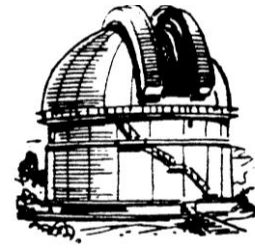

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

May 2005

Inside this issue

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Thursday 5th May

at the Djanogly City Academy

Doors open from 7.30pm

Tonight is a

Members' Evening

**with a special focus on the Society's
Observatory and Large Telescope**

MARS ROVERS SET TO CONTINUE THEIR MISSION

Spirit and Opportunity, the two rovers that landed on Mars in January 2004, have been given the go-ahead to continue their mission until September 2006. Both continue to work very well, and each is in a good position to continue its programme of exploration. We can therefore expect a stream further scientific data from both rovers. They have already provided evidence of past water in both of the landing areas.

Sky Notes

2005 May

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



PHASES OF THE MOON

Last Quarter	1d 06h 24m	and	30d 11h 47m
New Moon	8d 08h 45m		
First Quarter	16d 08h 57m		
Full Moon	23d 20h 18m		

THE PLANETS

Mercury is very well-placed for observation from the Southern Hemisphere this month, but we in the north are less well-favoured. The planet is south of the Sun in the morning sky, so it will be quite low down in the twilight and difficult to observe.

Venus passed through superior conjunction at the end of March, and is very slowly moving away from the Sun in the evening twilight. This planet too will be difficult to observe this month. We shall have to wait until the autumn to see it at its best.

Mars continues to move southwards throughout May, and so becomes more difficult to observe from Britain. Only after the end of this month does its declination begin to increase (i.e. become less negative), so we shall have to wait a few more months in order to get a good view of this planet.

Jupiter is by far the best planet to observe this month. It will be visible as a bright star throughout the hours of darkness (only the Moon will be brighter). It is almost due south late in the evening, and is in the constellation of Virgo. On the 19th it will be occulted by the Moon as seen from South America (not Britain); from this country it will be about one degree north of the Moon on this occasion.

Saturn, still close to Castor and Pollux in the constellation of Gemini, is steadily becoming less favourable to observe as it gets lower in the west after sunset. Viewing is best immediately after darkness falls.

Uranus and **Neptune** will be very difficult to observe this month. They are low in the morning twilight.

METEORS

Conditions are favourable this year for observing the Eta Aquarids, although this is never an easy shower to see from the latitude of the U.K. Moonlight will be completely absent at the expected maximum on May 4th, and so early morning observers may see a few of these meteors before dawn.

COMET MACHHOLZ is now becoming a difficult object for ordinary binoculars as it is expected to fade to magnitude 9 this month. However you might like to take the opportunity to try to locate it around May 8th when it will be within a degree of Delta Ursa Majoris (the central star of the Plough).

6-inch Dobsonian Reflector Free to a good home

The Editor has a 6-inch Newtonian telescope which he originally built when a teenager, but which in recent years has been re-mounted as a Dobsonian. He will be happy to give it to any member or friend who would like to acquire such an instrument. If you are interested, or know some else with a genuine interest, please telephone 01509 852237, or email roy@gretton.surfonwater.com

Two new UK astronomy magazines!

SKY AT NIGHT magazine

During May, the new **BBC Sky at Night** magazine will be launched and each copy will include an interactive CD-ROM. Full details are on the website: www.skyatnightmagazine.com/

COSMOS Magazine

Another new magazine to be launched soon is entitled **COSMOS**. Its main aim is to promote life long learning in astronomy and the space sciences. There will be a directory named "Blueprint" which aims to provide information on University Courses, telescope retailers, astronomical societies etc for use by astronomers and the general public. The magazine will be available from all good newsagents, or on subscription. Launch date is 1st June. More information can be found at: www.cosmosmagazine.co.uk

Cosmos magazine will carry a listing of Nottingham Astronomical Society events in the first issue.

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 work sessions at the Observatory.

Thursday 5 May

Djanogly City Academy

Doors open 7.30pm

Members' Evening

We'll be discussing the telescope/observatory project. Ideas are very welcome!

Thursday 2 June

NAS Observatory site, from 7.30pm

An evening at the Observatory

All members and guests are welcome

Directions to the site are available from: nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

(There is no NAS event at Djanogly on 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

Twilight Opening

Ever wondered what the view from the Rocket Tower looks like at night? Well here's your chance to find out! The **National Space Centre** will be open until **10pm** (*last entry 8:30pm*) on **Tuesday 24th May**.

The Centre will be open as normal, with Boosters serving hot and cold snacks, the Cargo Bay gift shop will be open and a variety of Space Theatre shows will be running throughout the evening. Admission prices will be as normal. Details: www.spacecentre.co.uk

SKY WATCH PROJECT

Introducing European youth to the world of scientific research through interactive utilisation of a global network of robotic telescopes

The SKY WATCH project aims to introduce European youth to the truly wondrous world of science and technology by engaging school and university students and young science amateurs to escalating, challenging and innovative multidisciplinary 'Science Games' combining creativity, intelligence and scientific quest. SKY WATCH introduces a pan-European Science Communication and Celebration Initiative, which will reach its peak during European Science Week 2005, comprising two main interrelated events:

- (1) A two-phase European Science Contest culminating in a central European Exhibition and a Best Projects Award Ceremony
- (2) A series of popular science distance learning courses (16 'Science Days' overall).

Please visit the website for further details: www.sky-watch.org

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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CCD CAMERAS

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

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Dr Roy Gretton

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David Lukehurst

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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.
