

---

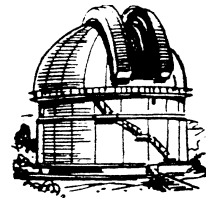
# Journal

of the

## Nottingham Astronomical Society

### March 2018

---



#### *In this issue*

- Sky Notes for March
- Diary Dates 2018:  
Meetings at Gotham and Plumtree
- Other events of interest
- E-Services
- Social and Practical Astronomy – report of last month's meeting and preview of future events
- Society Information
- Membership application form

**Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**

Gotham Memorial Hall

Gotham, NG11 0HE

8 pm (doors open at 7 pm)

Tonight we give a warm welcome to

**Bob Mizon, MBE, FRAS**

*of the*

*BAA Commission for Dark Skies*

who will be speaking on

## **Dark Future?**

*Can the UK's dark spaces survive?*

---

**JANUARY'S "BLUE SUPERMOON" IMAGED BY GARETH DAVIES**

using a Canon 700D at the prime focus a Skywatcher 127 Maksutov-Cassegrain



# Sky Notes

## March 2018



Compiled by Roy Gretton

*All times given below are in Universal Time (UT) unless otherwise stated*

The Northern Hemisphere **Spring Equinox** occurs at 4:16 pm on March 20<sup>th</sup>, when the Sun will be exactly above Earth's equator for the first time this year.

**British Summer Time** begins on Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. Clocks should be advanced by one hour at 1 am on that date.

### PHASES OF THE MOON

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Date and time</i>
Full Moon	12:52 am on March 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Last Quarter	11:21 am on the 9 <sup>th</sup>
New Moon	1:13 pm on the 17 <sup>th</sup>
First Quarter	3:36 pm on the 24 <sup>th</sup>
Full Moon	1:38 pm <b>BST</b> on the 31 <sup>st</sup>

*(Expect more media hype on the theme of Blue Moons)*

This month the Moon is closest to the Earth on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and furthest on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

### THE PLANETS

The middle of March provides one of the best opportunities for observing **Mercury** in 2018. The planet will be an evening object throughout the month, reaching greatest eastern elongation on March 15<sup>th</sup>, when it will be 18 degrees from the Sun and shining at magnitude  $-0.6$ . Look west at about 7 pm in mid-month to spot both Mercury and the much brighter Venus a few degrees above the western horizon. Earlier, on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mercury, although very low in the west after sunset, will be 1.4 degrees north of Venus.

**Venus** is an evening object, gradually moving away from the Sun as the month unfolds, and shining at magnitude  $-3.9$ . It will become much more prominent as the summer approaches.



**Looking due west at  
7 pm on March 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Mars**, shining at magnitude 0.8 and displaying a disk nearly 7 arcseconds across, rises at about 3 am in early March. Being 23 degrees south of the celestial equator it will be a challenging object to observe telescopically.

**Jupiter** is better-placed, being at about 17 degrees southern declination, and shining at magnitude  $-2.2$ . By the end of March, Jupiter will be rising well before midnight, and its angular diameter will have reached 40 arcseconds.

**Saturn**, at magnitude 0.5, will be a more difficult target to observe, not rising until nearly 5 am as March begins. If you happen to be out-and-about before sunrise at the very end of the month, watch out for Mars closing in on Saturn. (The two planets will be a little over a degree apart on April 2<sup>nd</sup>).



**Looking due south at  
5 am on March 17<sup>th</sup>**

*A trio of superior planets  
among the southern  
zodiacal constellations*

**Uranus** and **Neptune** must now be regarded as unobservable as they are very close to the Sun.

## METEORS

The **Virginids** begin to show weak activity in the second half of March, although you will be very lucky to see a handful of events in an hour of watching.

# DIARY DATES 2018

## Monthly Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

### 1) Meetings at Gotham Memorial Hall

Nottingham Road, Gotham, NG11 0HE

Held on the **FIRST Thursday** of each month except **August**

Doors open at 7pm for 8pm start.

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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Dark Future? <i>Can the UK's dark spaces survive?</i>	Bob Mizon, MBE, FRAS <i>BAA Commission for Dark Skies</i>
April 5 <sup>th</sup>	Jodrell Bank 60 years on	Prof Ian Morison <i>University of Manchester</i>
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lucky Planet – why Earth is exceptional <i>and what it means for life</i>	Prof David Waltham <i>Royal Holloway, University of London</i>
June 7 <sup>th</sup>	Diamonds in the Sky <i>White Dwarfs in Modern Astrophysics</i>	Professor Martin Barstow <i>University of Leicester</i>
July 5 <sup>th</sup>	Cassini's Final Science	Dr Phil Sutton <i>University of Lincoln</i>
August 4 <sup>th</sup> (Saturday)	Annual Society BBQ at the Observatory	
September 6 <sup>th</sup>	The Adventures of Curiosity on Mars	Prof Sanjeev Gupta <i>Imperial College, London</i>
October 4 <sup>th</sup>	Juno – the Answers	Prof Emma Bunce <i>University of Leicester</i>
November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Annual General Meeting	
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	Transient Events in Astronomy or <i>things that go bump in the night</i>	Prof Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell DBE, FRS, FRSE, FRAS

## 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.*

**The next meeting will be on March 15<sup>th</sup>**

---

**Check our website: [www.nottinghamastro.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamastro.org.uk)  
for the latest information about the Society's meetings  
and for further information about the talks and speakers**

---

### **Events in the coming months open to everyone**

(follow hyperlinks for more information and how to book)

28th February	<a href="#">A brief history of women in astronomy</a> , Open Dome Event, Clifton
4th March	BAA <a href="#">Deep Sky Section Meeting</a> , Bedford
10th March	BAA <a href="#">Back to Basics Workshop</a> , Bristol
17-20 March	<a href="#">The Photography Show</a> , The NEC, Birmingham
29th March	<a href="#">A live surface of the Sun</a> , Open Dome Event, Clifton
21st April	Society for the History of Astronomy <a href="#">Spring Meeting</a> , Cambridge
25th April	<a href="#">Heavenly Place on Earth</a> , Open Dome Event, Clifton
24th May	<a href="#">Flat Earth Rising</a> , Open Dome Event, Clifton
2nd June	<a href="#">Webb Deep Sky Society Annual Meeting</a> , Cambridge
7-8 July	<a href="#">BAA Summer Meeting</a> , Coventry
12-13 October	<a href="#">International Astronomy Show</a> , Stoneleigh, Warwickshire
27 October	Society for the History of Astronomy, <a href="#">Autumn Conference</a> , Birmingham

### **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 meetings and other events by visiting the NAS website: [www.nottinghamastro.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamastro.org.uk)

#### **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 Twitter**

The Society has a Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/NottinghamAstro>

#### **NAS Journal e-mailing list**

To register for your monthly e-mailed copy of the NAS Journal, just e-mail [secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:secretary@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 [treasurer@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@nottinghamastro.org.uk)*

## Social and Practical Astronomy, Plumtree

The **February** meeting at Plumtree was an educational quiz, organised and delivered by our own Astrophysicist, Dr Julian Onions, from The University of Nottingham.

Those attending were divided up into two teams, and all members of the teams took it in turn to answer a question. The questions were ranked in difficulty from 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest); individuals were asked what level of difficult question they would like, and the harder the question, the more points it would attract for their team. If they struggled with the question the rest of their team could help them though this would halve the number of points awarded if they were correct.

All of the questions were to define or describe an astronomical term. These ranged from "[Blue Moon](#)" to "[AGN](#)". Brief discussion and an explanation was subsequently given by Julian once the team member had attempted to define their term, and a slide was projected with the correct definitions and often a useful graphic. The technical side of the evening was run by myself and Tobias, who is also at The University of Nottingham, an undergraduate reading physics.

The scores were very close at the end, and Julian provided treats for the winners (and the runners up). It was a very educational and fun evening. Thank you Julian.



*Julian Onions quizzing the audience*

The **March** meeting at Plumtree will see Leigh run a session on telescopes. At the **April** meeting, David Lukehurst is going to give us a talk on eyepieces. The **May** meeting is yet to be confirmed, and in **June**, Alan Heath will talk to us about observing the planets.

**James Dawson**

NAS Helpdesk

[helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk)



# 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 **Commission for Dark Skies**

---

## **CHAIRMAN:**

**John Hurst**

e-mail: [president@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:president@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

## **VICE CHAIRMAN:**

**Roy Gretton**

e-mail: [vicepresident@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:vicepresident@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

## **SECRETARY:**

**(vacant post: )**

e-mail: [secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

## **TREASURER:**

**David Anderson**

e-mail: [treasurer@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

## **JOURNAL EDITOR:**

**Roy Gretton**

e-mail: [journal@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:journal@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

---

## **CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS:**

**Leigh Blake**

e-mail: [curator@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:curator@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

## **DIRECTOR OF OBSERVING:**

**David Buxton**

email: [observatory@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:observatory@nottinghamastro.org.uk)

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

---

## **Meetings**

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

**Gotham Memorial Hall  
Gotham  
Nottingham NG11 0HE**

Doors open                7.00pm  
**Meetings start        8.00pm**  
Meetings end            10.00pm

These meetings are open to the public, and visitors are welcome to attend.

## ***Annual subscriptions 2018***

Full	£30
Joint rate for partners living at the same address	£45
Under-18s and full-time students	£5

Subscriptions become due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Half-price subscription is charged if joining after 30<sup>th</sup> 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 the Secretary [secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk) or speak to any NAS committee member at one of the regular monthly meetings. A membership application form is inside this issue of the Journal.

---

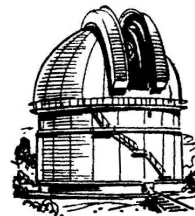
## **The Nottingham Astronomical Society**

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.

# NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1946 for all interested in astronomy  
Affiliated to the British Astronomical Association  
Member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies

Registered Charity No. 1174745  
Member of the Society for Popular Astronomy  
Supporter of the Commission for Dark Skies



## Membership application and Gift Aid declaration

**Title:**

**Full name:**

**Full home address:**

**Postcode:**

**Telephone:**

**e-mail address:**

<b>Subscription rate:</b>	Full	(year)	(half year)
	Partnership	(year)	(half year)
	Under-18 and full-time students		

Partnership = two members living together as a couple at the same address

I wish my subscriptions to be eligible for Gift Aid **Yes / No**

## Gift Aid declaration

**(HMRC reference XR32048)**

I want Nottingham Astronomical Society to treat all subscriptions and donations that I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise.

I pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that Nottingham Astronomical Society reclaims on my donations in the appropriate tax year.

**Signature:**

**Date:**