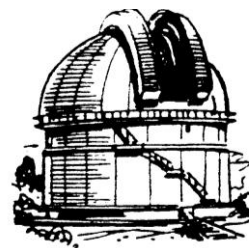

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

May 2014

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Thursday, May 1st

British Geological Survey
Nicker Hill, Keyworth
8 pm (doors open at 7.30pm)

Tonight we welcome

Dr Sarah Casewell

who will be speaking on

White Dwarf Stars

Make the best of the next couple of weeks
(particularly if you are a deep sky observer)

At the latitude of Nottingham, no part of the sky is completely dark between May 17th and July 26th, because the Sun is less than 18 degrees below the horizon throughout this period. Put another way, astronomical twilight persists throughout the night. This year, Full Moon occurs on May 14th, so I reckon that the window for observing *faint* deep sky objects ends on about the 10th!

That said, there are some brighter deep sky objects that are observable throughout the summer, for example

M3 (*Messier 3*): a glorious globular cluster in the constellation of Canes Venatici, which is almost overhead in the late evening in May. Best viewed through a telescope.

The double star **24 Comae Berenices**: a striking combination of an orange star and a blue star 20 arcseconds apart, high in the south in the late evening. Binoculars or a small telescope are required to appreciate this object.

Melotte 111 is the large triangular star cluster from which the constellation of Coma Berenices (*Berenices' Hair*) derives its name. It is visible to the naked eye, and is particularly beautiful when viewed through binoculars. Look high in the south in the late evening.

And, of course, we may be treated to displays of **noctilucent clouds** at any time from late May to late July.

Sky Notes

May 2014

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times are given in British Summer Time



PHASES OF THE MOON

First Quarter	4:15 am on May 7 th
Full Moon	8:16 pm on May 14 th
Last Quarter	2 pm on May 21 st
New Moon	7:40 pm on May 28 th

This month the Moon is closest to the Earth on the 18th, and furthest on the 6th.

THE PLANETS

The second half of this month sees the best evening apparition of **Mercury** during 2014, with greatest eastern elongation occurring on May 25th. On this date the planet will have an elevation of 10 degrees above the WNW horizon when the Sun is 6 degrees below the horizon.

Venus is a morning object throughout May, its elongation from the Sun slowly decreasing from 43 degrees at the start of the month to 37 degrees by the end. It begins the month shining at magnitude -4.0 , but fades slightly thereafter.

Although opposition occurred last month, the beginning of May is still an excellent time for observing **Mars**, with the angular diameter of the planet more than 15 arcseconds (greater than it will be for over two years). It will spend the whole of May in the constellation of Virgo, an orange “star” slowly fading from magnitude -1.1 to -0.6 as the month progresses.

The current apparition of **Jupiter** is now beginning to draw to a close as it heads toward conjunction with the Sun in July. By the end of May its angular diameter will have diminished to 33 arcseconds, and its brightness to magnitude -1.9 .

May is the best month of 2014 for observing **Saturn**, as the gas giant, in the constellation of Libra, reaches opposition to the Sun on the 10th. It will be shining at magnitude $+0.1$, with the planet’s equatorial diameter reaching 18.7 arcseconds, and the diameter of the ring system reaching 42.4 arcseconds. With the rings tilted at nearly 23 degrees to our line of sight, the northern hemisphere of the planet will be exposed. Saturn’s largest and brightest satellite, Titan, will be due north of the planet on May 1st and again on the 17th.



Looking SSW at midnight
on May 17th

Uranus, in the constellation of Pisces, is unobservable this month, while **Neptune** is a morning object in the constellation of Aquarius, rising at about 2 am at the close of May.

METEORS

May is not normally a very promising time for observing meteors from the UK, with a few showers with southern radiants (Aquarids, Scorpids, Ophiuchids) active during the month. There is, however, the outside chance of a spectacular event on May 24th, when the **Camelopardalids** (meteors appearing to radiate from the direction of Camelopardalis, a circumpolar constellation) could put in an appearance. Look toward the north once the sky is nearly dark (which won't be until quite late). Conditions will be favourable, with no interference from moonlight.

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

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 Journal e-mailing list

To register for your monthly e-mailed copy of the NAS Journal, just e-mail secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk

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

DIARY DATES 2014

Monthly Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Our programme for this year is shown below. Don't forget to check our website:

www.nottinghamastro.org.uk

for the latest information about the Society's meetings and for further information about the talks and speakers.

Our meetings are held on the **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month,

at the British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Notts. NG12 5GG

doors open at 7:30pm for 8pm start.

Thursday 1st May 2014

White Dwarf Stars

Dr Sarah Casewell

Thursday 5th June

Practical Radio Astronomy for Amateurs

Paul Hyde

Thursday 3rd July

Phoenix from the Ashes – the Origin of the Chemical Elements

Prof Mike Edmunds

Thursday 7th August

Summer Break - No meeting

Thursday 4th September

Members' Evening – Non-members welcome – Topics to be arranged

Thursday 2nd October

The Latest on the Sun

Dr Lucie Green

Thursday 6th November

2014 Annual General Meeting

Thursday 4th December

**Into the Cosmic Ocean
*The Dream of Travel to the Stars***

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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ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Kevin Greally

David Anderson

Phil Heesom

Meetings

Our meetings, often with an illustrated talk by a guest speaker, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except in August) 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 2014

Full	£25
Concessions	£12.50
Joint rate for partners living at the same address	£37.50

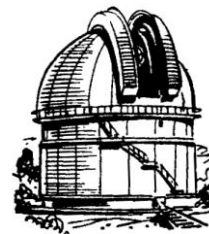
Subscriptions become due on 1st January. Half-price subscription is charged if joining after 1st July. Please make cheques payable to: Nottingham Astronomical Society.

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 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



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Affiliated to the British Astronomical Association
Member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies

Registered Charity No. 1066645
Member of the Society for Popular Astronomy
Supporter of the Campaign for Dark Skies

Membership application and Gift Aid declaration

Title:

Full name:

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e-mail address:

Subscription rate:	Full	£25.00	(year)	£12.50	(half year)
	Concession	£12.50		£6.25	
	Partnership	£37.50		£18.75	

Concession = under-18 / full-time student / unemployed and receiving benefits

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.

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