
Journal

of the

Nottingham Astronomical Society

March 2026



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Thursday, March 5th

**Nottingham Emmanuel School
Gresham Park Road,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 7YF**

7:45pm (doors open at 7:15pm)

This evening we welcome

**Dr Vatsal Panwar
University of Birmingham**

who will be speaking on

**Forecasting Weather on
Extrasolar Worlds**

Chairman's Message, March 2026

Dear members,

Welcome to March - and I'm hoping there is going to be less rain now. We've been trying to get the observatory accessible with some drainage pipes so that it is not such a quagmire! Meanwhile we had an introduction to black holes from Dr JJ in February and thanks to those who coped with the whiplash of the venue change with only 48 hours to go. Also we had a very enjoyable talk from James about imaging the moon.

This month we have a talk on weather on planets around other stars. I wonder if they get as much rain!

Best wishes,

Julian
NAS Chair

Sky Notes

March 2026

Compiled by Roy Gretton



All times given below are in Universal Time unless otherwise stated

The Northward Equinox (Spring Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere) occurs at 2:46 pm on March 20th.

British Summer Time begins on March 29th. Clocks should be advanced by one hour at 2 am on that date.

PHASES OF THE MOON

Phase	Date
Full Moon	March 3 rd
Last Quarter	March 11 th
New Moon	March 19 th
First Quarter	March 25 th

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 22nd, and furthest on the 10th.

Lunar Occultation of Regulus, March 29th

Regulus will be occulted by a waxing gibbous Moon beginning at 7:15 pm **BST** (in a bright sky), and will emerge from occultation 8:21 pm **BST** from behind the bright limb of the Moon, which will by then be at an elevation of 39 degrees in the southeast.

THE PLANETS

Mercury begins March as an evening object moving rapidly in towards the Sun until it reaches inferior conjunction on the 7th. Thereafter it emerges as a morning object, moving out to 27 degrees west of the Sun by the close of the month.

Venus is moving away from the Sun in the evening sky and by the end of the month won't be setting until after 9pm **BST**.

Mars, angular diameter 4 arcseconds, is still swamped by the pre-dawn glow, and even at the end of March will be rising less than one hour before the Sun.

Jupiter remains the best planet to observe this month. Even in mid-March it will still be above the horizon at 4 am, have an equatorial diameter of 41 arcseconds and a brightness of magnitude -2.4.

Phenomena of Jupiter's satellites

The **reappearance** of Jovian satellites **from eclipse** is the easiest type of phenomenon to observe with a small telescope (say, 50mm aperture). As we are now viewing the planet after opposition, satellites will be reappearing from eclipse on the east side of Jupiter.

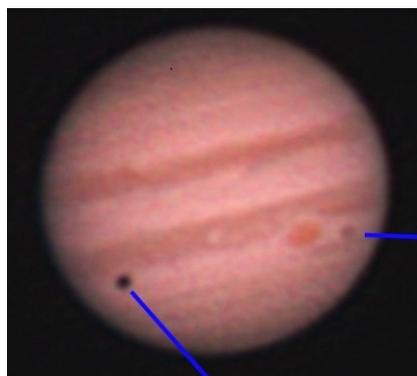
Next in ease of observation (with instruments of 100mm aperture and above) are **shadow transits**. In this case, look for a dark spot crossing Jupiter's disk.

Lists of eclipse reappearances and shadow transits visible in the *evenings* this month are given below.

In the case of reappearances, start looking several minutes ahead of the stated time, because this refers to the moment when Jupiter's shadow bisects the satellite.

March	Reappearance from eclipse of
1	Ganymede 23:16
2	Io 22:17
7	Europa 22:30
18	Io 20:36
25	Io 22:31

March	Shadow transit of
1	Io begins 22:39
10	Io ends 21:20
16	Europa ends 20:09
17	Io 20:59 to 23:15
19	Ganymede ends 21:21
23	Europa 19:55 to 22:45
24	Io begins 22:54
26	Ganymede begins 21:58
30	Europa begins 23:31 BST



The Editor's image of Jupiter at 18:30 on February 4th, showing the Great Red Spot together with Ganymede and its shadow

Saturn passes through conjunction with the Sun on March 25th, and consequently is not observable this month.

Uranus, magnitude 5.7, is an evening object in the constellation of Taurus, setting at midnight in mid-March.

Neptune is unobservable this month.

METEORS

There are no notable meteor showers in March.

Nottingham Astronomical Society 2026 membership renewal

Membership subscriptions for 2026 are due for renewal in January.

All current members will shortly receive their renewal forms by email detailing their current membership rate.

2026 subscription rates

Individual £40

Students £5

Family £55* *Family membership covers a maximum of two Adults, and any Children/Students living at the same address.

We encourage members to renew their membership using BACS electronic bank transfer. Alternatively please scan the QR code and quote your Surname and Membership number as the payment reference.



I hope you have enjoyed the meetings and events we have organised over the past year, and that you are able to renew your membership of the society in 2026.

Richard Severn

Treasurer and Membership Secretary

The Nottingham Astronomical Society: E - SERVICES

Whether or not you are a NAS member, you can keep up to date with details of the Society's

NAS on Facebook

You are welcome to connect with other members and friends of the NAS on Facebook by going to:
<http://www.facebook.com/nas.org.uk>

NAS on X

The Society has an X account at <https://twitter.com/NottinghamAstro>

NAS Journal e-mailing list

To register for your monthly e-mailed link to the NAS Journal, just e-mail
membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk

You don't have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service.

If you happen to change your email address, please remember to inform the Society by emailing us at membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk

DIARY DATES 2026

Monthly Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

1. Meetings at
Nottingham Emmanuel School
Gresham Park Road,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 7YF

Held on the **FIRST Thursday** of each month (**unless otherwise stated**)
except **August**

Doors open at 7:15pm for 7:45pm start.

*These events are normally centred around a talk by a visiting speaker,
except Quiz Nights, etc, when NAS members provide the activities.
Normally we have a **Helpdesk** open at each meeting.*

Date	Topic	Speaker
5 th March	Forecasting Weather on Extrasolar Worlds	Dr Vatsal Panwar University of Birmingham
2 nd April	<i>To be announced</i>	<i>To be announced</i>
7 th May	Time capsules from our Solar System – a story preserved in meteorites	Cesca Willcocks University of Leicester
5 th June	Atmospheres of the Solar System	Paul Money
2 nd July	<i>To be announced</i>	

2. Social and Practical Astronomy Meetings at the Burnside Memorial Hall, Plumtree

Church Hill, Plumtree, Nottingham, NG12 5ND
Held on the **THIRD Thursday** of each month from **7:30pm**

*These meetings are of a more informal nature, providing opportunity for
members and guests to share their hobby over a cup of tea or coffee,
as well as listening to a short talk or discussion*

The next meeting will be on **March 19th**

Social and Practical Astronomy, Plumtree, February 2026

The **February** Plumtree meeting was a talk by me on imaging the Moon. I realised in retrospect the talk should have been called “processing imaging data of the Moon” as I didn’t talk about how best to capture the data; we’ll have to do that another time.



Hopefully there was something for everyone and that we have encouraged others to get out there and image our nearest celestial neighbour. I mentioned various bits of free software which are listed below.

Chris made a lovely cake which didn’t last long at all, thank you.

The **March** Plumtree will be a session on the Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis, by Leigh following his recent trip to Iceland.

James Dawson
helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk



<https://www.autostakkert.com/>

<https://www.astronomie.be/registax/>

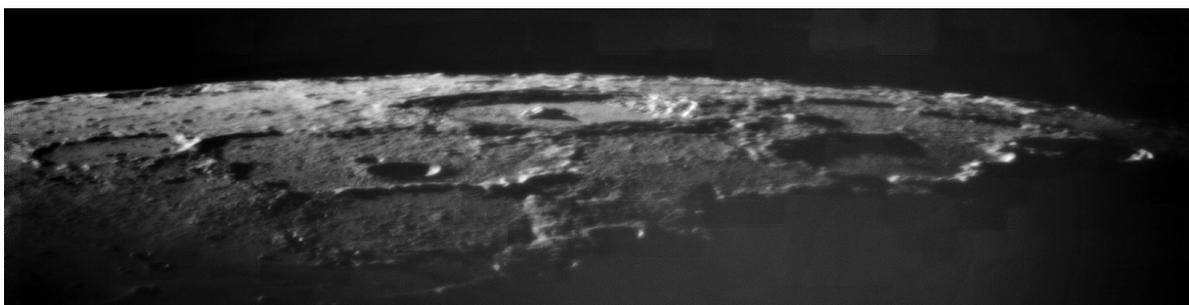
<https://www.rsastro.com/downloads/>

<https://www.faststone.org/>

https://free-astro.org/index.php?title=SER_Player

Upcoming events for the amateur astronomer

7 th March 2026	Practical Astronomy Show	Coventry
25 th March 2026	BAA Meeting	London
28 th March 2026	Deep Sky Section Meeting	Cheltenham
24 th April 2026	SHA Spring Conference	Birmingham
25 th April 2026	SPA Meeting	London
2 nd May 2026	Back to Basics	Cornwall
9 th May 2026	Historical Section Meeting	Mansfield
22 nd May 2026	BAA Spring Meeting	Leicester
3 rd June 2026	BAA Meeting	London
20 th June 2026	Webb Deep Sky Society	Cambridge
27 th June 2026	FAS Annual Meeting	Cardiff
25 th July 2026	SPA Meeting	London
18 th September 2026	BAA Meeting	Liverpool
3 rd October 2026	Radio Astronomy Section Day	Mansfield
28 th October 2026	BAA Meeting	London
31 st October 2026	SPA Meeting	London
12 th December 2026	BAA Christmas Meeting	London



Crater Pythagoras (top centre), captured by **James Dawson** on 22nd June 2025 with the Celestron C14 and ASI 585MC camera. Note the large central peak. Pythagoras is on the northwestern limb of the Moon and seldom much better positioned than this. The crater is about 130km in diameter and about 5km deep. The crater belongs to the Eratosthenian period in lunar history, and was formed between 3.2 billion years ago and 1.1 billion years ago. The crater to the left of Pythagoras in the foreground is Babbage.

**Some Features of a 10-day old Moon
imaged on the evening of January 28th**



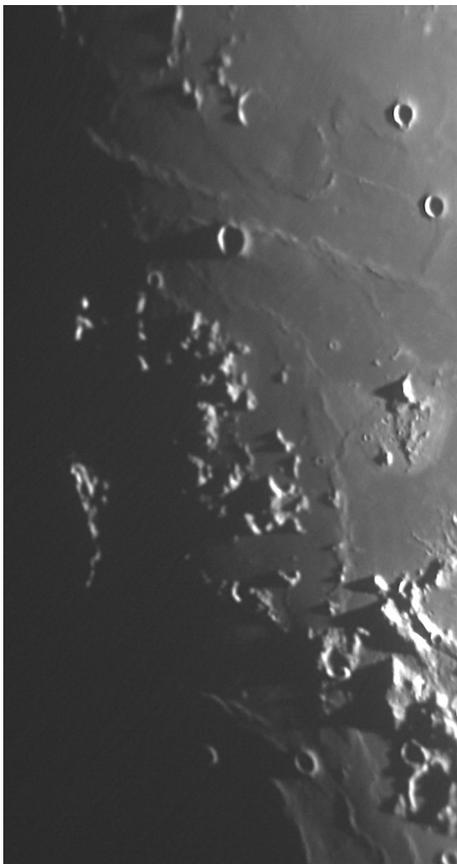
Landsberger **On the lunar equator**

x ← The Apollo 12 landing site is here

The Rhiphaeus Mountains

**This whole flat area is
part of the Mare Nubium**

← images of the same crater
←



Herigonius

The Andreus Hills are on the left side of the image

Agatharchides **20° south**



Euler

20° North

**An area on the southern edge
of the Mare Imbrium**

Carpathian Mountains

T Mayer

Milichius



Campanus

30° south

This plain is called Palus Epidemiarum

Ramsden

Hainzel

Roy Gretton

NGC 281, the Pacman Nebula

Imaged by **David Buxton** using a Dwarf 3 smartscope

It consists of 300 x 15 second images, with the gain set at 60, and processed using the Dwarf software.



Nottingham Astronomical Society

Affiliated to the **British Astronomical Association**
Member of the **Federation of Astronomical Societies**
Supporters of the **Commission for Dark Skies**

CHAIRMAN:

Julian Onions

email: chairman@nottinghamastro.org.uk

VICE CHAIRMAN:

James Dawson

email: vicechairman@nottinghamastro.org.uk

SECRETARY:

Chris Sneddon

email: secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk

TREASURER:

Richard Severn

email: treasurer@nottinghamastro.org.uk

JOURNAL EDITOR:

Roy Gretton

email: journal@nottinghamastro.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Richard Severn

email: membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk

WEBMASTER:

Leigh Blake

email: leigh@nottinghamastro.org.uk

OBSERVATORY DIRECTOR:

James Dawson

email: observatory@nottinghamastro.org.uk

LIBRARIAN:

Holly McNiven

Aniket Mahapure

Meetings

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

**Nottingham Emmanuel School
Gresham Park Road,
West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 7YF**

Doors open	7:15pm
Meetings start	7:45pm
Meetings end	9:15 pm

These meetings are open to the public, and visitors are welcome to attend, subject to a charge of £5 per meeting for adults (£1 for concessions).

Annual subscriptions 2026

Individual	£40
Family (maximum of two adults, and children/students living at the same address)	£55
Under-18s and full-time students	£5

Subscriptions become due on 1st January. Half-price subscription is charged if joining after 30th June (minimum subscription £5).

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 membership@nottinghamastro.org.uk or speak to any NAS committee member at one of our regular monthly meetings.

The Nottingham Astronomical Society

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