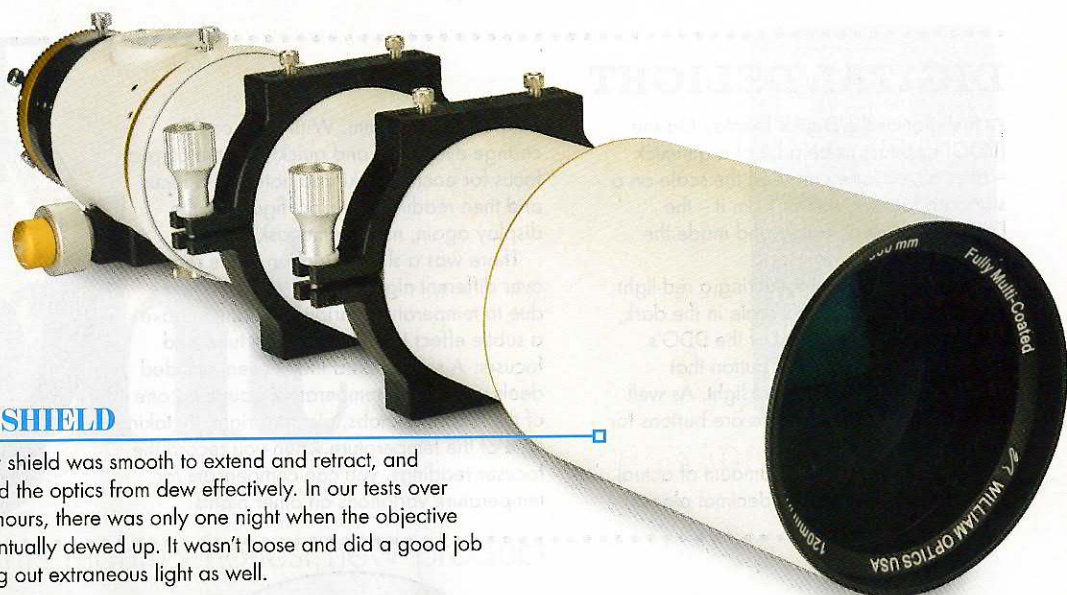
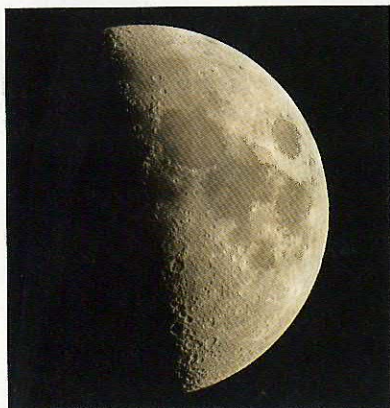


FIRST light

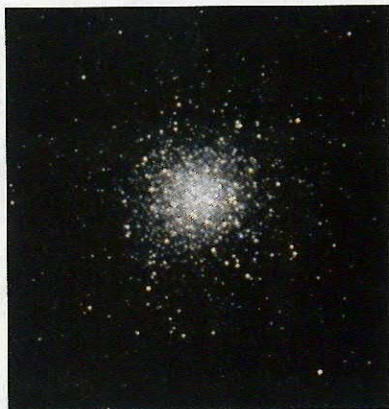


DEW SHIELD

The dew shield was smooth to extend and retract, and protected the optics from dew effectively. In our tests over several hours, there was only one night when the objective lens eventually dewed up. It wasn't loose and did a good job at cutting out extraneous light as well.



▲ Quality optics enabled us to capture a colour-fringe-free view of the Moon



▲ The Megrez 120 resolved the Great Globular, M13, into a myriad of stars

SKY SAYS...

Now add these:

1. William Optics 2-inch Carbon Fibre Diagonal
2. Dovetail Base for William Optics
3. William Optics Binoviewer

► p91 for more on this. We tested the telescope optically with our dielectric diagonal and a selection of our own eyepieces including a 26mm, 20mm and 9mm. When conditions enabled us to increase the magnification, we also examined the view through the eyepiece with a 2x Barlow and 5x Powermate.

We were very impressed with the quality of the field of view, using our own tried and trusted 26mm Plössl eyepiece to view the stars Arcturus and Vega. They were both pin-sharp across 95 per cent of the field with no sign of any chromatic (colour) aberration.

We then pointed the Megrez 120 to a selection of double stars. Although Iota Cassiopeiae was low in the sky, we split it into its three components with our 26mm eyepiece and 2x Barlow. We increased the magnification by using the 26mm eyepiece with the 5x Powermate and in moments of steady seeing were just able to split Porrima in Virgo, a close double separated by around 1.5 arcseconds. Saturn was nearby so we explored the planet at a range of magnifications and enjoyed good detail, with the North Belt clearly visible and a hint of the white storm that was raging. Complementing the scene were six moons and the Cassini Division marking the rings.

Turning our sights on deep space, open clusters such as M39 in Cygnus and M11 in Scutum were sparkling with an abundance of stars, and although M39 is quite large, it filled the frame using our 26mm eyepiece. The Great Globular, M13, was resolved into a myriad of stars when the magnification was pushed and, despite the light spring nights, we enjoyed taking a tour of the galaxies M81 and M82, which fit the 26mm eyepiece's field of view. M82 appeared mottled along its disc, while M81 was surrounded by an oval haze, hinting at its spiral form.

Passing the Whirlpool test

Then we tested its astro-imaging ability, attaching a Canon 50D to the Megrez on an autoguided NEQ6 mount. We examined our images for colour fringing on the brightest stars and sharpness at the edges of the frame, coming away impressed. We also took 180s exposures of the Whirlpool Galaxy at ISO 800 and compared the shapes of the stars at the centre and edges of the unprocessed images. We were impressed that there was hardly any noticeable difference between the edge and centre of the frame, with only the slightest distortion of the stars at the extreme edge of the image. You could certainly get perfectly pleasing results without the need of a field flattener. Colour correction was also extremely good in the images with hardly any noticeable colour fringing on the stars, proving the excellent quality of the FPL-53 ED glass.

Overall, the Megrez 120 performed well for visual and photographic use and is highly recommended. **S**

VERDICT

BUILD AND DESIGN	93%
EASE OF USE	94%
FEATURES	96%
FIELD OF VIEW	95%
OPTICS	96%
OVERALL	95%