
Journal

of the

Nottingham Astronomical Society

February 2026



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Thursday, February 5th

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

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

This evening we welcome

Dr Jiachen Jiang
University of Warwick

who will be speaking on

Black Hole Astronomy 101

Chairman's Message, February 2026

Dear Members,

Did anyone see any aurora recently? I was in London when it was at its peak - and you can't see much in London at the best of times! I missed the first meeting of the year as I was looking at constellations in the Caribbean! So I hope it was good.

We were treated to a fabulous talk on the Greek myths and their influence on naming of planets and moons by Diya. A great presentation for her first ever talk! Coming up we have "Black holes 101" at the Emmanuel meeting. So I look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes,

Julian
NAS Chair

Sky Notes

February 2026

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times given below are in Universal Time



PHASES OF THE MOON

Phase	Date
Full Moon	February 1 st
Last Quarter	February 9 th
New Moon	February 17 th
First Quarter	February 24 th

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 24th, and furthest on the 10th.

THE PLANETS

This is one of the best months of 2026 to observe **Mercury** in the evening sky. The planet reaches greatest eastern elongation on February 19th, when it will be 18 degrees from the Sun and shining at magnitude -0.6.

Venus will remain difficult to observe in the evening sky this month.

Tiny **Mars**, angular diameter 4 arcseconds, is struggling to break free from the pre-dawn glow at present.

Jupiter is the dominant planet in the evening sky this month, remaining above the horizon for most of the night.

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 disappearances/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.*

February	Reappearance from eclipse of
3	Europa 22:43
7	Io 22:04
14	Io 23:58
22	Ganymede 19:16
23	Io 20:22
28	Europa 19:53

February	Shadow transit of
4	Ganymede 18:00 to 21:19
6	Io begins 22:26
8	Io ends 19:11
11	Ganymede begins 21:59
12	Callisto 19:05 to 23:10
12	Europa ends 20:28
15	Io ends 21:06
19	Europa 20:14 to 23:04
22	Io 20:44 to 23:01
26	Europa begins 22:50



Jupiter, with Europa and Callisto and their shadows
at 8pm on February 12th

As darkness falls at the beginning of February, **Saturn** will still be visible low in the southwest, but by the end of the month it will have all but disappeared into the sunset glow.

Uranus, magnitude 5.6, is an evening object in the constellation of Taurus.

Neptune, a magnitude 8 object in Pisces, will be disappearing from view by the close of February.

METEORS

There are no notable meteor showers in February.

Nottingham Astronomical Society 2026 membership renewal

Membership subscriptions for 2026 are due for renewal in January.

All current members will shortly receive their renewal forms by email detailing their current membership rate.

2026 subscription rates

Individual £40

Students £5

Family £55* *Family membership covers a maximum of two Adults, and any Children/Students living at the same address.

We encourage members to renew their membership using BACS electronic bank transfer. Alternatively please scan the QR code and quote your Surname and Membership number as the payment reference.



I hope you have enjoyed the meetings and events we have organised over the past year, and that you are able to renew your membership of the society in 2026.

Richard Severn

Treasurer and Membership Secretary

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

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
5 th February	Black Hole Astronomy 101	Dr Jiachen Jiang University of Warwick
5 th March	Forecasting Weather on Extrasolar Worlds	Dr Vatsal Panwar University of Birmingham
2 nd April	<i>To be announced</i>	<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 **February 19th**

Social and Practical Astronomy, Plumtree, January 2026

The **January** Plumtree meeting was a talk by member Diya on the mythology of the solar system. Diya can be seen here cutting a lovely chocolate cake Chris made for the occasion.

Diya spoke about Greek and Roman mythology, outlining the family tree of the Titans and Olympians and the tales of their infighting and complex—sometimes incestuous—relationships, as well as the gruesome fates some of them met, all in connection with the names of the planets, their moons, and various asteroids in the Solar System.

This was Diya's first public speaking event, yet her nerves never showed. She says she enjoyed preparing for the talk and delivering it and we are hopeful that Diya will give us another talk in the future. Thank you!

Diya can be seen below, before the talk setting up the slide shown with her dad (left) and chairman Julian (right).



The **February** Plumtree will be on imaging the Moon.

James Dawson

helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk

Two Contrasting Nebulae in Cassiopeia

NGC 7635 (*the Bubble Nebula*) and **IC 1795** (*the Fish Head Nebula*) lie on opposite sides of the 'W' asterism of Cassiopeia. The plane of the Milky Way runs through this region of sky. In this direction we are looking away from the galactic centre (180 degrees galactic longitude cuts through the nearby constellation of Auriga) and so the Milky Way looks relatively sparse compared with the view in the opposite direction (Sagittarius) which we see less clearly from our part of the world.

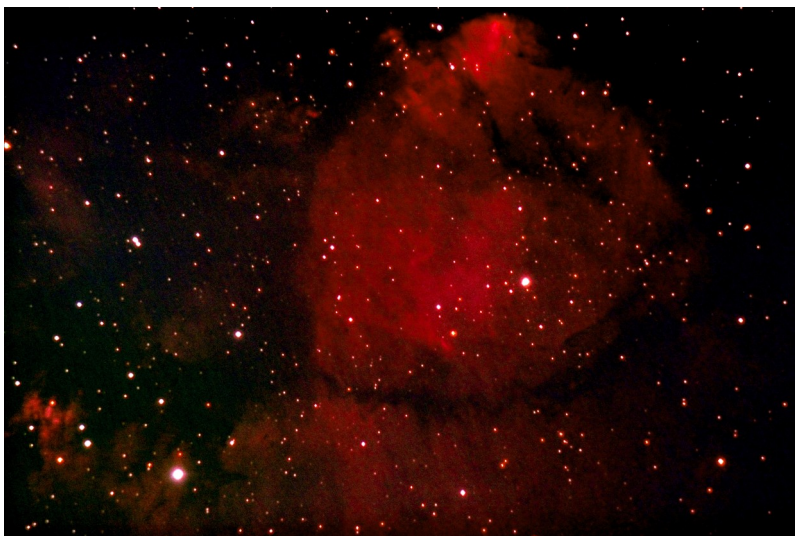
The **Bubble Nebula**, NGC 7635 (also known as Caldwell 11), is an H(II) region – a region of ionised atomic hydrogen – containing a hot massive central star, whose stellar wind creates the appearance of a bubble in the surrounding giant molecular cloud.



NGC 7635

203 minutes of data collected
at ISO1600 using a Canon
700Da camera at the f/10
focus of an 11-inch SCT

The **Fish Head Nebula**, IC 1795, is part of a star-forming region of gas and dust which includes the much larger Heart Nebula. Ultraviolet radiation from hot young stars within the nebula excites the surrounding hydrogen gas to produce the characteristic red glow at a wavelength of 656 nm.



IC 1795

113 minutes of data collected
at ISO1600 using a Canon
700Da camera at the f/10
focus of an 11-inch SCT

Roy Gretton

David's Lucky Shot

In the early evening of January 5th, **David Buxton** was attempting to image the galaxy M33 before a bright Moon rose to spoil the view. On examining his images the following morning David noticed a mysterious line just below the galaxy, and contacted James Dawson who was able to confirm that this was due to the movement of the asteroid Eros across the field of view.

David would love to claim that he planned this capture, but admits that it was serendipitous – in his own words, a fluke! But well done, David...if you point your imaging system at the sky on a clear night, who knows what you might find!



The galaxy M33 in Triangulum,
with the asteroid Eros moving nearby on the evening of January 5th
Captured with a Dwarf 3, 200 frames of 15 second duration at Gain 60

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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