
Journal

of the
Nottingham Astronomical Society
April 2026



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Thursday, April 2nd
Nottingham Emmanuel School
Gresham Park Road,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 7YF

7:45pm (doors open at 7:15pm)

This evening we welcome

Benjamin Muntz
of the University of Nottingham

who will be speaking on

**The Hitch-Hikers Guide to
Swampland – finding a theory
of everything**

Chairman's Message, April 2026

Dear Members,

The weather is getting better and we're now past equinox and officially into spring. The observatory ground is drying out and we're hoping to have some observing there now it is no longer a quagmire.

Meanwhile we have had some interesting talks covering weather on exoplanets, and a fine meeting where Leigh covered auroras and his trip to Iceland. Coming up we have a talk on theories of everything and what the future looks like for theoretical physics and cosmology. It's also been pointed out by our treasurer that the society will be 80 years old in May - so we hope to be able to commemorate this event.

Best wishes,

Julian
NAS Chair

Sky Notes

April 2026



Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times given below are in British Summer Time

PHASES OF THE MOON

Phase	Date
Full Moon	April 2 nd
Last Quarter	April 10 th
New Moon	April 17 th
First Quarter	April 24 th

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 19th, and furthest on the 7th.

THE PLANETS

Mercury will be a morning object throughout April, reaching greatest western elongation on the 3rd. After this it will head toward superior conjunction which will occur on May 14th.

Venus is becoming more prominent in the evening sky, and at the close of April will be above the horizon until 11 pm, shining at magnitude -3.9 among the stars of Taurus.

Mars, angular diameter 4.1 arcseconds, is still swamped by the pre-dawn glow, and even at the end of April won't be rising until 5 am.

At the end of this month **Jupiter**, still in Gemini, will be above the horizon until about 2 am. By then its equatorial diameter will have diminished to less than 36 arcseconds, while its brightness will have decreased to magnitude -2.0. But it will still be a very rewarding object to observe with modest-sized telescopes.

Phenomena of Jupiter's satellites

The **reappearance** of Jovian satellites **from eclipse** is the easiest type of phenomenon to observe with a small telescope (say, 50mm aperture). As we are now viewing the planet after opposition, satellites will be reappearing from eclipse on the east side of Jupiter.

Next in ease of observation (with instruments of 100mm aperture and above) are **shadow transits**. In this case, look for a dark spot crossing Jupiter's disk.

Lists of eclipse reappearances and shadow transits visible in the *evenings* this month are given below.

In the case of reappearances, start looking several minutes ahead of the stated time, because this refers to the moment when Jupiter's shadow bisects the satellite.

April	Reappearance from eclipse of
1	Europa 20:42
6	Ganymede 20:19
8	Europa 23:20
10	Io 21:50
17	Io 23:45

April	Shadow transit of
2	Io ends at 22:35
9	Io begins at 22:14
17	Europa ends at 20:49
18	Io ends at 20:55
24	Europa ends at 23:24
25	Io ends at 22:51

Io just beginning a transit
of Jupiter at 7:50 pm
on March 17th
(Editor's image)

Io's shadow began to transit
1 hour 10 minutes later, but
by then Jupiter was behind a tree (!)



Saturn passed through conjunction with the Sun in late March, and remains unobservable this month.

Uranus is a magnitude 5.7 evening object in the constellation of Taurus, setting at about 10pm by the end of April.

Neptune is unobservable this month.

METEORS

April's main shower, the **Lyrids**, typically produce about 15 events per hour at maximum under ideal conditions. This year the peak is expected in the late evening of April 22nd, coinciding with a 5-day-old Moon, so conditions will be reasonably favourable for observation.

DIARY DATES 2026

Monthly Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

1. Meetings at
Nottingham Emmanuel School
Gresham Park Road,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 7YF

Held on the **FIRST Thursday** of each month (**unless otherwise stated**)
except **August**

Doors open at 7:15pm for 7:45pm start.

*These events are normally centred around a talk by a visiting speaker,
except Quiz Nights, etc, when NAS members provide the activities.
Normally we have a **Helpdesk** open at each meeting.*

Date	Topic	Speaker
2 nd April	The hitch-hikers guide to swampland – finding a theory of everything	Benjamin Muntz University of Nottingham
7 th May	Time capsules from our Solar System – a story preserved in meteorites	Cesca Willcocks University of Leicester
5 th June	Atmospheres of the Solar System	Paul Money
2 nd July	<i>To be announced</i>	

2. Social and Practical Astronomy Meetings at the Burnside Memorial Hall, Plumtree

Church Hill, Plumtree, Nottingham, NG12 5ND
Held on the **THIRD Thursday** of each month from **7:30pm**

These meetings are of a more informal nature, providing opportunity for members and guests to share their hobby over a cup of tea or coffee, as well as listening to a short talk or discussion

The next meeting will be on **April 16th**

Social and Practical Astronomy, Plumtree, March 2026

The March Plumtree meeting was a talk on aurora by Leigh. We learnt about the solar wind and how this interacts with the Earth's magnetic field to funnel electrons into our atmosphere which goes on to produce the illusive aurora. Leigh has recently been to Iceland and we got to see lots of pictures of aurora from the UK and from Iceland.



Chris made a gorgeous cake, and Marcus brought some of his wife's gluten free and lacto-free banana oat treats.

The April Plumtree will be a talk on the exosphere of Mercury and how to observe it from Earth.

James Dawson

helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk



Upcoming events for the amateur astronomer

25 th March 2026	BAA Meeting	London
28 th March 2026	Deep Sky Section Meeting	Cheltenham
24 th April 2026	SHA Spring Conference	Birmingham
25 th April 2026	SPA Meeting	London
2 nd May 2026	Back to Basics	Cornwall
9 th May 2026	Historical Section Meeting	Mansfield
22 nd May 2026	BAA Spring Meeting	Leicester
3 rd June 2026	BAA Meeting	London
20 th June 2026	Webb Deep Sky Society	Cambridge
27 th June 2026	FAS Annual Meeting	Cardiff
25 th July 2026	SPA Meeting	London
18 th September 2026	BAA Meeting	Liverpool
3 rd October 2026	Radio Astronomy Section Day	Mansfield
28 th October 2026	BAA Meeting	London
31 st October 2026	SPA Meeting	London
12 th December 2026	BAA Christmas Meeting	London



Vista looking due west from the observatory at 17:59 on Thursday 19th March 2026. James and Brian after a hard afternoon doing maintenance at the observatory set about hunting for 0.7 day old Moon in the twilight sky, but clouds and haze thwarted their attempts. They did get to see a lovely sunset though.

James Dawson

helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk

Some Features of a First Quarter Moon

The following images, arranged from north to south, were obtained in the early evening of February 24th, approximately 7 hours after the First Quarter phase.



Barrow

70 degrees north

Archytas

Protagorus

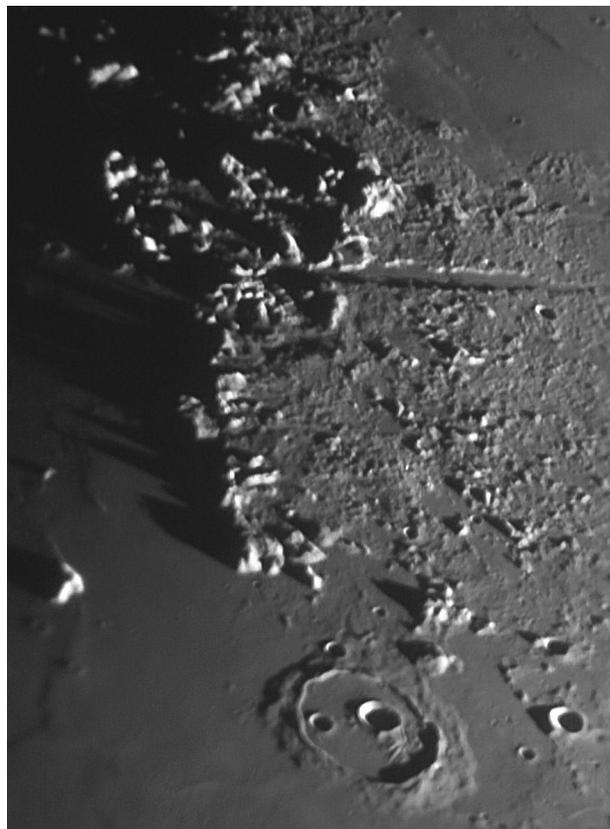
Mare Frigoris



The Alpine Valley



Lunar Alps



Cassini

40 degrees north



Aristillus

Autolycus

30 degrees north

Apollo 15 landing site, July 30th, 1971
(the first of three missions carrying a
lunar roving vehicle)

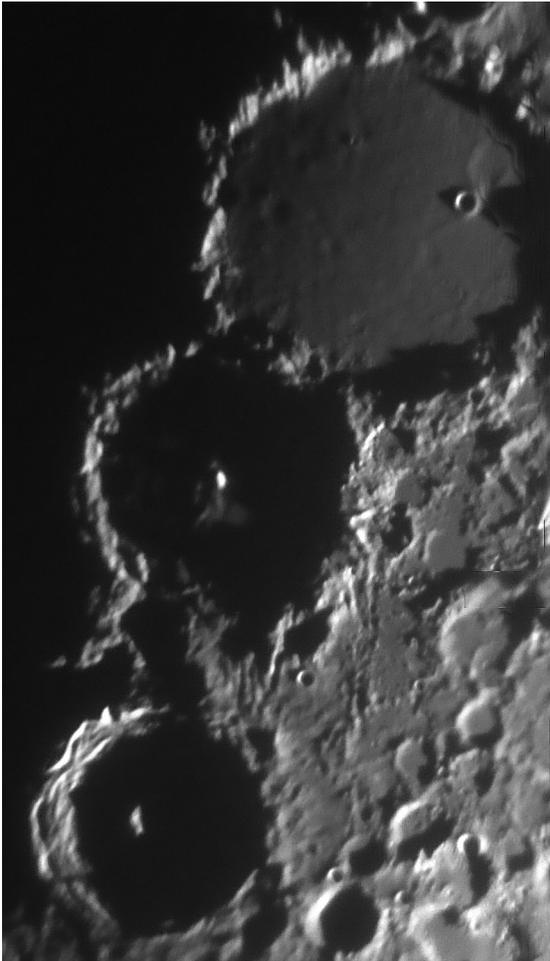


Conon

Lunar Apennines

20 degrees north

Mare Vaporum



Ptolemeus

10 degrees south

Alphonsus: In the 1950s this crater was suspected to be the site of volcanic activity, especially when the Soviet astronomer Nikolai Kosyrev claimed to have observed a “mist” within the crater on 2nd November 1958

Arzachel

20 degrees south



Purbach

← Werner

30 degrees south

Walther (previously “Walter”)

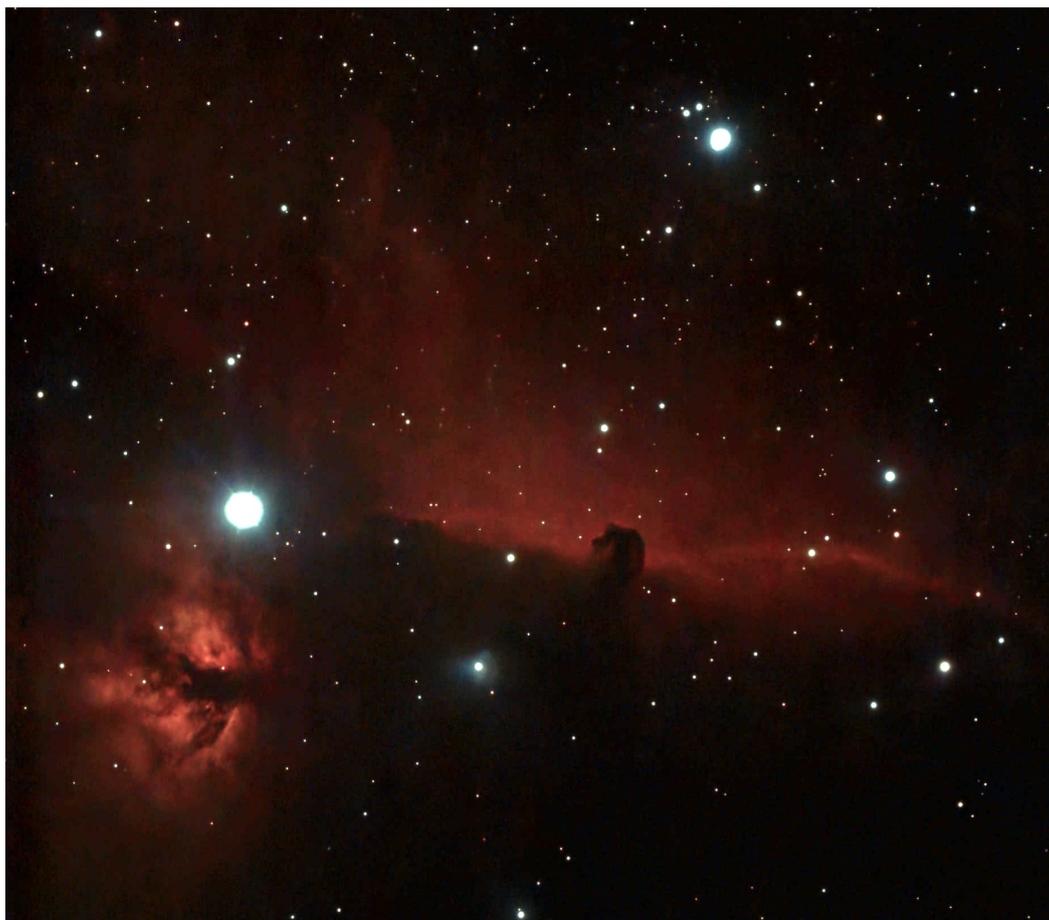
Roy Gretton

The Horsehead through a Dwarf 3 smartscope

David Buxton captured this image of the part of Orion that includes the Horsehead Nebula, using a Dwarf 3 on March 14th. It is comprised of 250 stacked images of 15 seconds duration, with a gain setting of 60.



For comparison, the following night David captured this image with his Seestar:



The Nottingham Astronomical Society: E - SERVICES

Whether or not you are a NAS member, you can keep up to date with details of the Society's

NAS on Facebook

You are welcome to connect with other members and friends of the NAS on Facebook by going to:
<http://www.facebook.com/nas.org.uk>

NAS on X

The Society has an X account at <https://twitter.com/NottinghamAstro>

NAS Journal e-mailing list

To register for your monthly e-mailed link to the NAS Journal, just e-mail
membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk

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

If you happen to change your email address, please remember to inform the Society by emailing us at membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk

Obituary of Allan Chapman

Many will remember the engaging talks by Allan Chapman when he came to Nottingham, and people will have heard him speak elsewhere. His passing is a great loss to us all. An obituary of Allan appears in the Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society written by Tony Simcock. This can be accessed for free online here:

<https://scientificinstrumentsociety.org/bulletin-168-march-2026/>



James Dawson
Observatory Director

Nottingham Astronomical Society

Affiliated to the **British Astronomical Association**
Member of the **Federation of Astronomical Societies**
Supporters of the **Commission for Dark Skies**

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Meetings

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

**Nottingham Emmanuel School
Gresham Park Road,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 7YF**

Doors open 7:15pm
Meetings start 7:45pm
Meetings end 9:15 pm

These meetings are open to the public, and visitors are welcome to attend, subject to a charge of £5 per meeting for adults (£1 for concessions).

Annual subscriptions 2026

Individual	£40
Family (maximum of two adults, and children/students living at the same address)	£55
Under-18s and full-time students	£5

Subscriptions become due on 1st January. Half-price subscription is charged if joining after 30th June (minimum subscription £5).

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 membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk or speak to any NAS committee member at one of our regular monthly meetings.

The Nottingham Astronomical Society

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