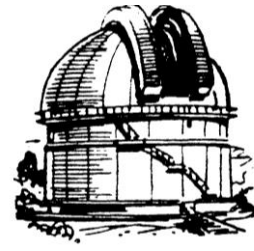

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

January 2003

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Thursday 2nd January

Doors open 7.30pm

Tonight is a
Members' Evening

These have been enjoyable occasions in the past. This year a number of members will be contributing items of interest.

Feel free to bring examples of your own work, but if you don't have any, please come along anyway and join in this New Year event!

A SEASONAL WISH

The Committee of the Society would like to wish all members and friends a very happy and prosperous 2003!

...and A REMINDER

Annual membership subscriptions are now overdue. The Treasurer would be delighted to hear from you if you have not already paid.

Sky Notes

2003 January

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



THE MOON

New Jan 2nd First Quarter Jan 10th Full Jan 18th Last Quarter Jan 25th

THE PLANETS

Mercury can be seen around the New Year, if your skyline is low enough, in the south-west after sunset. Its magnitude is +0.1, not bright enough to be easily seen against the twilight sky without the aid of binoculars. It then moves to inferior conjunction and will not be seen again until the very end of the month, low in the southeast before dawn.

Venus is visible from around 04.00 U.T. in the eastern sky. At a magnitude of -4.5 it will continue to dominate the pre-dawn sky. Through a telescope Venus will show a gibbous phase as it is now moving towards the far side of the Sun. Venus remains at about the same brightness for several months on end because the visible area of the disc remains almost constant, although the phase is changing. As the planet gets further away from us, which makes the disc appear smaller, the proportion that we see illuminated by the Sun gets greater and the two effects tend to cancel out.

Mars is easy to find, despite being quite dim, due to its proximity to Venus. Mars is to the west of, and slightly higher in the sky than, its much brighter sister. The red planet continues to present a very small angular size, so telescopic viewing is unlikely to reveal any detail.

Jupiter rises in the eastern sky soon after sunset. Apart from the Moon, it is the brightest object in the night sky until Venus rises before dawn. With a magnitude of -2.5, it lies between the constellations of Cancer and Leo. It reaches opposition at the beginning of February and thus is approaching its best. The equatorial angular is about 45 seconds of arc, so that a modest telescope will reveal interesting details in the cloud bands.

Saturn. Following opposition in December, this planet continues to be visible throughout the night, shining at magnitude -0.3. It is high in the south in the late evening. Though less brilliant than Jupiter, it is still one of the brightest objects in the sky and lies between the constellations of Taurus and Gemini. With the rings wide open it is a splendid object telescopically.

Uranus and **Neptune** are early evening objects, but now very difficult to observe as they approach conjunction. They are faint and very low in the south-west after sunset.

METEORS

The **Quadrantids** should make a favourable appearance this year. They are normally visible in the morning sky during the first six days of January.

The Nottingham Astronomical Society

E – SERVICES

The Journal

I hope by now you are all aware that the Journal can be sent to you **FREE** as an E-mail attachment in Word format? All you have to do is make sure you can receive a 1MB message, and know how to open attachments. The Journal has never been as large as 1MB, but this is a system requirement if you use some service providers such as Hotmail, Yahoo etc. You are strongly advised to scan any attachment before you open it. Outgoing mail is always scanned, but recent virus alerts show that ISP can play a part in the spread of a new virus. To register for your FREE E-zine Journal, just E-mail the secretary at carl.stella@virgin.net - You don't even have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service - something that really is FREE.

Observatory Group

A web group page and message service has been set up at

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

This group is only open to members, and will be used for circulating information about the observatory construction, observatory projects, large telescope up-dates/projects, and use of the site, and in the near future the observatory 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

Draft Minutes of recent committee meetings have been circulated to members of the Observatory Group (as some business relates directly to them). These have been received much better than expected, and other members of the Society have expressed an interest in receiving future 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 only open to Society members.

General

E-mail has made such a difference to the ease with which members can be kept informed, reached, and is especially important in keeping Society running cost down. The majority of speakers are now contacted and booked via E-mail, with only one final hard copy confirmation letter, and maps needing to be sent in a few cases.

One funny downside is the Journal. Next meeting try and look at another member's copy. The font flows differ widely – but the information is there. That's the main thing!

<p>Because of the Christmas and New Year Holiday we will be unable to supply hard printed copies of the Journal at the Jan 2nd meeting. Please run a spare copy off on your printer and bring it along to the meeting – Thank You</p>
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DIARY DATES, by Carl Brennan

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

January 2nd Djanogly C.T.C.

Doors open from 7.30pm

MEMBERS' NIGHT

Bring along some examples of your work/projects

January 16th Informal Meeting

7.30pm to 9.00pm at the home of
Stuart Atkins', 356 Loughborough
Road, West Bridgford, NOTTINGHAM,
NG2 7FD,

Telephone 0115 923 3558

February 6th OBSERVING THE UNIVERSE

Dr. Alfonso Aragon-Salamanca, School of
Physics and Astronomy, University of
Nottingham

February 20th Informal Meeting

7.30pm to 9.00pm at the home of
Stuart Atkins', 356 Loughborough
Road, West Bridgford, NOTTINGHAM,
NG2 7FD,

Telephone 0115 923 3558

March 6th EINSTEIN VERSUS STAR TREK

Les Jepson, Bassetlaw Astronomical Society

OTHER EVENTS

4th January (Saturday) BAA Christmas

Meeting, 14.30 to 17.30, St Bride Institute, Fleet
St, London

28th January (Tuesday) Making Stars with Dust
and Ice - A Chemist's Viewpoint
**Martin McCoustra Dept. of Chemistry,
University of Nottingham, from 7.30pm
Sherwood Observatory (M&SAS)**

7th & 8th February AstroFest Details to follow

8th February Totality Day An event being
organised by the OU at Milton Keynes. Web site is
under construction as I write, but do try
http://solareclipsewebpages.users.btopenworld.com/TD_files/TD2003.html

14th & 15th February Planetary Geophysics
Meeting, **Geological Society Lecture Theatre,
Burlington House, London**
<http://bullard.esc.cam.ac.uk/~nimmo/bgaras.html>

8th & 9th March Liverpool AS public Star party
will be held at Croxteth Park & Hall

9th/10th/11th May [Autographica 2003](http://www.autographica.co.uk) '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.

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 [ww.nmm.ac.uk](http://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 [ww.nmm.ac.uk](http://www.nmm.ac.uk)

The next National Astronomy Week. On 27
August 2003 the planet Mars will come to a
particularly good opposition. To celebrate this
event, Britain's astronomers are planning another
[National Astronomy Week](http://www.astronomyweek.org.uk)
<<http://www.astronomyweek.org.uk>>.

If you are able to visit the Royal Observatory
(Greenwich/London) there is a special exhibition
running from December 2002 until August 2003
about the Beagle 2 mission to Mars.

Joke found in a Christmas Cracker

Q. Where do professors come from?
A. From the West. Because the wise men
came from the East.

Nottingham Astronomical Society

The Secretary compiles these Diary Dates.
Contributions are always welcome (please include
source acknowledgement). Nottingham
Astronomical Society, and/or the Secretary accept
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Nottingham Astronomical Society please send a
C5 SAE to the Secretary Carl Brennan at

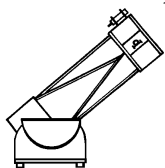
40 Swindon Close, The Vale, Giltbrook,
NOTTINGHAM, NG16 2WD. Telephone 0115
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E-mail carl.stella@virgin.net

Small Advertisements

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gildor@ntlworld.com

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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**

The Widescreen Centre

18, LADY BAY ROAD, Nottingham, NG2 5BJ

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www.telescopes-direct.com

eMail: call@widescreen-centre.co.uk

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Nottingham Astronomical Society

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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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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.
