirror fogging up during storage are much reduced.

Equipment:

Several notable donations during the last 12 months.

- James Dodd donated an 8” Meade SCT telescope¹ without accessories or a mount.
- Michael Martin-Smith’s family donated his telescope collection to the club after he passed away in late 2024. This included two fork mounted 8” Meade SCTs (Hubble and Kepler), two small scopes and other equipment. There are drive/mount issues with both Meade’s, but optically they are both good.

Current Club equipment available to members includes:

- TS20 Dobsonian mounted Newtonian
- 10” Dobsonian mounted Newtonian – big purple
- 6” Dobsonian mounted Newtonian – small white
- 8” Celestron SCT – the orange one
- 8” Meade SCT on an Alt/Az goto mount – Hubble
- 8” Meade on a motorised equatorial head – Kepler
- Coronado PST Personal Solar Telescope
- Prinz refractor with solar projection screen.
- The container is also home to some other minor or personal scopes.

¹ It was agreed that Lee could swap his Celestron C8 SCT for this scope, along with a long term loan of a mount to the club.

Plans and proposals for summer 2025:

Make progress with the TS20 mounting improvements discussed last year (azimuth bearings and improved setting circle).

- A small working party needed for this.
- Volunteers?

Improved container ventilation valves.

- The current plastic “flap” valves have demonstrated an improvement, but they are not robust.

Additional shelving in the container.

- Donations of suitable shelving material would be welcome.

Lee Cooper, May 5th 2025.