

Name: Mick Crook

Observer Code: CMY

Site: Back garden patio area facing NNE

Location: On the northern edge of Preston... a large town/small city in Lancashire, North West England.

Latitude and Longitude: 53.792400, -2.73378

Limiting Visual Magnitude: At zenith I average 4.5, but I can reach 5 on exceptionally transparent nights (which are rare!).

Horizon: To the south, my house blocks the horizon up to 45 degrees from the horizon. East and west are relatively clear. The North has trees blocking up to about 30 degrees from the horizon.

Weather/Seasonal Factors: Preston is known for its damp climate and spells of clear nights lasting more than three consecutive days are rare. However the climate is relatively mild and winter temperatures don't fall below zero for very long.

Other factors: Light pollution is increasingly significant towards the southern horizon – I tend to avoid observing in that direction.

Frequency of observations: Around twice a week on average. I class myself as a “slow and steady” variable star observer as I like to be confident my observations are as accurate as I can make them, so at the moment, I only observe about six stars during an observing session. I hope to expand and speed up my observing programme this year after completing this course!

Experience: Although I can confidently identify a variable, make an estimate and submit an observation, embarrassingly I have less than 200 observations in the AAVSO database. I think this is largely due to a lack of focus and direction – something I hope the course will help me to resolve!

Equipment:

- Celestron C9.25 SCT on an EQ6 Pro Equatorial.
- 6” F6 Newtonian Reflector with 50x12 RACI finder on a Skytee 2 alt-az mount.
- Orion UK OMC 140 Maksutov
- William Optics 66SD refractor.
- 7x50, 10x50 binoculars.
- 10” Celestron F4.7 Newtonian OTA which will soon sit on a home-made Dobsonian mount.

I envisage the 6” Newtonian and its finder being my main VS scope, but this could change to the 10” if I start observing fainter stars.

Primary Programme: Mostly semi-regular binocular LPVs