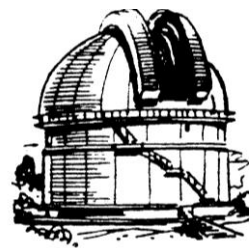


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# Journal

of the



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## Nottingham Astronomical Society

June 2004

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Inside this issue

- Sky Notes for June
- Transit of Venus
- Installation of the Large Telescope
- Diary Dates
- Advertisements
- E-Services
- Membership application form
- Society Information

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

at the Djanogly City Technology College

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

Tonight we welcome

**Dr Mike Leggett FRAS FBIS**

who will be speaking on

**The Exploration of the Moon**

### WATCHING COMET NEAT

**COMET 2001 Q4 (NEAT)** theoretically is a naked eye object, but in our local light-polluted skies you will struggle to find it without the aid of binoculars. Earlier in May the skies were frustratingly cloudy, but during the second and third weeks of the month they were much clearer, permitting night-to-night tracking of the comet. The tail was discernable as it moved past the Praesepe cluster and up towards Ursa Major. As I write this, the comet is approaching the front paws of the Bear, but fading. After 11 p.m. (BST) is the best time to look for it. It will not reach the Plough until August, when it will have faded considerably.

# Sky Notes

## 2004 June

Compiled by Roy Gretton

*All times quoted are U.T.*



### THE MOON

Full Moon 3d 04h 20m  
Last Quarter 09d 20h 02m  
New Moon 17d 20h 27m  
First Quarter 25d 19h 08m

### THE PLANETS

*We have had a glorious year for planetary observation, beginning with the closest-ever approach of Mars last August, on through to this spring, when Venus, Saturn and Jupiter have been such fine objects in our sky. Now this period is almost over, and the bright planets are moving out of sight. They do however have one last treat for us...a rare transit!*

**Mercury** is at superior conjunction on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and so is unobservable this month.

**Venus** is at inferior conjunction on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and this happens to be a special one, because the planet will pass in front of the Sun for the first time for nearly 122 years! *See the special item on the Transit of Venus.*

**Mars** is by now a rather inconspicuous object, setting in the evening twilight. It will be 4° south of the Moon on the 20<sup>th</sup>. It will be moving into Cancer this month.

**Jupiter**, magnitude -2, in Leo, is still a conspicuous evening object. By the end of the month it will be too low for good telescopic observation.

**Saturn**, is now very low in the evening twilight, and will be quite difficult to observe by the end of the month.

**Uranus** and **Neptune** are low in the morning sky before sunrise, and remain very difficult to observe.

# The Transit of Venus on 2004 June 8

Not only is this the first transit of Venus since 1882, it is the most favourably placed for U.K. observers since the one of A.D.1283.

The details for this year's transit are

	First contact	Full immersion begins	Maximum ingress	Full immersion ends	Last contact
U.T.	05.20	05.40	08.22	11.04	11.24
B.S.T.	6.20 a.m.	6.40 a.m.	9.22 a.m.	12.04 p.m.	12.24 p.m.

The transit is a slow event, lasting fully six hours, all of which will be visible from the U.K. (weather permitting). I think we can allow ourselves some optimism -- even the notoriously unreliable British weather would have to be exceptionally unkind to us to blot out the Sun for a full six hours in June!

The safest way to observe the transit is to project the Sun's image from a small telescope on to a white screen held behind the eyepiece. Another possible method, without a telescope, is to use your dark eclipse glasses (if you have kept them since 1999), as Venus is large enough to be seen without magnification. (*However, if you do this, make sure that the glasses remain undamaged – no pin-holes or scratches*).

## ***Coming Soon...*** **The installation of the Large Telescope in the NAS Observatory**

On 24<sup>th</sup> May, David Lukehurst contacted the large telescope's builder Beacon Hill Telescopes who confirmed that, after an upgrade to part of the drive mechanism, the final assembly and check on the large telescope had been completed. It was then to be dismantled and taken for powder coating. After that, it will be ready for transport to the site and installation.

So things now look very promising for the month of June!

The NAS committee hope to be able to announce a firm date for the telescope installation at the Society's meeting at Djanogly CTC on 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

Helpers will be needed at the observatory site over the installation weekend (this could possibly be **5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> June**, but please note this is not yet definite).

More about this at the CTC meeting, so do please come along.

Paul Stocks  
NAS Secretary

## DIARY DATES

### Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Djanogly CTC

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

#### **The Exploration of the Moon**

Dr Mike Leggett FRAS FBIS

Thursday 1st July

Djanogly CTC

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

#### **Beagle 2 Mars - The Challenge Continues**

Derek Pullan

Beagle 2 Instrument & Science Operations Manager

University of Leicester

*August – Summer break, no meeting*

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September

Djanogly CTC

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

#### **Update on European/UK Space Science Programmes**

Prof Ken Pounds

Dept of Physics & Astronomy, University of Leicester

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October

#### **Meeting at the NAS Observatory Site**

An opportunity to use the large telescope, weather permitting!

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November

Djanogly CTC

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

#### **NAS Annual General Meeting**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

Djanogly CTC

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

#### **X-Planes and Lifting Bodies**

James Ince

(This talk to be confirmed for this meeting)

### Other events

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June

#### **Transit of Venus**

**Venus crosses the Sun's disk as seen from Earth, for the first time since 1882.**

(If anyone is planning to observe the event from the NAS Observatory site, please let me know. I have had an enquiry from a potential new member who would like to observe from a site with a good horizon.)

**Saturday 26 June 2004**

**11:00 -18:00**

#### **British Astronomical Association Exhibition Meeting**

The Cavendish Laboratory

Madingley Road

Cambridge

## 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**

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## The Widescreen Centre

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18, LADY BAY ROAD ,Nottingham, NG2 5BJ  
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WebShop: [www.widescreen-centre.co.uk](http://www.widescreen-centre.co.uk)  
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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](mailto: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.*

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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 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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## PRESIDENT:

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**Alan Heath** (Ex. Dir. BAA Saturn Section)

## VICE PRESIDENTS:

**David Lukehurst**

e-mail: [gildor@ntlworld.com](mailto:gildor@ntlworld.com)

**Dr Roy Gretton**

e-mail: [roy@gretton.surfonwater.com](mailto:roy@gretton.surfonwater.com)

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## CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS

**David Lukehurst**

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## CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

**Greg Eisenhauer**

## ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBER:

**Joe Sowerby**

**Dorothy Sowerby**

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## 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.

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## 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.**

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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.

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