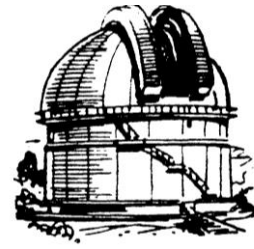

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

July-August 2004

Thursday 1st July

at the Djanogly City Technology College
Doors open from 7.30pm

Tonight we welcome

Derek Pullan
Beagle 2 Instrument & Science
Operations Manager
University of Leicester

who will be speaking on

Beagle 2 Mars –
The Challenge Continues

Inside this issue

- Sky Notes for July and August
- Diary Dates
- Advertisements
- E-Services
- Membership application form
- Society Information

AMATEUR DISCOVERS VARIABLE NEBULA

An American amateur astronomer, using only a 3-inch refractor and CCD camera, discovered a nebula on January 23rd this year. The nebula is near M78 in Orion. When, years earlier, the same area of sky had been photographed with the 48-inch Schmidt telescope on Mount Palomar, the object was barely visible. The brightening of the nebula must have been due to an outburst from a star embedded in the gas. But how interesting that a deep-sky discovery of this type should be made with a small amateur refractor!

Sky Notes

2004 July & August

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



THE MOON

Full Moon	July 2 nd , July 31 st , August 30 th
Last Quarter	July 9 th , August 7 th
New Moon	July 17 th , August 16 th
First Quarter	July 25 th , August 23 rd

(So, there are two Full Moons in July, making the second a “blue moon”)

THE PLANETS

Mercury is at greatest eastern elongation (27°) on July 27th, and will therefore be visible in the evening twilight during the second half of July and the first half of August. The magnitude is close to zero.

Venus will be low in the morning twilight in early July, but will move steadily away from the Sun and therefore become more prominent in August.

Mars is becoming a difficult object to observe, setting in the evening twilight. We will lose it altogether in August, as it is due to reach conjunction on September 15th.

Jupiter, too, is becoming difficult to observe, as it will also reach conjunction with the Sun in September. In early July it will still be visible low in the west after sunset.

Saturn is unobservable for most of the July-August period, as it will be at conjunction on July 8th. (However, this fact will not prevent the Cassini spacecraft going into orbit around the planet!)

Uranus and **Neptune** are both at opposition in August (Neptune on the 6th and Uranus on the 27th). Uranus, at magnitude 5.7, is by far the easier to find in binoculars. It will be less than a degree away from sigma Aquarii (magnitude about 5) in mid-August. The closest bright star to Neptune is theta Capricorni (magnitude about 4), from which the planet will be less than one degree in August.

METEORS

Look out for the Perseids between July 23rd and August 20th. The maximum is on August 12th, and this year conditions are favourable, with a waning crescent Moon.

DIARY DATES

Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Thursday 1st July
Djanogly CTC
Doors open 7.30pm

Beagle 2 Mars - The Challenge Continues

Derek Pullan
Beagle 2 Instrument & Science Operations Manager
University of Leicester

<http://www.src.le.ac.uk/projects/beagle2/>

August

Summer break, no meeting this month

Thursday 2nd September
Djanogly CTC
Doors open 7.30pm

Update on European/UK Space Science Programmes

Prof Ken Pounds
Dept of Physics & Astronomy, University of Leicester

Thursday 7th October
From 7.30pm

Meeting at the NAS Observatory Site

An opportunity to use our large telescope, weather permitting!

Thursday 4th November
Djanogly CTC
Doors open from 7.30pm

NAS Annual General Meeting

Thursday 2nd December
Djanogly CTC
Doors open 7.30pm

X-Planes and Lifting Bodies

James Ince
Bassetlaw Astronomical Society

DIARY DATES continued

Other events

From the Jodrell Bank website: <http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/scicen/>

Saturday 18th and Sun 19th September 2004

Jodrell Bank Observatory Visitor Centre

“Meet an Astronomer”

for guided walks of all the radio telescopes at Jodrell Bank

The event is free from any additional charge.

Normal car park charges of £3.00 per car apply,
entrance to the 3D Theatre is £1.00 per person per show.

The new Observational Pathway, which stretches 180 degrees around the base of the Lovell Telescope is now open. The pathway allows visitors to get closer to the radio telescope than ever before. There is also a 3D Theatre, small exhibition area, 35 acre Arboretum, an award winning Environmental Discovery Centre which houses the Tree Planet exhibition, Space Cafe and Shop.

Please note that there is no longer a Planetarium or extensive exhibitions open while the Visitor Centre undergoes a 3 year redevelopment programme.

For further information, please call Jodrell Bank Visitor Centre on 01477 571339
or email: visitorcentre@jb.man.ac.uk

*Carl Brennan picked up this item from **Yahoo News**:*

June 13, 2004

Meteorite smashes into house

WELLINGTON (Reuters) - A grapefruit-sized meteorite has smashed through the roof of a New Zealand house, hitting a couch and bouncing off the ceiling before coming to rest under a computer. The 1.3 kg (2.9 lb) chunk of space debris dropped out of the sky and plummeted through the tiled roof of the Auckland home on Saturday.

"I was in the kitchen doing breakfast and there was this almighty explosion," owner Brenda Archer told the Sunday Star-Times newspaper. "It was like a bomb had gone off. I couldn't see anything, there was just dust."

Archer's one-year-old grandson had been playing nearby minutes before it hit. It is only the ninth meteorite found in New Zealand and the first to hit a home. The Archers, who are following expert advice by drying the rock out in their oven, plan to sell it or give it to a museum. Experts believe the meteorite, a chunk of an asteroid, could be worth more than NZ\$10,000 (£3,500), the newspaper said.

<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/040613/80/evsox.html>

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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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 £23
- Junior (17 years or under) £11.50
- Concession (*full time student, UB40, Senior Citizen*) £11.50

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

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e-mail: greg.eisenhauer@ntlworld.com

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David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

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, 2003-04

Full Adult:	£23
Junior (<i>17 years or under</i>)	£11.50
Concessions	£11.50

(*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, 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.
