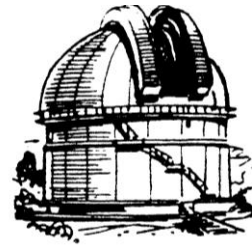


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# Journal

of the



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## Nottingham Astronomical Society

March 2005

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### Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

at the Djanogly City Technology College

*Doors open from 7.30pm*

Tonight we welcome

**Dr Nigel Bannister**

of the

**Space Research Centre, Department of Physics  
& Astronomy**

**University of Leicester**

who will be speaking on

### **Astronomy with the International Space Station**

### **DISCOVERY OF THE FIRST METEORITE ON ANOTHER PLANET**

In January this year the Mars rover Opportunity discovered a “rock” on the Martian surface that is almost certainly an iron meteorite. The discovery was made when Opportunity was inspecting the area around the remains of the heat shield used when the rover was entering the Martian atmosphere.

The object, about the size of a baseball, is the only meteorite so far to be discovered on the surface of another planet. Analysis with the thermal emission spectrometer on Opportunity showed that the object had the composition of an iron meteorite rather than that of a Martian rock.

# Sky Notes

## 2005 March

Compiled by Roy Gretton

*All times quoted are U.T.*



### PHASES OF THE MOON

Last Quarter	3d 17h 36m
New Moon	10d 09h 10m
First Quarter	17d 19h 19m
Full Moon	25d 20h 50m

### THE PLANETS

**Mercury.** The best evening apparition of Mercury for Northern Hemisphere observers during 2005 occurs this month. The planet is at greatest eastern elongation ( $18^\circ$ ) on March 12<sup>th</sup>, and so there are good prospects of observing it during the first three weeks of the month. It will be a magnitude -1 object low in the west (in the constellation of Pisces) after sunset. Choose a location with a low western skyline and a minimum of obstructions.

**Venus** is to all intents and purposes unobservable this month, as it passes through superior conjunction on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Mars** continues to draw slowly away from the Sun in the morning sky, but in spite of this it is actually getting harder to observe from the Northern Hemisphere because of its southward movement. Little or no useful observation of the planet can be expected this month.

**Jupiter** is approaching opposition, which will occur early next month, and so is visible for much of the night. It will be rising about 20.00 hours in the middle of March, and will be a bright object at magnitude -2.4. It has by far the best planetary disc for observation.

**Saturn** is well placed for observation in the early evening. The rings are still widely open, making it an excellent object to observe through even a modest-sized telescope.

**Uranus** and **Neptune** continue to be unobservable as they both passed through conjunction with the Sun last month.

### METEORS

Like February, March is a sparse time of year for meteor showers. Some Virginids may be seen late in the month (but the maximum is not until April 10<sup>th</sup>).

### COMET MACHHOLZ

Comet 2004 Q2 (Machholz) continues to be observable through binoculars. It is circumpolar, passing from Cepheus into Camelopardalis and later into Draco. It will reach its most northerly declination on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Early in the month is a favourable time to make observations as moonlight will not be troublesome.

## DIARY DATES

### Meetings and activities of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

#### Thursday 3 March

Djanogly CTC 7.30pm

### “Astronomy with the International Space Station”

Dr Nigel Bannister

Space Research Centre, Department of Physics & Astronomy

University of Leicester

[www.src.le.ac.uk/lobster](http://www.src.le.ac.uk/lobster)

#### **Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 March (Provisional dates)**

From 10.00am at the Observatory

### Work Weekend in the Dome

Volunteers needed to help construct the raised wooden floor. Details at the March meeting.

If you are able to help, please contact the Secretary:

[nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

#### Thursday 7 April

Djanogly CTC 7.30pm

### “Nottinghamshire, a Heavenly County”

Madeline Cox

Bassetlaw Astronomical Society

#### Monday 11 April

### The Rose and Crown

Main Road, Cotgrave

### NAS Annual Dinner

All are welcome!

Full details at the March meeting

#### Thursday 5 May

Djanogly CTC 7.30pm

*[Speaker and topic to be arranged]*

#### Thursday 7 July

Djanogly CTC 7.30pm

### “Extra-Solar Planets”

Dr Roger New

Sheffield Hallam University

#### Thursday 6 October

At NAS Observatory site 7.30pm

### Members' Evening at the Observatory

#### Thursday 1 December

Djanogly CTC 7.30pm

### “Cosmic Collisions”

Dennis Ashton

Director, Sheffield Hallam University Star Centre

## Observatory Work Weekend in March

There will be another “work weekend” at the observatory during March. The task will be to construct a raised wooden floor for the dome. Once installed in the dome, the raised floor will provide much improved access to the large telescope, making observing a more pleasurable activity!

**Helpers are needed** for the construction of the floor, so if you are “good with wood”, do please volunteer. Your help to the Society will be much appreciated. David Lukehurst has drawn up the plans for the floor and can be contacted at: [gildor@ntlworld.com](mailto:gildor@ntlworld.com)

At the time of writing, **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March** are the likely dates, with the site open from 10.00am. However, please note that these dates are provisional.

We will discuss this work at the Society’s meeting on 3rd March, and confirm the dates then.

Paul Stocks  
NAS Secretary  
[nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

### The Nottingham Astronomical Society's 'Beehive' website

The NAS has a 'Beehive' website, which you can find at:  
<http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro>

‘The Beehive’ is a free service for the local area's not-for-profit community groups provided by the Nottingham Evening Post as part of the community section of their website. It's a useful way for the Society to publicise our meetings and observatory facility.

If you have any ideas for the content of the site, please let the Secretary know at:  
[nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

## 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

**8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-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](http://www.widescreen-centre.co.uk)**

**[www.telescopes-direct.com](http://www.telescopes-direct.com)**

**eMail: [call@widescreen-centre.co.uk](mailto:call@widescreen-centre.co.uk)**

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# 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](mailto: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.*

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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 £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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## **PRESIDENT:**

**Greg Eisenhauer**

Tel: 01949 875857

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

## **HONORARY VICE PRESIDENT**

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

## **VICE PRESIDENTS:**

**David Lukehurst**

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

website: [www.dobsonians.co.uk](http://www.dobsonians.co.uk)

**Dr Roy Gretton**

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

## **HONORARY SECRETARY:**

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## **CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS**

**David Lukehurst**

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

## **CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:**

**Greg Eisenhauer**

## **ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

**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.

## **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.**

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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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