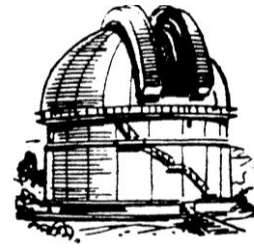

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

April 2003

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Thursday 3rd April

Doors open 7.30pm

This evening we welcome

**Dr. Steve Maddox, School of Physics and
Astronomy, University of Nottingham**

who will be speaking on the subject of

**The Large-Scale Structure and Evolution
of the Universe**

STARRY NIGHTS!

How often do we complain of the cloudy British climate? Ruining our view of the heavens! My personal memories of a typical winter seem to be of one clear night per week on average.

Not 2003! March has given us clear views of the stars night after night. And this is the third astronomer-friendly month in succession! The following sunshine records for England and Wales are gleaned from the BBC weather website:

January 2003: 142% of the 1961-90 average, which is in the exceptionally above average category. 2nd sunniest in series.

February 2003: 152% of the 1961-90 average, which is in the exceptionally above average category. 2nd sunniest in series.

Editor

NEWS NOTES

A great evening out

Sixteen people attended the NAS Annual Dinner on 12th March; a most enjoyable evening with excellent food and company. I had a great time, as did my wife and daughter, and I would like to thank Peter Davison for making the booking arrangements.

Observatory tidy-up day

Several members of the observatory group gathered at the site on Sunday 23rd March with the aim of giving the dome and annexe a good “spring clean”. I am delighted to say that the day was a success. Within a couple of hours, most movable items had been taken out of the dome and the floor swept. Later in the day the scaffolding inside the dome was taken down, after the shutter had been made fully secure. The rotation of the dome was then tested. It could be pushed by hand (although it needed two people to do it) and moved around smoothly, despite one of the wheels having lost its nylon “tyre”.

This was the first step towards preparing the observatory for installation of the large telescope later this year. Many thanks are due to Dorothy and Joe Sowerby and to Greg Eisenhower for all their hard work. For once, the weather was on our side, with hours of glorious spring sunshine.

Observatory group

Don't forget that any NAS member can join the observatory group. Take look at: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/nottinghamastronomicalsociety/> which is where we post notices of meetings at the observatory site and other items of interest. The website also has some recent images of the observatory. Details are in “E Services” in the Journal.

1st May meeting

The 1st May meeting at Djanogly CTC will be a special “members evening” which will give all members an opportunity to hear the latest about the observatory and large telescope project. Remember that ideas and offers of help are most welcome! I know that several members are interested in re-starting observing sessions at the observatory site and I would like to encourage this. The site is there for *all* NAS members to use and access to it can and should be improved.

We will also have a short talk from our previous President and current Curator of Instruments, David Lukehurst. And I may have some news of a British Astronomical Society meeting that we expect to be held in Nottingham in 2004, which the NAS is helping to organise.

So please do come along on 1st May and make it a lively discussion!

Paul Stocks
NAS President

Sky Notes

2003 April

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



THE MOON

New Moon	3d 02h 35m
First Quarter	11d 07h 15m
Full Moon	18d 10h 35m
Last Quarter	25d 01h 52m

THE PLANETS

<i>Positions on April 11th</i>			
	R.A.	Dec.	Mag.
Mercury	2h 23m	+16° 27'	-0.6
Venus	23h 15m	-6° 14'	-3.8
Mars	19h 41m	-22° 18'	+0.3
Jupiter	08h 43m	+19° 04'	-2.2
Saturn	05h 35m	+22° 21'	+0.1
Uranus	22h 15m	-11° 40'	5.9
Neptune	21h 01m	-16° 55'	7.9

Mercury. This month provides our best opportunity of the year to observe Mercury in the evening sky. In mid-month the planet will be 20° from the Sun, and visible low in the west after sunset.

Venus will have moved to within 30° of the Sun by the end of the month, so will become increasingly difficult to observe in the morning sky.

Mars is slowly brightening, and on April 1st will be one magnitude brighter than it was at New Year. It is also moving gradually further north, and by the end of the month its angular diameter will have almost doubled since the beginning of the year.

Jupiter continues to be a fine object for observation, continuing a long season dominating the night sky.

Saturn is now well past its best for this season, but is still worth a look in the evening sky.

Uranus and **Neptune** are low in the pre-dawn sky, but will be extremely difficult to observe.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE ANNULAR ECLIPSE OF 2003 MAY 31

(Source: F.A.S. Digest No.154)

Date: Tue, 25 Mar 2003 14:36:06 GMT
From: Peter James Kelly <theглеbe@zetnet.co.uk>
Subject: eclipse in Shetland

Dear Clive,

I am writing to let you know how the arrangements for the eclipse are proceeding. We will be having a soup and sandwiches night immediately before the eclipse. This will be in Uyeasound Hall on Unst, Britain's most northerly island. We will then drive to a point on the north-east coast to watch the eclipse in the early hours and afterwards return to a bacon roll type breakfast.

People staying on Mainland might be able to arrange a ride in the coach arranged by Sarah McBurnie of "seeshetland.co.uk". She will arrange to pick up and drop people.

If they have their own transport then it may be easier to drive themselves. They will have to book their place in the hall because a limited number will be housed (fir regulations).

We may have a small event on the Saturday evening. This might be a talk or two and local music. If it is arranged it will be timed so that those who saw the eclipse have time for a siesta during the day.

We are trying to put together a souvenir leaflet which will also tell people, visitors and locals, how to view the sun.

If any members of the FAS who give talks to societies are coming to Shetland we would appreciate a talk on Yell. I may be able to offer accommodation but we cannot run to paying fares. (That is why we do not normally have visiting speakers. I can be contacted by email here or on 01957 733 242.

I will keep you informed of developments.

All the best from Shetland.

Peter.

DIARY DATES, by Carl Brennan

MEETINGS OF THE NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

April 3rd Djanogly CTC, Doors open 7.30pm
**LARGE-SCALE STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION OF
THE UNIVERSE**

Dr. Steve Maddox, School of Physics and
Astronomy, University of Nottingham

May 1st Djanogly CTC, Doors open 7.30pm
MEMBERS NIGHT WITH SHORT TALK BY
Dave Lukehurst, Curator of Instruments and
Everest climber

May 12th Committee Meeting 7.30pm
22 Killerton Park Drive, West Bridgford
Committee and invited guests only please.

OTHER EVENTS

7th to 11th April [UK National Astronomy Meeting
& Solar Physics Meeting](#), Dublin, Ireland – even if
you cannot attend this event you would be advised
to keep up with the web site – visit
<http://star.arm.ac.uk/nam2003>

9th April (Wednesday) Sir Patrick Moore's 80th
Birthday Tour – Mars: The Next Front Ear
7.30pm Derby Assembly Rooms (£11, £9, (Cons
£7)). Patrick talks about his planned holiday to
Mars using his bus pass. 01332255800
www.assemblyrooms-derby.co.uk. If you want to
be entertained then this is a "must" night out.

25th to 27th April BAA Winchester Weekend.
<http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~baa/baa200203.htm>

9th/10th/11th May [Autographica 2003](#) 'The Worlds
Largest Autograph Show'. At the Northampton
Moat House Hotel. Tickets can now be booked on
our **new telephone number 01227 762392** during
normal office hours only, or visit
<http://www.autographica.co.uk/> for full details.

27th April (Sunday) Ilkeston Astronomical
Society are organising a trip and tour of Jodrell
Bank on Sunday April 27. They need around
twenty people and the trip will be a car share
arrangement. No idea on cost. This could be your
last chance to see the Jodrell Bank Visitor Centre
as it now stands, as it will be demolished later this
year and re-built. The new centre will open in
about two years time. If you want to go along you
should contact their secretary Mark Thomas at
idaswmt1@aol.com

10th May 2003 Eclipse 10.30am to 4.15pm
National Maritime Museum. A simple day course
to look at this natural phenomenon and the science
we can learn. Interesting collection of speakers.
Cost £28.00 (£16 concessions). More information
on 02083126747/6648, E-mail
openmuseum@nmm.ac.uk, lstone@nmm.ac.uk or
visit www.nmm.ac.uk

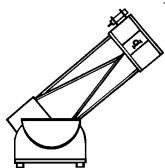
6th June 2003 Extraterrestrial Life 10.30am to
4.15pm National Maritime Museum. Cost £28.00
(£16 concessions). More information on
02083126747/6648, E-mail
openmuseum@nmm.ac.uk, lstone@nmm.ac.uk or
visit www.nmm.ac.uk

1st to 4th August Third Summer Star Festival
(That's a Friday to Monday) 3 nights observing at
Adderstone, Dalby Forest, North York Moors
National Park. The site is ideal for caravans and
tents. £15 for the weekend. Details from Mrs. S
Anderson, 25 Highfield, Scarborough, N. Yorks,
YO12 4AW, 01723 500389, E-mail
gwnan2@ukf.net, visit [http://www.scarborough-
as.org.uk](http://www.scarborough-as.org.uk)

Small Advertisements

David Lukehurst

Astronomical Telescope Maker



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For details & price list:

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gildor@ntlworld.com

For Sale

Maksutov 6-inch by Drew. 2x2-inch finderscopes, equatorial tripod mount with circles, eyepiece tray, carry box. Selection of eyepieces, Barlow lens, star diagonals.

Buyer collects. **£495** for prompt sale.

**Telephone Peter Davison
on 0115 923 0040**

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SKYVIEW OPTICS LTD

This is a brief introduction from *SkyView Optics Ltd*.

We are a small family business dedicated to the retail of **Meade** and **BC&F** products.
As a fully authorised retailer, all of our products carry a full UK warranty and guarantee.

We are an Internet & mail order business not burdened with high overheads which assist us in passing savings back to our customers.
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Best Regards.

The team at Skyview Optics Ltd.

info@skyviewoptics.co.uk

<http://www.skyviewoptics.co.uk>

The Nottingham Astronomical Society: E – SERVICES

The Journal

To register for your FREE Journal, just E-mail the secretary at carl.stella@virign.net - You don't have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service.

Observatory Group

A web group page and message service has been set up at <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/nottinghamastronomicalsociety/>

It will be used for circulating information about the observatory construction and projects, large telescope up-dates, and use of the site by members of the Observatory Group. Please visit the web site and E-mail on line if you wish to join (NAS Members only)

Minute Reports

If you wish to receive E-copies of the draft minutes of the committee let the secretary know at carl.stella@virgin.net . This service is open only to Society members.

Nottingham Astronomical Society

The Nottingham Astronomical Society, and/or the Editor accept no responsibility for any errors that may occur within this publication. Any views expressed in the NAS Journal are those of the individual authors and not necessarily endorsed by the Nottingham Astronomical Society, it's Committee or Members.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to join the Nottingham Astronomical Society, please complete and tear off this slip. Make your cheque/postal order payable to:

THE NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Then send the slip and payment to Carl Brennan, Hon. Secretary, **Nottingham Astronomical Society**, 40 Swindon Close, The Vale, Giltbrook, Nottingham NG16 2WD.

Alternatively you may hand the slip and payment to the Secretary or Treasurer at one of the Society's regular meetings.

Your name _____

Full address _____

_____ Postcode _____

I wish to join the Nottingham Astronomical Society and enclose the membership fee for

(please tick appropriate box)

- Full Adult £22
- Junior (17 years or under) £11
- Concession (*full time student, UB40, Senior Citizen*) £11

Nottingham Astronomical Society

Affiliated to the British Astronomical Association
Member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies
Member of the Society for Popular Astronomy
Supporters of the Campaign for Dark Skies
Registered Charity No: 1066645

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Alan Heath (Ex. Dir. BAA Saturn Section)

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CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS

David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

Greg Eisenhauer

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Richard Evans

Meetings

Formal monthly meetings, with speakers, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except August) at

Djanogly City Technology College

Sherwood Rise, Nottingham NG7

Doors open	7.30pm
Meetings Start	7.45pm
Meetings end	10.00pm

Non-members are very welcome at our meetings and there is no charge for the first meeting. We make a small charge of £2.50 adults, £1.25 juniors to non-members after their first attendance. Invited guests are admitted free of charge.

Annual Subscriptions, 2002-03

Full Adult:	£22
Junior (17 years or under)	£11
Concessions	£11

(Full time student, UB40, Senior Citizens)

Subscriptions become due on 1 October. Half-price subscription is charged if joining after 1st April. Please make cheques payable to:
Nottingham Astronomical Society.

If you would like further information about the Nottingham Astronomical Society, or would like to become a member, please

- contact the Honorary Secretary, Carl Brennan, at the address given above or
- speak to any NAS committee member at one of the regular monthly meetings.

A membership application form appears inside this issue of the Journal.
