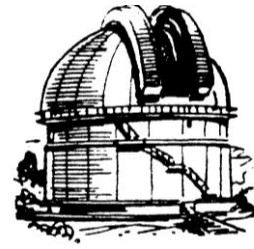

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

January 2005

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Thursday 6th January

at the Djanogly City Technology College

Doors open from 7.30pm

Tonight we have a

MEMBERS' EVENING

including a talk on

Telescope Basics

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

The Committee of the Society would like to wish all members and friends a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COMING YEAR

Partial solar eclipse (about 70% of the Sun eclipsed from southern Britain) on October 3rd.

Opposition of Saturn on January 13th.

Opposition of Jupiter on April 3rd.

Opposition of Mars on November 7th.

Sky Notes

2005 January

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



PHASES OF THE MOON

Last Quarter	3d 17h 46m
New Moon	10d 12h 03m
First Quarter	17d 06h 57m
Full Moon	25d 10h 32m

THE PLANETS

Mercury is difficult, but not impossible, to observe this month. Early in January it will be only about a degree away from Venus, which should make it easier to locate, but it will become lost in the morning twilight later in the month.

Venus is still bright in the morning sky, but its elongation from the Sun will have diminished to only 11 degrees by the end of January, making it increasingly difficult to observe. On the morning of the 8th there will be a grouping of Venus, Mercury, Mars and the crescent Moon in the same area of sky.

Mars rises at about 5 hours, and is very low in the south-east, making it difficult to observe. (Be patient, Mars will be very well placed for observation from Britain next autumn and early winter!) The Moon will be 3 degrees south of the planet on the 7th.

Jupiter is a bright object in the morning sky, and as Venus fades away, it will become the brightest (magnitude -2.2 by the end of January). It is not best placed for telescopic observation from this country, as it is about six degrees south of the celestial equator. The Moon is less than half a degree away on the 4th, and just under one degree away on the 31st.

Saturn reaches opposition on January 13th, and hence may be observed all night (if you are so inclined!) It is the bright planet below Castor and Pollux in the constellation of Gemini, and is a magnificent object through the telescope. Interest will be heightened this month as the Huygens probe is due to plunge into the atmosphere of Titan, Saturn's largest satellite, on the day after opposition. The parachute descent should last over two hours, and if the craft survives it may be able to transmit data for another two hours after touching down.

Uranus and **Neptune** are probably too low in the evening twilight for any useful observation this month.

METEORS

The Quadrantids reach their maximum activity on January 3rd, with a possible 100 meteors per hour (somewhere in the world!) The radiant, close to the constellation of Draco, is highest in the sky in the morning, but the last-quarter Moon will interfere, so late evening on the 2nd may be the best time to watch. Let's hope we are not clouded out as we were for the Geminid maximum in December!

COMET C2004 Q2 (Machholz)

This should be the best northern hemisphere comet since C2001 Q4 (NEAT) in the late spring. It is predicted to reach a magnitude of 3 this month, as it moves northwards past Orion and through Taurus and Perseus. (The Editor was able to locate it very easily—in a light-polluted sky—with small binoculars on December 19th, by extending a line from the bottom of Orion's sword through Rigel and on about twice as far again). It will cross the celestial equator to the west (right) of Orion on December 27th, and on New Year's Day will be about 25 degrees west of Orion's head. On January 8th the comet will be just a few degrees west of the Pleiades, and by then the Moon will be well out of the way. At the end of January it will be about six degrees east of the 'W' of Cassiopeia. Good viewing!

ARTICLES FOR THE JOURNAL

The Editor would welcome contributions from members for future editions of the Journal. Articles (however brief) on subjects of interest (not necessarily specifically astronomical, but preferably related to the subject) can be included. Perhaps you have made some observations of interest recently, perhaps you have personal reminiscences of your hobby, or can share something that you have heard or read elsewhere.

Please email your contribution to roy@gretton.surfonwater.com

Note that we do not include large image files in the Journal, as we try to keep the total size down to less than 200 kB to avoid server problems.

DIARY DATES

Happy New Year!

2005

Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Doors open from 7.30pm

Thursday 6 January

Djanogly CTC

Members' Evening

Includes a short talk about telescope basics

Thursday 3 February

Djanogly CTC

"The Disclosure Project"

UFOs and extra-terrestrial intelligence

Video, question & answer session

Andrew Johnson

www.disclosureproject.org

Thursday 3 March

(Topic and speaker to be arranged)

Thursday 7 April

Djanogly CTC

"Nottinghamshire, a Heavenly County"

Madeline Cox

Bassetlaw Astronomical Society

Thursday 7 July

Djanogly CTC

"Extra-Solar Planets"

Dr Roger New

Sheffield Hallam University

Thursday 6 October

At NAS Observatory site

Members' Evening at the Observatory

An opportunity for members & guests to use the society's 24 inch telescope, weather permitting

Thursday 1 December

Djanogly CTC

"Cosmic Collisions"

Dennis Ashton

Director, Sheffield Hallam University Star Centre

DIARY DATES continued

New guest speakers always wanted!

Don't forget that your society needs guest speakers to help create a varied programme of talks for our monthly meetings.

If you know of anyone who is willing to give a talk to the society about astronomy, space science or related topics, please contact:

Paul Stocks
Secretary, Nottingham Astronomical Society
nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

0115 914 8185

Many thanks

Other events in 2005

Friday 4 February
& Saturday 5 February
Kensington & Chelsea Town Hall
Hornton Street, London
(Nearest Tube station is High Street Kensington on the Circle and District lines)

European Astrofest 2005
"The Universe comes to London"
Conference programme details:
www.astronomynow.com/astrofest/

Ticket Hotline 01732 367542

Saturday 26 February
British Astronomical Association Workshop No. 6
"Image Processing"
The Berrill Lecture Theatre
The Open University
Walton Hall, Milton Keynes
Speakers include Nik Szymanek and Gordon Rogers
Organiser: Nick Hewitt, BAA
<http://www.britastro.org/main/meetings.html>

Saturday 1 October (provisional date)
Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge
Federation of Astronomical Societies
Convention 2005

Small Advertisements

For Sale

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

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CCD CAMERAS

You are always made welcome at our shop or a telephone call to Lynda will bring you our latest catalogue

The Nottingham Astronomical Society: E – SERVICES

The Journal

To register for your FREE Journal, just E-mail Carl Brennan at carl.stella@virgin.net - You don't have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service.

Observatory Group

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

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

It will be used for circulating information about the observatory construction and projects, large telescope up-dates, and use of the site by members of the Observatory Group. Please visit the web site and E-mail on line if you wish to join (NAS Members only)

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, it's 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 £24
- Junior (17 years or under) £12
- Concession (*full time student, UB40, etc*) £12

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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Greg Eisenhauer

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Joe Sowerby

Dorothy Sowerby

Meetings

Formal monthly meetings, with speakers, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except August, and occasionally other months as announced) 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, 2004-05

Full Adult:	£24
Junior (<i>17 years or under</i>)	£12
Concessions	£12

(*Full time student, UB40, etc*)

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, Paul Stocks, 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.
