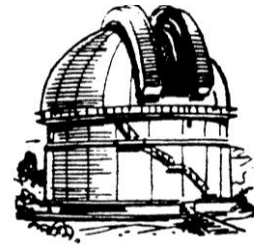

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

June 2008

Inside this issue

- Sky Notes for June
- Diary Dates
- Gifts of equipment to the Society
- Advertisements
- E-Services
- Membership application form
- Society Information

Thursday 5th June

at the

British Geological Survey

Nicker Hill, Keyworth

8 pm (doors open at 7.30pm)

Tonight we welcome

Andrew Lound

who will be speaking on

The Discovery of New Worlds

BRITISH AMATEUR DISCOVERS FASTEST-ROTATING ASTEROID

A British amateur astronomer, Richard Miles, has discovered the fastest-rotating object known in the Solar System. The near-Earth asteroid, 2008HJ, is about 20 metres across and rotates once every 42.7 seconds. Miles, based in Dorset, measured the rotational period on April 29th by remotely controlling the 2-metre Faulkes South Telescope at Siding Spring Observatory in Australia. The asteroid was visible for a few days as it passed by Earth at a distance of about three times that of the Moon, and was travelling at 45 km per second relative to Earth. The period of rotation was deduced from observations of the variation in its apparent brightness. The International Astronomical Union has confirmed the discovery. The previous record-holder for fast rotation was discovered in the year 2000, and was found to rotate once every 78 seconds. Rapidly-rotating asteroids do not come as a surprise to theorists, and it is probable that many more exist.

Sky Notes

2008 June

Compiled by Roy Gretton



The SUMMER SOLSTICE occurs at one minute to midnight UT on June 20th, which corresponds to one minute before 1 a.m. BST on June 21st. Thus the night of June 20th-21st will be the shortest night of the year. For about a month either side of the solstice the sky is never truly dark at the latitude of Nottingham, as astronomical twilight lasts throughout the night. This is not the time of year to be observing faint, deep-sky objects!

PHASES OF THE MOON

New Moon occurs in the early evening of June 3rd
First Quarter occurs in the afternoon of the 10th
Full Moon occurs in the late afternoon of the 18th
Last Quarter occurs close to midday on the 26th

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 3rd, and furthest from Earth on the 16th.

THE PLANETS

Mercury reaches inferior conjunction on June 7th, and will be unobservable for the whole of the month.

Venus is too close to the Sun to be observed this month.

Mars continues to move eastward, and on June 10th moves from Cancer into Leo, having faded to magnitude 1.6. It is now too far from Earth for useful telescopic observation, but in the meantime we are being delighted by the images sent back by the latest NASA probe to land on the planet.

Jupiter, in the constellation of Sagittarius, is now rising soon after sunset, and reaches its maximum altitude before 2 a.m. BST. However, the planet is very low in the south for observers in the UK, and while it is a delightful sight to the naked eye, telescopic observation will be difficult because of the thickness of Earth's atmosphere.

The current apparition of **Saturn** is now drawing to a close, but the planet is still observable in the evening, close to the bright star Regulus. By the end of the month, Saturn will be only 20 degrees above the western horizon at sunset, and will itself set before midnight.

Uranus (magnitude 5.9) is a morning object in the constellation of Aquarius, situated between Phi Aquarii (magnitude 4.2) and 20 Piscium (magnitude 5.5). Try using binoculars and a star chart to find this planet.

DIARY DATES 2008

Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Our programme for the coming months is below. Don't forget to check our website:

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

for the latest information about the Society's meetings and observing sessions.

Thursday 5 June 2008

British Geological Survey, Keyworth

8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

'The Discovery of New Worlds'

Andrew Lound

A dramatic talk, with music and props!

Thursday 3 July 2008

British Geological Survey, Keyworth

8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

'Mars – The Next Generation'

Paul Money

August

Summer break - no meeting at BGS this month

Thursday 4 September 2008

British Geological Survey, Keyworth

8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Members' Evening

Thursday 2 October 2008

British Geological Survey, Keyworth

8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

To be confirmed:

'Dr Plot and the Amazing Double Sunset'

Kevin Kilburn

Thursday 6 November 2008

British Geological Survey, Keyworth

8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

Annual General Meeting 2008

Two generous gifts to the Nottingham Astronomical Society

The Nottingham Astronomical Society has recently received two gifts of equipment. The donors are:

Peter Davison, a former NAS vice-president, who has kindly donated his 6 inch aperture Maksutov telescope, built by telescope-maker Peter Drew. The telescope is in a carrying case and is reasonably portable, so we hope to make use of it at NAS members' evenings at the BGS.

Greg Eisenhauer, a former NAS president, who has kindly donated a laptop computer for use at the observatory in guiding the large telescope.

The NAS committee are very grateful for these gifts to the society and wish to thank both Peter and Greg for their generosity.

Paul Stocks
Secretary
June 2008

Small Advertisements

Various items of equipment for sale

Celestron Nexstar 5 telescope and tripod etc. (including nylon cover and power supply)	£395
Pop-up observatory tent	£95
Carl Zeiss 10x50 binoculars with leather case	£25
Meade 9.7 Super Plossl eyepiece	£25
Celestron 3.6 Plossl eyepiece	£10
Celestron 90-degree erecting diagonal	£10
sodium light pollution filter	£10

**Please contact Sam Boote
s.boote@bcs.org
0115 937 4644**

This advertising space is available
free of charge to society members

For Sale

10 inch reflector telescope, focal length 63 inches
with RA Drive
two eyepieces
and storage shed

Any reasonable offer accepted

Phone **Mr Chambers**
0115 914 1454

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.

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, 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:

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

Please tick and enter your e-mail address if you wish to receive:

- the monthly **NAS Journal** (in 'Word' format) by e-mail
- e-mail notifications of dates & times of observing sessions using the large telescope at our observatory.

Your e-mail address: _____

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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email: jmhurst@hotmail.co.uk

Observatory line: 07726 940700 (line open during observing sessions)

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Joe Sowerby

Dorothy Sowerby

Kevin Greally

Robert Bush

Meetings

Our meetings, often with an illustrated talk by a guest speaker, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except in August & October) at:

The British Geological Survey

Nicker Hill

Keyworth

Nottingham NG12 5GG

Doors open 7.30pm

Meetings start 8.00pm

Meetings end 10.00pm

Meetings are open to the public and visitors are always welcome to attend.

Annual subscriptions 2007-08

Adult £25

Junior (under 18 years) £12.50

Concessions* £12.50

(*Full-time student, jobseeker's allowance, basic state pension)

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 more information about the **Nottingham Astronomical Society**, or would like to become a member, please contact the Secretary, Paul Stocks, 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.
