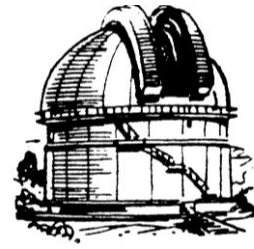


---

---

# Journal

of the



---

## Nottingham Astronomical Society

April 2008

---

---

**Inside this issue**

- Sky Notes for April
- Diary Dates
- Advertisements
- E-Services
- Membership application form
- Society Information

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

at the

**British Geological Survey**

Nicker Hill, Keyworth

**8 pm (doors open at 7.30pm)**

**Tonight we welcome**

**Dr Meghan Gray**

of the University of Nottingham

who will be speaking on

***Gravitational Lensing:  
Revealing the Dark Side  
of the Universe***

**The UK's Biggest Impact Crater?**

The latest issue of the journal *Geology* reports findings by a team from Oxford and Aberdeen universities, that a large object (cometary or asteroidal) hit north-west Scotland about 1.2 billion years ago, near to where the town of Ullapool stands today. The researchers believe that material ejected from the crater has been preserved in almost pristine condition as an exposed outcrop of rock along the northwest Scottish coast. The remains of the crater itself are believed to lie under the Minch, the corridor of sea that separates Lewis in the Outer Hebrides from the Scottish mainland. It is hoped that the crater will some day be located by geophysical surveying. Rock formations in the area were previously thought to have been of volcanic origin, but the lack of vents or volcanic sediments was puzzling. Now there is strong evidence confirming an extra-terrestrial origin for the deposits. Chemical analysis of the rocks found the characteristic signature of meteoritic material in the form the element iridium.

# Sky Notes

## 2008 April

Compiled by Roy Gretton



### PHASES OF THE MOON

New Moon occurs in the early afternoon of April 6<sup>th</sup>  
First Quarter occurs in the early evening of the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Full Moon occurs in the late morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Last Quarter occurs during the afternoon of the 28<sup>th</sup>

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and furthest from Earth on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### THE PLANETS

**Mercury** reaches superior conjunction on April 16<sup>th</sup>, and is unobservable this month.

**Venus** is too close to the Sun to be observed this month.

**Mars** continues its slow decline from prominence, having now faded to magnitude 1, and this month sets barely three hours after sunset.

**Jupiter**, in the constellation of Sagittarius, is low down in the southeast before sunrise, and not well-placed for observation.

**Saturn** is a lovely evening object close to Regulus in the constellation of Leo. You might like to compare the brightnesses of the two bodies: Saturn, clearly the brighter object, shines at magnitude +0.5, while Regulus shines at magnitude +1.35.

**Uranus** and **Neptune** are virtually unobservable this month.

### METEORS

Two showers are observable this month: the Virginids, which reach their maximum on April 10<sup>th</sup>, and the Lyrids which reach their maximum on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (unfortunately close to the Full Moon). Typical hourly rates at maximum are: 5 for the Virginids, and 10 for the Lyrids.

### VARIABLE STARS: Algol

There are three minima of this **eclipsing binary** visible from the UK this month. They occur on April 8<sup>th</sup> (3.35 am), the 11<sup>th</sup> (12.20 am), and the 13<sup>th</sup> (9.10 pm). The star dims from its normal brightness (magnitude 2.1) to magnitude 3.4 over a period of 4.8 hours.

## DIARY DATES 2008

### 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 3 April 2008

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

### Gravitational Lensing: Revealing the Dark Side of the Universe

Dr Meghan Gray

University of Nottingham, School of Physics & Astronomy

#### Thursday 1 May 2008

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

### 'Caroline Hershel'

Madeline Cox

Librarian, Society for the History of Astronomy

#### Thursday 5 June 2008

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

### 'The Discovery of New Worlds'

Andrew Lound

A dramatic talk, with music and props!

#### Thursday 3 July 2008

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

### 'Mars – The Next Generation'

Paul Money

#### August

*Summer break*

*No meeting at BGS this month*

# Small Advertisements

## Various items of equipment for sale

Celestron Nexstar 5 telescope and tripod etc. (including nylon cover and power supply)	£395
Pop-up observatory tent	£95
Carl Zeiss 10x50 binoculars with leather case	£25
Meade 9.7 Super Plossl eyepiece	£25
Celestron 3.6 Plossl eyepiece	£10
Celestron 90-degree erecting diagonal	£10
sodium light pollution filter	£10

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

This advertising space is available  
free of charge to society members

### For Sale

10 inch reflector telescope, focal length 63 inches  
with RA Drive  
two eyepieces  
and storage shed

Any reasonable offer accepted

Phone **Mr Chambers**  
0115 914 1454

## 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](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

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

#### 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, 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:

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

Please tick and enter your e-mail address if you wish to receive:

- the monthly **NAS Journal** (in 'Word' format) by e-mail
- e-mail notifications of dates & times of observing sessions using the large telescope at our observatory.

Your e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

# 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**

---

**PRESIDENT:**

**Fred Hopper**

*email:* [fwmh@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:fwmh@nerc.ac.uk)

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

**Dr Roy Gretton**

*e-mail:* [roygretton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roygretton@hotmail.co.uk)

**SECRETARY:**

**Paul Stocks**

Tel: 0115 914 8185

*e-mail:* [nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

**TREASURER:**

**Sam Boote**

*e-mail:* [s.boote@bcs.org](mailto:s.boote@bcs.org)

**JOURNAL EDITOR:**

**Dr Roy Gretton**

*e-mail:* [roygretton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roygretton@hotmail.co.uk)

**DIRECTOR OF OBSERVING and  
CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS**

**John Hurst**

*email:* [jmhurst@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jmhurst@hotmail.co.uk)

**Observatory line: 07726 940700 (line open during observing sessions)**

**ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

**Joe Sowerby**

**Dorothy Sowerby**

**Kevin Greally**

**Robert Bush**

---

## 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 2007-08

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.

---