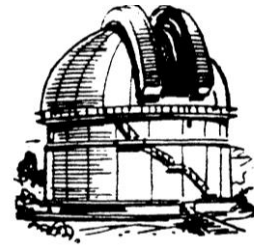

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

July - August 2006

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Thursday July 6th

at

****The British Geological Survey****

Nicker Hill

Keyworth

Doors open 7.30pm

Mr Paul Money

will be speaking on

'Rambling through Summer and Autumn Skies'

JUPITER'S 'NEW' RED SPOT

This year a second 'Red Spot' has appeared on the planet Jupiter. It is somewhat smaller than the famous Great Red Spot, and is situated in the planet's south temperate region. The new spot is a storm system that has apparently formed from the remains of two white ovals that merged a few years ago.

Jupiter is the prominent planet visible in the southwest after dusk in July; see Sky Notes.

Sky Notes

2006 July and August

Compiled by Roy Gretton



Astronomical twilight lasts from sunset until the Sun is 16 degrees below the horizon. This means that at the latitude of Nottingham, astronomical twilight lasts all night between mid-May and late July, and the sky is never completely dark during this period (even directly overhead). This of course restricts our view of faint objects, but the Moon and bright planets can still be profitably observed when they are suitably positioned. By the end of July true darkness has returned and spans half an hour or so either side of midnight (1 a.m. BST). By mid-August we have five hours of darkness, so the season of deep-sky astronomy has definitely returned. By way of a bonus the nights in August and September are generally mild (even warm sometimes), so why not get out there and enjoy the glories of the late summer sky, especially the constellations of the Milky Way? There is plenty to be seen with the naked eye, away from bright artificial lighting, and even more with a small pair of binoculars.

Aphelion (the point when the Earth is furthest from the Sun) occurs this year on the 4th of July, when we will be 152 million km from the Sun.

PHASES OF THE MOON

July First Quarter occurs during the afternoon of the 3rd
 Full Moon occurs in the early hours of the 11th
 Last Quarter occurs in the early evening of the 17th
 New Moon occurs in the early morning of the 25th

August First Quarter occurs on the morning of the 2nd and again on the 31st
 Full Moon on the morning of the 9th
 Last Quarter occurs in the early hours of the 16th
 New Moon occurs on the evening of the 23rd

In July the Moon is closest to Earth on the 13th, and furthest from Earth on the 29th.
In August the Moon is closest to Earth on the 10th, and furthest from Earth on the 26th

THE PLANETS

Mercury will be at inferior conjunction on July 18th, so observation is almost impossible during that month. In August, Mercury is a morning object, best seen around the beginning of the second week.

Venus has been a morning star for some months, but difficult to observe for much of the time due to its southerly declination. Its elongation from the Sun is now decreasing and by the end of July will be down to 22 degrees. However, its visibility to northern hemisphere observers will have improved somewhat because it will now

be well north of the celestial equator, in the constellation of Gemini, so you may spot the planet in the pre-dawn sky in late July and early August.

Mars is disappearing fast into the sunset sky. Its angular diameter will fall below 4 arcseconds in July, and the present apparition, which gave us such splendid views of the Red Planet last autumn, will effectively be at a close.

Jupiter continues to be easily observable in July, but will become more difficult by the time August begins as it is low down in the constellation of Libra. Look southwest after sunset to see this bright object (magnitude -2.2). By the end of August observation will have become very difficult.

Saturn is now virtually lost in the bright evening sky. It will be in conjunction with the Sun on August 7th, so we shall have to wait until well into the autumn to enjoy good views of this planet again.

Uranus, magnitude 5.8, is a morning object in the constellation of Aquarius throughout July and August.

Neptune, magnitude 7.9, is a morning object in July, in the neighbouring constellation of Capricornus. It reaches opposition on August 11th and thereafter is classed as an evening object.

METEORS

Late July marks the beginning of the meteor-observing season. The **Capricornids** and **Aquariids** (various radiants) are active for several weeks from late July to mid-August, but the best summer shower has to be the Perseids. However, conditions are unfavourable for these in 2006, as the time of maximum activity on August 12th is only three days after the Full Moon.

Fancy Yourself as a Writer?

Springer-Verlag publishers are looking for people to write for them on astronomy. They are interested in producing books that will help active amateur astronomers. Authors who are accepted will receive an annual royalty payment. If you are interested, contact

John.Watson@clara.co.uk

sending a broad outline of your proposed book.

Venues for NAS meetings

Djanogly City Academy rebuilding work

Djanogly City Academy in Sherwood Rise is undergoing rebuilding work throughout the summer, and all evening room lettings have been cancelled by Djanogly.

I understand that the Djanogly building work is expected to be completed by the start of the school autumn term, so the meeting room there should be available for our 7th September meeting.

But please see the September issue of the Journal for confirmation of the venue.

Keyworth meeting on 6 July

The Society again has the use of a room at **Keyworth for our 6th July meeting**, with doors open at 7.30pm. So do come along to **The British Geological Survey, Nicker Hill, Keyworth** on 6th July and hear Paul Money's talk about what you can see in the summer and autumn skies. It's an ideal talk for beginners!

Here are directions by car:

- Heading out from the south of Nottingham, take the **A606 Melton Road**.
- Stay on the A606 beyond Tollerton and Plumtree, and look for a **right turn**, signposted "**Keyworth ¾, British Geological Survey**". This is Platt Lane.
- Drive along Platt Lane, enter Keyworth and go past the goods entrance to the BGS. You will reach a "T" junction. Turn left into Nicker Hill, then first left again into the main gate of the British Geological Survey.
- After going through security at the gate, please use the car park to your left. After parking, look for the signs directing you to the meeting room.

Don't forget that we have our summer break in **August** and there is no meeting (or Journal) that month.

Notice of a vote at September's meeting

At the meeting on 7th September we shall hold a vote of members to see whether the Society wishes to make a permanent move of our meetings to Keyworth, from December 2006.

If we do move our meetings to Keyworth the committee propose that future meetings should start at 8.00pm. This links better with bus times for those travelling by public transport.

The committee is in favour of moving to Keyworth and welcomes the views of members – whether "for" or "against" a move.

Paul Stocks
NAS Secretary

Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Our programme for the remainder of 2006 is below. Don't forget to check our website:
<http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro>
for the latest information about the Society's activities.

Thursday 6 July

This meeting will be held at
The British Geological Survey
Nicker Hill
Keyworth

Doors open 7.30pm

'Rambling through Summer and Autumn Skies'

Paul Money

August

Summer break, no meeting this month.

Thursday 7 September

Djanogly City Academy, Room 105

doors open 7.30pm

(Venue to be confirmed – see the September issue of the Journal)

Members' Evening

Including images of the 2006 total solar eclipse

Thursday 5 October

NAS Observatory, near Cotgrave

from 7.30pm

Observatory Evening

Members are welcome to bring guests to the observatory.

If you need directions to the site, please e-mail nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

Thursday 2 November

Annual General Meeting 2006

Thursday 7 December

Doors open 7.30pm

The Barwell Meteorite

Professor Jack Meadows

Loughborough University

DIARY DATES: Other Events

The Starry Messenger: Visions of the Universe at Compton Verney 7 July - 10 September

Compton Verney is an art gallery set in the heart of Warwickshire. UK visitor attraction of the year 2006 we are delighted to be presenting **The Starry Messenger: Visions of the Universe** 7 July - 10 September. This exhibition explores man's ultimate quest in understanding the solar system. It examines visual representations by artists, scientists and thinkers throughout the ages, and how they have used various means in order to attempt to understand the incomprehensible mysteries of the universe and man's place in it. The exhibition includes a vast and diverse selection of both historical and contemporary work. Themes within the exhibition include the visionary imaginings of William Blake and the Surrealists; science fiction; time travel; moon landings, and paintings and drawings dating back to Galileo's invention of the telescope in 1610.

To find out more about the events, workshops and related events relating to the show visit <http://www.comptonverney.org.uk/?page=events>

Small Advertisements

For Sale

Maksutov 6-inch Telescope by Drew

2x2-inch finderscopes, equatorial tripod mount with circles, eyepiece tray, carry box.

Selection of eyepieces, Barlow lens, star diagonals. Buyer collects.

Now reduced to £200

An opportunity for a beginner to obtain some good equipment at a bargain price

**Telephone Peter Davison
on 0115 923 0040**

For Sale

8¾-inch Newtonian telescope on Dobsonian mount

Built by David Lukehurst.
65x and 250x eyepieces, finderscope.
5 years old.

Hardly used, very good condition.

£375 or near offer

**Telephone Terry Naylor
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MEADE

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

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

NAS Observatory Group

A web group page and message service (for NAS members only) is available at

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

It is used for circulating information to members about work at the observatory and use of the large telescope. If you are a member of the Society, you can join this online group by visiting the website and clicking on "Join this Group".

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

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

HONORARY VICE PRESIDENT

Alan Heath (Ex. Dir. BAA Saturn Section)

VICE PRESIDENTS:

David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

website: www.dobsonians.co.uk

Dr Roy Gretton

e-mail: roygretton@speed-mail.co.uk

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John Hurst

Observatory line: 07726 940700

CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

Duncan Collins

email: duncan.collins@talk21.com

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 Academy, Room 105

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, 2005-06

Full Adult:	£25
Junior (17 years or under)	£12.50
Concessions	£12.50

(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.
