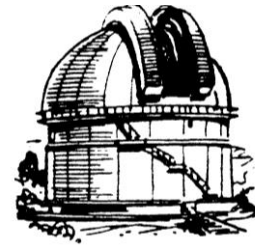

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

June 2003

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Thursday June 5th

Doors open 7.30pm

This evening is a

VIDEO EVENING

...see you there!

MARS EXPRESS

By the time we meet on June 5th, the European Space Agency's Mars Express mission **should** have been launched on a Russian Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Central Asia.

Latest information on going to press was that the launch was scheduled for 1745 UT (11:45 p.m. local time) on June 2nd.

The journey to Mars will take six months and the spacecraft should enter Martian orbit on December 26. The Mars Express mission features an orbiter that will study the Red Planet from above, and the tiny Beagle 2 lander that will separate from the main craft and touch down on the surface to run experiments. The orbiter aims to take high and super-high resolution images of the planet's surface, collect data on Mars' mineral composition and study the atmosphere.

Beagle 2 is designed to determine the landing site's geology, mineral and chemical composition and weather. It will also search for signs of life.

News Notes

I would like to begin this month by thanking everyone who came along to the members' evening on 1st May.

As those who attended will recall, we had a lively discussion about the NAS observatory, followed by a talk by Dave Lukehurst on the history of our large telescope project. Some excellent suggestions were put forward by members and we identified the dome's shutter as the number 1 priority for attention before the telescope is installed. The meeting ran rather longer than I had imagined it would, which I believe clearly proves the interest and enthusiasm that the revitalised telescope and observatory project has created.

More good news

I am pleased to say that the committee is arranging for some engineering work to be done on the dome with the aim of getting it operational during the summer. The Society has recently purchased a generator which will provide much needed power at the observatory for tools, the motor to drive the shutter mechanism, and the telescope drives. We expect the telescope to be ready for installation by early August. Mars, of course, reaches opposition on 28th August, providing a spectacular subject for "first light" and a great incentive to have the telescope ready in time.

Can you help?

Please don't forget that help at the observatory is always needed. There are always tasks such as painting that need doing. If you can spare an hour or two to help out, just have a word with me or any committee member at the monthly meetings. If enough members are interested, we can have another weekend get-together at the site to get some jobs done. It really can be quite good fun!

Paul Stocks
NAS President

Sky Notes

2003 June

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



THE MOON

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| First Quarter | 7d 20h 28m |
| Full Moon | 14d 11h 16m |
| Last Quarter | 21d 14h 45m |
| New Moon | 29d 18h 39m |

The Summer Solstice occurs on June 21d 19h 10m. We have now entered the time of year when Astronomical Twilight lasts all night.

THE PLANETS

Mercury is at greatest eastern elongation on June 3rd, but on this occasion will be placed very unfavourably for observation from Britain, barely rising above the pre-dawn horizon.

Venus also is difficult to observe in the bright sky just before dawn.

Mars will, by the end of the month, be rising about midnight, and shining at magnitude -1.4 . By then its apparent diameter will have grown to 17 arcseconds. **This** is the planet to watch from now on! On June 19th Mars will be 3° north of the Moon.

Jupiter remains the brightest object in the evening sky. Through most of the month it will be in the constellation of Cancer, but moves into Leo on the 30th.

Saturn is unobservable this month, being at conjunction on June 24th.

Uranus and **Neptune** are observable before dawn. Uranus is in Aquarius and Neptune in Capricornus.

METEORS

The position of the Moon is very favourable for observing the *possible* **June Boötids**, from 26th June to 2nd July. The maximum may occur on the night of 27-28th June. The shower was very active in 1998 with Zenithal Hourly Rates between 50 and 100 for one night. However, hardly any June Bootids have been seen since 1998.

OCCULTATION

On June 11th Alpha Librae (magnitude 2.8) will be occulted by the Moon, beginning at 21h 23m.

ASTRONOMICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

From: callumpotter@hotmail.com

Subject: **Time Team - The Big Dig. Anyone for Astronomical Archeology ?**

You may have heard about Channel 4, Time Team's Big Dig taking place over the weekend of the 28th/29th June. If not check out

<http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/B/bigdig/>

Orpington Astronomical Society have come up with the idea of investigating the location of an old observatory (the Craig Telescope tower). Perhaps your local society could instigate a similar project ?

Greg Smye-Rumsby of Orpington AS (www.orpington-astronomy.org.uk) writes:

Time Team Big Dig

The Orpington Astronomical Society is intending to dig on the Wandsworth Common to find the footings of the Craig Telescope tower. I have already sorted permission from the Wandsworth Council and have put in place several actions in order to safely conduct the small 1 metre test trench. The intention is to first survey the site using non-destructive geophysics testing to see if the circular tower can be accurately located. There are still several official and Health & Safety issues to get cleared, but apart from that, digging will start on Saturday 28 June 2003.

It might be now, that we are on the verge of seeing for the first time in over 100 years the REAL Craig Telescope. If you have any comments or suggestions they would be most welcome, or if you just want to find out more then send me an email, phone or write. Or come down and join us on the dig itself; you would be most welcome.

YOUR NAME COULD MAKE A 'DEEP IMPACT' ON A COMET

People worldwide may celebrate July 4, 2005 as the day their names reach a comet. NASA is launching a campaign to send hundreds of thousands of names to comet Tempel 1.

The names will be carried on board NASA's Deep Impact spacecraft, the first deep-space mission designed to reach out and touch a comet. Mission scientists are confident an impact on a comet's nucleus will answer basic questions about the nature and composition of these celestial wanderers.

"This is an opportunity to become part of an extraordinary space mission," said Dr. Don Yeomans, an astronomer at JPL and a member of Deep Impact's science team. "When the craft is launched in December 2004, yours and the names of your loved-ones can hitch along for the ride and be part of what may be the best space fireworks show in history."

People may submit their names for this historic one-way mission by visiting NASA's Deep Impact Web site, now through February 2004, at <http://deepimpact.jpl.nasa.gov/>

MARS IS GETTING CLOSER!

2003 June 2 18.45BST a Soyuz rocket will lift off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome and Mars Express will be on it's way to Mars, carrying with it the British Beagle 2 lander. Visit for an update http://www.esa.int/SPECIALSMars_Express/. This will start a Summer of public interest in Mars, which will be filled with media madness during National Astronomy Week (NAW) 23rd to 30th August.

There will be rekindled interest in the Martian Meteorite ALH84001, and speculation about the Viking lander results from so long ago - "Is there life on Mars?" The recent Mars Global Surveyor results which appear to clearly show past water flow evidence will only add fuel to this popular argument. Recent speculation about the Martian origin of Earth life will also add to this media fanfare.

The highlight of NAW has got to be August 27th when Mars will be it's closest to the Earth for what pre-publicity material already tells me is 60,000 years. I will take their word for it, as I don't recall that far back. During August Mars will be a bright object near the southern horizon (in the Aquarius/Capricornus region).

So get your books out, and start observing the Red Planet, if anyone knows you have an interest in astronomy you can almost bet your last Pound they will ask you something about Mars.

If you can find time on Saturday August 30th please go along to Ilkeston and support an NAW exhibition by Ilkeston and District AS (Erewash Museum, just behind the Market Square and Observatory public house.)

Useful Web Sites

http://www.esa.int/SPECIALSMars_Express/

www.beagle2.com

www.sci.esa.int/marsexpress

www.astronomyweek.org.uk

www.sherwood-observatory.org.uk

DIARY DATES, by Carl Brennan

MEETINGS OF THE NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

June 5th Djanogly CTC, Doors open 7.30pm

VIDEO EVENING

June 16th Committee Meeting 7.30pm
22 Killerton Park Drive, West Bridgford
Committee and invited guests only please.

July 3rd Djanogly CTC, Doors open 7.30pm

ASTROQUIZ NIGHT

OTHER EVENTS

2nd June 18.45 BST watch out for the launch of Mars Express

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 www.nmm.ac.uk

7th June SPA Golden Jubilee Event. "Astronomical Any Questions" at the London Planetarium Barrie Jones, Monica Grady, Ian Morison, Robin Catchpole. Details phone 020 7487 0243

10th June Ilkeston Astronomical Society has Neil Hagarth speaking on the topic "We Are Not Alone". 7.30pm Erewash Museum

24th June Sherwood Observatory M&SAS have jumping Paul Money to talk to them about "Our Galaxy, The Milky Way". Observatory and meeting room open from about 7.30pm.

5th July Saturday Night Ilkeston & District AS are holding a sky watch at Shipley Park between Ilkeston and Heanor. This is a good night sky sight, and an excellent opportunity to see bats as well as stars! Call Mary McNulty for more information on 01298 78234

1st to 4th August Third Summer Star Festival (That's a Friday to Monday) 3 nights observing at Adderstone, Dalby Forest, North York Moors National Park. The site is ideal for caravans and tents. £15 for the weekend. Details from Mrs. S Anderson, 25 Highfield, Scarborough, N. Yorks, YO12 4AW, 01723 500389, E-mail gwernan2@ukf.net, visit <http://www.scarborough-as.org.uk>

23rd to 30th August NATIONAL ASTRONOMY WEEK

28th to 31st August Astro-Camp South West. West Buckland School, West Buckland, Nr. Barnstable, N. Devon. Camping in school grounds, or local B&Bs (www.staynorthdevon.co.uk) or john@parratt8017.freerve.co.uk, or www.halien.com/swaa/

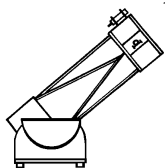
26th Sept. to 5th Oct 9th Equinox Sky Camp. For full details contact Mike Cook, 2 Sunset Drive, Havering-Atte-Bower, Essex, RM4 1QL. All inquiries must be with Mike by September 19th latest.

20th September FAS ANNUAL CONVENTION returns to IoA Madingley Road, Cambridge. Doors open 8.30am, lectures start 9.00am. You must book in advance as seating is limited. Tickets in advance cost £6.00 from John Parratt, 37 Woolbarn Lawn, Whiddon Valley, Barnstable, N. Devon, EX32 8PQ, 01271 372331 johnparratt8017@freerve.co.uk

Small Advertisements

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The Nottingham Astronomical Society: E – SERVICES

The Journal

To register for your FREE Journal, just E-mail the secretary 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)

Minute 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 open only to Society members.

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 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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Dr Roy Gretton

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Alan Heath (Ex. Dir. BAA Saturn Section)

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CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS

David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

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.
