



## The Small Print

Spooky, eh. We hope the other side of this form does not put you off hiring a telescope. If you will give us a few moments we will explain why we have introduced it.

### **You only need one person to spoil it.**

We had a member who borrowed a 10" telescope for two months and then refused to pay for it, despite several letters and our treasurer going round his house. We simply didn't have a leg to stand on.

### **Why do I have to pay for loss or damage.**

Insurance companies like things to be in one place, owned by one person and they tend to come out in a sweat when we mention that we send our telescopes to ten or more people and they often travel several hundred miles a year. So the premium on a telescope which is lent out to all and sundry and goes gadding about Cambridgeshire and the surrounding counties would be astronomical! (Sorry for the pun, but it was intentional!) However, some insurance policies do cover things like telescopes on home contents policies, so it may be worth a call if you are at all worried. But please do not be put off from a) borrowing a scope and b) then using it as much as possible. We want your viewing to be enjoyable.

### **Need I be worried?**

No (and we don't worry either) because we started hiring out telescopes in August 1991 and now have six loan instruments and apart from the odd scuff of paint, no harm has come to any of them, and they get periodic overhauls and repaints. So provided common sense precautions are carried out, as outlined in the accompanying booklet, there should be no problems.

### **But I'm not an expert.**

Most members who borrow a loan telescope are not experts. Of the fifty people who have borrowed our first loan instrument (as of summer 1996) over half have never used a telescope before. It has been to several schools, travelled literally thousands of miles. It has even been camping with a group of scout. So our telescope has had hundreds of non-expert using it. In any case, you only become an expert with practice.

Probably the most "unexpert" people who get conned into having a loan telescope are mums and dads of our "Young Astronomers" who have often no idea what they are letting themselves into until it arrives on their doorstep!! Hopefully our booklet will help them, once they get over their initial shock.

### **And finally...*MONEY!***

The loan fee goes in to our Telescope Fund which pays for maintenance and improvements. The mirrors have to be re-aluminised periodically. In 1995 three of the telescopes each had new sets of eyepieces. The replacement cost of an eyepiece is about £50 (Ouch!) So we hope you will agree that our loan fee are not extortionate for our telescopes. And for many it is the first step to owning or building their own telescope. We have helped members build their own instruments. It's easier than you think.

Good luck and clear skies.

*P.S.* Get out there and pull in all those photons which have been coming your way for millions of years, enjoy the view and have fun.