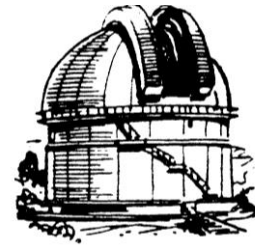

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

June 2005

Thursday 2nd June

This evening's meeting will be at the
Society's Observatory
from 7.30pm

Do come along to observe Jupiter and Saturn.
We shall have several telescopes at the site.

Bring your own telescope or binoculars if you wish!

For directions to the site, please e-mail:

nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

Inside this issue

- Sky Notes for June
- Diary Dates
- Advertisements
- E-Services
- Membership application form
- Society Information

AMERICA'S NEXT MISSION TO MARS

NASA's next spacecraft to be sent to Mars is called *Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter*, and is being made ready at the Kennedy Space Centre for launch on August 10th. It will not arrive at the Red Planet until next year. *MRO* will be equipped with a camera capable of imaging features only a few feet across, and might even be able to find poor old Beagle 2!

The launch vehicle will be an Atlas 5 rocket.

Sky Notes

2005 June

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



THE SUN

The Summer Solstice occurs on June 21st. On this date the interval between sunset and sunrise at our latitude is only about 7 hours, and astronomical twilight lasts all night. Only in late July will we begin to have true darkness once again.

PHASES OF THE MOON

New Moon occurs on the evening of June 6th
First Quarter occurs in the early hours of the 15th
Full Moon occurs around dawn on the 22nd
Last Quarter occurs on the evening of the 28th

The Moon will be furthest from Earth this month on the 11th (405 thousand kilometres) and closest on the 23rd (360 thousand kilometers) – so the Full Moon will loom particularly large!

THE PLANETS

Our long winter-spring season with Saturn and Jupiter is now drawing to a close. Saturn will disappear into the evening twilight this month, and Jupiter will follow it a month later. However if you want a challenge you might like to look for Mercury, Venus and Saturn together in the northwest soon after sunset in mid-month. For the best evening planetary viewing during the remainder of 2005 you will have to wait until early November, when Mars will be at opposition and Venus will be at greatest eastern elongation.

Mercury reaches greatest eastern elongation early in July, and so will be observable in the northwest after sunset in the second half of June. But the planet will very low down in our sky and so will be a difficult target, except perhaps around the 27th when it is very close to the much brighter Venus.

Venus is slowly moving away from the Sun in the evening sky. Though bright (magnitude -3.8) it will be difficult to observe due to its low altitude.

Mars will remain a difficult object to observe this month, due to its low altitude in the pre-dawn sky. However, circumstances are beginning to improve, so if you are an early riser you might like to look for it low in the east before sunrise.

Jupiter continues to be a bright object in the southern sky at sunset, but conditions for observing it will deteriorate steadily until it is only about 10° above the horizon at dusk by the end of June.

Saturn is rapidly sinking into the evening twilight as June begins, and will be unobservable by the end of the month.

Uranus and **Neptune** can be observed after midnight, but conditions will be difficult due to the lack of true darkness. Uranus (magnitude 5.7) will be about one degree away from Lambda Aquarii. Neptune is in the same area of sky, but harder to find because it is considerably fainter (magnitude 7.8).

Progress at our Observatory!

The work session on 21 May

A group of NAS members and friends gathered at the Society's observatory on a recent Saturday for a very successful work session. Mike Provost gives a report of the day:

We had a good session at the observatory, the raised wooden floor was completed, and the large telescope was re-assembled. As well as committee members, NAS members David Owen, Duncan Collins and John Molotoks were there, as was John Hurst (a member of Mansfield & Sutton A.S.) This was a good turnout and extremely helpful, given the heavy lifting required to reassemble the telescope. Thank you to all.

The drum holding the eyepiece now misses the dome: once the 'stalk' holding the secondary mirror is trimmed to size and other adjustments have been made, we think the telescope should be able to swing freely without any problems, even after polar alignment.

We still have to make the steps up to the new floor level, but there is no real urgency for this: the old wooden steps can be used to get up there for now. My stepladder is quite adequate to get to the eyepiece for elevations up to 45 degrees. But we will need to get a platform (either 1m or 2m: we need to balance size/ease of use with getting to the eyepiece near the zenith) in the near term.

As well as making the telescope more accessible, the wooden floor also doesn't chill the feet like the concrete did!

A big vote of thanks is due to David Lukehurst, for designing a really good floor and doing most of the assembly.

DIARY DATES

Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Our programme for the remainder of 2005 is below.

Don't forget to check our website:

<http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro>

for up-to-date details of our meetings and activities.

Thursday 2 June

NAS Observatory site, from 7.30pm

An evening at the Observatory

All members and guests are welcome. Come along and observe Jupiter and Saturn and anything else that's visible, if the sky is clear!

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

(There is no NAS event at Djanogly City Academy this evening)

Thursday 7 July

Djanogly City Academy

Doors open 7.30pm

"Extra-Solar Planets"

Dr Roger New, Sheffield Hallam University

August: Summer break, no meeting

Thursday 1 September

Djanogly City Academy

Doors open 7.30pm

"Why galaxies look the way they do: The origin of galaxy morphology"

Dr Alfonso Aragon-Salamanca

University of Nottingham

Thursday 6 October

NAS Observatory site, from 7.30pm

An evening at the Observatory

All members and guests are welcome.

Thursday 3 November

Djanogly City Academy 7.30pm

NAS Annual General Meeting 2005

Thursday 1 December

Djanogly City Academy 7.30pm

"Cosmic Collisions"

Dennis Ashton

Director, Sheffield Hallam University Star Centre

DIARY DATES (2)
Other Events

National Space Centre

Exploration Drive, Leicester

23 June 2005

“Ice Station Zero” (Cryosat Exhibition)

Understanding why ice sheets are thinning. This is ESA's look at global warming and its effects.

Visit <http://www.esa.int/esaLP/cryosat.html> for more information.

Cheltenham

Festival of Science

8 to 12 June 2005

Entry from £4 to £7

Website: www.cheltenhamfestivals.org.uk

TV: **Discovery Channel**

28 June 2005 at 9.00pm

“Alien Planet”

The programme considers what life might be like on a planet of a binary star system.

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**

For Sale

8³/₄-inch Newtonian telescope on Dobsonian mount

Built by David Lukehurst.
65x and 250x eyepieces, finderscope.
3 years old.
Hardly used, very good condition.

£375 or near offer

**Telephone Terry Naylor
on 0115 9815968**

The Widescreen Centre

18, LADY BAY ROAD ,Nottingham, NG2 5BJ

0115 945 5459 FAX: 0115 945 5362

WebShop: www.widescreen-centre.co.uk

www.telescopes-direct.com

eMail: call@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

'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

Carl Brennan at: carl.stella@virgin.net

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 £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

Tel: 01949 875857

e-mail: greg.eisenhauer@ntlworld.com

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: roy@gretton.surfonwater.com

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CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS

David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

Greg Eisenhauer

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Joe Sowerby

Dorothy Sowerby

Fred Hopper

email: fwmh@nerc.ac.uk

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.
