

A FOLLOW-UP ON MY WILD M40

[Last month](#) I wrote an article about the history behind my two Wild microscopes. In it, I mentioned my initial deception to see the focus shifting by itself when I first attempted to take pictures with it. My solution was to use a stop screw set at the base of the column, in the back of the microscope.

Right after publication, a reader (Nicolas Berrong at Rocky Mountain Microscope Corporation) sent me an e-mail with a PDF of the M40 user manual. Not only was it much clearer than the copy I had, it was a *different* manual altogether.

While many people have the bad habit of throwing away the user manuals of things they have bought, I have a drawer where everything is kept for future reference. You know, just in case... So I went through that new manual page by page, with the microscope in front of me.

Instruction on setting up the field diaphragm were not useful; you may recall that my microscope came without its light and I had to improvise one with a DEL lamp. And then one line about the focusing knobs caught my attention: “The movement can be made stiffer or easier by turning the (...) knobs in opposite directions (clockwise to stiffen, anticlockwise to slacken).” Could it be that simple? I grabbed both left and right coarse controls and turned them in opposite directions. And it worked... The coarse focus is now stiff enough that the weight of the column no longer drags it down by itself; the fine focus can now be used to do what it is supposed to do. I no longer need to rely on that stop screw when taking pictures.

A second reader (Peter Webber) sent me not one, not two, but *three* manuals and brochures for the M40, making one wonder just how many manuals exist for that one microscope alone! In two of them could be seen the same light that was used in the movie. I know that my supplier didn't have it, so it must have been found elsewhere.

I cannot thank these two readers enough, as I consider manuals to be an essential part of any technological gadget that I own. It goes to show that a user manual is not something to glance at absentmindedly; it can contain some key pieces of information that could make all the difference in the world.

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