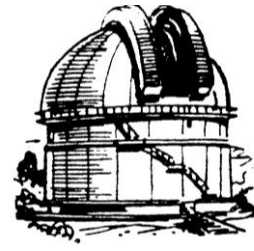

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society
November 2003

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Thursday November 6th

Tonight we have the

**Annual General Meeting
of the Society**

at the

Djanogly City Technology College

Doors open at 7.30 pm

HERMES FOUND AGAIN AFTER 66 YEARS

Hermes is an asteroid which was discovered by Karl Reinmuth at Heidelberg, Germany, on 28 October 1937. He tracked it for only five days and then lost it.

Hermes became famous because it passed within a mere 800,000 kilometres of the Earth, twice the distance of the Moon.

Early on 15 October 2003, Brian Skiff of the Lowell Observatory in Arizona, USA, found Hermes again after an absence of 66 years. Astronomers estimate that Hermes is about one to two kilometres across, and bright enough to be seen through amateur telescopes for a while.

An “AGM message” from the President

A busy year

Our AGM on 6th November is fast approaching. The past year has been one in which significant progress has been made towards achieving our goal of having an operational observatory with a 24 inch aperture telescope.

During the year:

The telescope has been ordered from Beacon Hill Telescopes and is under construction;

The main mirror has been aluminised;

We have bought a generator for on-site use;

The observatory dome has been “spring cleaned” ready to receive the telescope;

NAS committee member Joe Sowerby has constructed a winching mechanism to rotate the dome;

We have an engineer, Nick Howarth (a colleague of our Treasurer, Mike Provost) who is constructing a powered mechanism to open and close the dome shutter. The mechanism is being assembled is expected to be fitted to the dome within the next six weeks;

We have liaised with the British Astronomical Association to help bring a BAA “Observers Workshop” meeting to Nottingham in April 2004.

And of course we have had our usual programme of meetings at Djanogly CTC, as well as one at the observatory in October.

The NAS committee

The committee has been very active over the year, even though all of its members have other commitments. I am sure that NAS members will wish to join me in thanking the committee for their work. But sometimes committee members do have to set NAS work aside in order to attend to the business of earning a living!

At the AGM, our Society Secretary Carl Brennan will be stepping down from that post after many years of service to the NAS. On behalf of the committee and all NAS members I would like to say thank you Carl, for all you have done for the NAS during your time as Secretary. You really will be a “hard act to follow”!

Peter Davison is stepping down from the committee and as Vice President. Thank you Peter for booking the Society’s annual dinner for the last two years and also for standing in for me at a CTC meeting on an evening when I had to be elsewhere.

I am pleased to say that we have candidates for 2003-04 for Journal Editor, Curator of Instruments and Campaign for Dark Skies officer. BUT we shall need to find a new Secretary. All committee members who are standing for re-election are fully occupied and cannot take on extra commitments. The post of Secretary is mainly concerned with arranging meetings, booking guest speakers, dealing with enquiries from potential new members and taking minutes at committee meetings. It does not need any extensive knowledge of astronomy! Can you help? If you feel you could do the job, please contact me as soon as possible before the AGM.

The Society cannot function without a Secretary. Therefore if no candidate can be found by 6th November, I am prepared to stand as Secretary myself at the AGM and step down as President, half-way through my two-year term. That would create a vacancy for President, which may possibly be easier to fill than that of Secretary! The President's job is mainly to chair the meetings of the Society – the Djanogly CTC ordinary meetings and the committee meetings, as well as having a general overview of Society activities. If you are a member of the NAS, have an interest in our aims and activities and are able to get to our meetings, then you could be our President. It really is good fun and not too difficult, believe me.

So, to summarise:

We need a new Secretary from 6th November. If no NAS member is willing or able to take on the job, then I shall stand for election to the post.

In the event of me becoming Secretary, we shall need to elect a new President at the AGM.

So if the jobs of Secretary *or* President appeal to you, please give me a call or e-mail me – my contact details are below. Many thanks.

Finally, new ordinary members of the committee are always very welcome. The committee normally meets for two hours about once every two months. If you have been thinking of joining the committee and helping the Society, the AGM is the time to do it!

See you at the AGM.

Paul Stocks
NAS President
Phone: 0115 914 8185
E-mail: stocks_paul61@hotmail.com

Sky Notes

2003 November

Compiled by Roy Gretton

All times quoted are U.T.



THE MOON

First Quarter 01d 04h 25m and 30d 17h 16m
Full Moon 9d 01h 13m
Last Quarter 17d 04h 15m
New Moon 23d 22h 59m

THE PLANETS

Mercury is not well placed for observation this month, being very low in the evening twilight. On the 25th it will be one-third of a degree north of the Moon.

Venus is also low in the western sky after sunset, but is becoming easier to observe, being almost 27° from the Sun by the end of the month.

Mars, though continually fading, is still brighter than all the fixed stars in the evening sky, other than Sirius. The planet now sets about midnight, but is actually getting higher in the evening sky because its declination is increasing (i.e. becoming less negative). Mars is 3° north of the Moon on the 3rd.

Jupiter is now a striking object in the morning sky, reaching magnitude -2 before the end of the month. It will be 4° south of the Moon on the 18th.

Saturn is visible from mid-evening onwards in November, culminating about 03.00 hr, when, at declination +22°, it will be high in the morning sky. Saturn will be 5° south of the Moon on the 13th.

Uranus (magnitude 5.8) is an evening object, now a few degrees north of iota Aquarii.

Neptune (magnitude 7.9) is in Capricornus, and becoming very difficult to observe.

METEORS

The **Leonids** have failed to come up to the most spectacular predictions in recent years, but could still be quite active, with a possible zenithal hourly rate of 100. The maximum is expected at around 03.00 hr on November 18th.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE MOON

The Moon will pass into the Earth's shadow on the night of November 8-9th. The partial eclipse begins just after 23.30 and ends at 03.05. Totality lasts from 01.07 to 01.30. The event is very well-placed for UK observers.

DIARY DATES, by Carl Brennan

MEETINGS OF THE NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

November 6th Djanogly CTC Meeting. Doors open from 7.30pm
A.G.M.

December 4th Djanogly CTC Meeting. Doors open from 7.30pm

Understanding the largest explosive volcanic eruptions on Earth (TBC)

Dr M J Branney BSc, PhD, Department of Geology, University of Leicester

January 1st 2004 No Meeting

OTHER EVENTS

November 6th BA meeting 7pm at the Central Library, Quantum Machines and Information with John Gough, Nottingham Trent University.

**November 8th (Saturday) LEEDS
ASTROMEET.** This event is one of the major conventions of the year, and this year has Allan Chapman, Professor Carlos Frenk, and Dr David Hughes amongst the speakers. Visit [WWW.leedsastronomy.org.uk](http://www.leedsastronomy.org.uk) for more information.

November 11th IDAS meeting at the Hayloft, Erewash Museum, 7.45pm. John Brown will give a talk "Nebulae and their Discoverers"

November 18th will be Alan Shepherd's 80th Birthday. This man is famous not only for his space flights but for being the first man recorded of peeing in his space suit – not from fear, just a long launch delay, (but then when a Mans got go, he's got to go).

November 25th The Moon occults Mercury. Sorry but his is for observers in Australia, maybe should warn any relatives you have out there, see <http://www.lunar-occultations.com/iota/2003planets/1125.htm>

November 29th OPEN EVENING at Sherwood Observatory, Coxmoor Road, Sutton in Ashfield. December 17th Will mark the 100th Anniversary of the Wright Brothers first flight.

SKY AT NIGHT – MARS PICTURES

The Sky at Night is holding a small competition for the best Mars photographs from this year. If your members would like to take part then please send either photographs to: Mars Photo Competition, BBC Birmingham, Room G06, B5 7QQ. Or e-mail the digital picture to myself. I would like to know names, addresses, contact number and age please. It also helps to know how they took them. We will have two categories: under 16yrs and over 16yrs. No age limit! I look forward to your entries and hearing from you.

Kind regards

Jane Fletcher

SERIES PRODUCER, SKY AT NIGHT

jane.fletcher@bbc.co.uk

BEAGLE 2 UPDATES

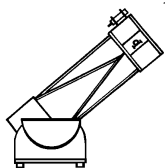
October 10th: onboard system check of the Beagle 2 and Mars Express crafts showed the green light for all systems.

Next Big event will be the separation of the craft from Mars Explorer sometime in December, and the long flight down to the surface. The craft should reach the surface around 3am our time on Christmas day morning. It will carry out a number of onboard system checks and if all is well will transmit an okay signal (composed by pop group Blur) between 7am and 9am our time on Christmas Day.

Small Advertisements

David Lukehurst

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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

The Journal

To register for your FREE Journal, just E-mail the secretary at carl.stella@virgin.net - You don't have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service.

Observatory Group

A web group page and message service has been set up at <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/nottinghamastronomicalsociety/>

It will be used for circulating information about the observatory construction and projects, large telescope up-dates, and use of the site by members of the Observatory Group. Please visit the web site and E-mail on line if you wish to join (NAS Members only)

Minute Reports

If you wish to receive E-copies of the draft minutes of the committee let the secretary know at carl.stella@virgin.net . This service is open only to Society members.

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, it's 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 Carl Brennan, Hon. Secretary, **Nottingham Astronomical Society**, 40 Swindon Close, The Vale, Giltbrook, Nottingham NG16 2WD.

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 £22
- Junior (17 years or under) £11
- Concession (*full time student, UB40, Senior Citizen*) £11

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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Alan Heath (Ex. Dir. BAA Saturn Section)

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CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS

David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

Greg Eisenhauer

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Richard Evans

Meetings

Formal monthly meetings, with speakers, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except August) 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, 2002-03

Full Adult:	£22
Junior (17 years or under)	£11
Concessions	£11

(Full time student, UB40, Senior Citizens)

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, Carl Brennan, 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.
