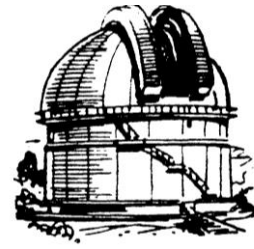

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

April 2007

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Thursday 5th April

at the

British Geological Survey
Nicker Hill, Keyworth

8 pm (doors open at 7.30pm)

Tonight we welcome

Madeline Cox, FRAS

who will be speaking on

Women in Astronomy

COMET McNAUGHT in HINDSIGHT

Comet 2006 P1 (McNaught) is now officially being called “a Great Comet” and “The Great Daylight Comet of 2007”, although annoyingly few of us (the Editor included) actually saw this spectacle. The prime time for observation from the UK was January 10th and 11th, when much of the country was blessed with clear skies. Spectacular images were obtained from southern Britain on those dates, but even better ones came from observers in the southern hemisphere (e.g. Chile and Australia) about ten days later. Some of these show the comet with an enormous striated dust tail. Various images and further information on the comet can be found on the following web sites:

www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~jds

www.pbase.com/terrylovejoy/2006p1

Sky Notes

2007 April

Compiled by Roy Gretton



PHASES OF THE MOON

Full Moon occurs on the afternoon of the 2nd
Last Quarter occurs in the early evening of the 10th
New Moon occurs in the late morning of the 17th
First Quarter occurs early in the morning of the 24th

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 17th, and furthest from Earth on the 3rd (and again on the 30th).

THE PLANETS

Mercury is a morning object this month, but very poorly placed for observation.

Venus is the glorious evening star, high in the west after sunset. Already bright, it continues to brighten throughout April, reaching magnitude -4 in mid-month.

Mars is an inconspicuous first magnitude 'spark' in the constellation of Pisces as the morning twilight approaches, and is hardly worth observing this month. However, in the early morning of April 14th the Moon will pass within half a degree of the Red Planet.

Jupiter, northeast of the red star Antares, rises at midnight in the middle of April, and continues to be visible until dawn. Early risers will easily spot this giant planet low in the south before sunrise, shining at magnitude -2. Its apparent equatorial diameter is now greater than 40 seconds of arc, but detailed views of the planet are likely to be rare due to its low elevation for observers in the UK.

Saturn continues to be well-placed for observation in the evening sky, a few degrees west of Regulus in the constellation of Leo. Through a telescope it should be possible to see the shadow cast by the planet on to the eastern side of the rings. On April 25th the Moon will be one degree north of Saturn.

Uranus in the constellation of Aquarius, and **Neptune** in the constellation of Capricornus, are very difficult to observe this month.

ASTEROID: Vesta

The brightest of the asteroids, Vesta, will be about 8 degrees north of Jupiter in early April. At magnitude -6.5 it is an easy binocular object, slowly moving westwards against the stars of Ophiuchus, but you will need a good star chart in order to identify the asteroid among the surrounding stars.

METEORS

There are two notable meteor showers in April: the Virginids and the Lyrids. The former reach maximum activity on the 10th, when a zenithal rate of 5 per hour is expected. The Lyrids, caused by a trail of debris from Comet Thatcher (Comet C/1861 G1) should be at their best on the evening of the 22nd, when conditions will be favourable (with regard to moonlight), and a zenithal hourly rate of 10 may be expected.

VARIABLE STAR: Algol

Two minima of this dark-eclipsing binary are visible this month: the first at 23.35 UT on the 9th (12.35 am BST on the 10th), and the second at 20.25 UT (9.25 pm BST) on the 12th.

DIARY DATES 2007

Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Our programme for the coming months is below. Don't forget to check our website:
<http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro>
for the latest information about the Society's meetings and observing sessions.

Thursday 5 April 2007

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Talk: 'Women in Astronomy'

Madeline Cox FRAS

Saturday 28 April 2007

NAS Annual Dinner

7.30pm, The Rose & Crown, Cotgrave

Thursday 3 May 2007

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Members' Evening: Developing the NAS

Come and give the committee your views on future plans for your society!

Thursday 7 June 2007

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Build you own Aurora Detector

NAS President Fred Hopper

Thursday 5 July 2007

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

The BGS 3D Immersion Suite

An opportunity to view images of the surface of Mars in 3D

August – summer break, no meeting

Thursday 6 September 2007

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Talk: 'How Galaxies are Formed'

Christopher Conselice
University of Nottingham

Thursday 4 October 2007

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Talk: 'Beneath the Shadow of the Moon'

Mike Frost

NAS Annual Dinner 2007

This year's annual dinner will be at 7.30pm on Saturday, 28th April
at
The Rose & Crown
Cotgrave.*

The annual dinner is a friendly, informal event. All NAS Members, their families and friends are welcome!

We'll have menu and price details available at the Keyworth meeting on 5th April.

If you plan to attend the dinner, please let Fred Hopper know

- how many will be in your party and
- their choices from the menu

either at the 5th April meeting, or by e-mail (before 20 April) to
nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

**There is an hourly evening bus service between Cotgrave and Nottingham (Broad Marsh).*

OTHER EVENTS

**National Space Centre
Exploration Drive
Leicester, LE4 5NS**

Yuri's Night

12 April 2007 – 7.30pm

Yuri Gagarin was the first human to go into space on April 12th, 1961. The US Space Shuttle first launched on April 12th, 1981. Yuri's Night is like the St Patrick's Day for space. It is one day when all the world can come together and celebrate the power and beauty of space and what it means for each of us.

The National Space Centre and Leicester Astronomical Society will be hosting an astronomy night, for people to come and look at the night sky, learn how to use telescopes and understand all about our little bit of space and beyond.

This event is suitable for adults and children. Cost is £3 per person including refreshments.

For more information or to book your place (booking is essential) please call 0116 258 2111

Small Advertisements

For Sale

Celestron Nexstar 5 telescope

(Schmidt-Cassegrain)

with 26 mm Plossl eyepiece, red-dot finder, standard and erect-image diagonals, aluminium tripod, padded carry-case, Nexstar user's guide.

Excellent condition. Very robust, fully computerised with easy set-up and GOTO operation with large database. Free delivery within 50 miles of Nottingham.

Only £600

**Please contact Sam Boote
s.boote@bcs.org
0115 937 4644**

**This advertising space is available
free of charge to society members**

The Nottingham Astronomical Society: E - SERVICES

'Beehive' Website

Whether or not you are a NAS member, you can now keep up to date with details of the Society's meetings and other events by visiting the NAS 'Beehive' website:

<http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro>

NAS Journal e-mailing list

To register for your monthly e-mailed copy of the NAS Journal, just e-mail

nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

You don't have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service.

NAS Observatory Group

A web group page and message service (for NAS members only) is available at

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/nottinghamastronomicalsociety/>

It is used for circulating information to members about work at the observatory and use of the large telescope. If you are a member of the Society, you can join this online group by visiting the website and clicking on "Join this Group".

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, its 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 Paul Stocks, Hon. Secretary, **Nottingham Astronomical Society**, 22 Killerton Park Drive, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7SB

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 £25
- Junior (17 years or under) £12.50
- Concession (*full time student, UB40, etc*) £12.50

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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email: duncan.collins@talk21.com

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Joe Sowerby

Dorothy Sowerby

Kevin Greally

Meetings

Our meetings, often with an illustrated talk by a guest speaker, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except in August & October) at:

The British Geological Survey

Nicker Hill

Keyworth

Nottingham NG12 5GG

Doors open 7.30pm

Meetings start 8.00pm

Meetings end 10.00pm

Meetings are open to the public and visitors are always welcome to attend.

Annual subscriptions 2006-07

Adult	£25
Junior (under 18 years)	£12.50
Concessions*	£12.50
(*Full-time student, jobseeker's allowance, basic state pension)	

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 more information about the **Nottingham Astronomical Society**, or would like to become a member, please contact the Secretary, Paul Stocks, 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.
