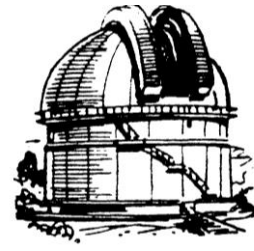

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

October 2006

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Thursday October 5th

is an

Observatory Evening

when we meet at the Society's
observatory near Cotgrave

from 7.30 pm

All members and their guests
will be welcome

DARK SKY

One night last week the Icelandic capital Reykjavik carried out an experiment in which the authorities arranged for the city's lighting to be switched off for half an hour.

Apparently many of the inhabitants went outside to experience a truly dark sky; and interestingly, no crime was reported.

All of which leaves one wondering: is it the kind of thing that might catch on over here?

Sky Notes

2006 October

Compiled by Roy Gretton



PHASES OF THE MOON

Full Moon occurs in the early hours of the 7th
Last Quarter occurs soon after midnight on the 14th
New Moon occurs around dawn on the 22nd
First Quarter occurs on the evening of the 29th

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 6th, and furthest from Earth on the 19th.

THE PLANETS

Although **Mercury** is at greatest eastern elongation (25 degrees) on October 17th, and therefore an evening object this month, it will be extremely difficult to observe from the latitude of the UK, due to its southerly declination (about -20 degrees). Observers in the southern hemisphere will be in a much better position to see the planet.

Venus reaches superior conjunction (on the far side of the Sun from Earth) on October 27th, and consequently is unobservable this month.

Mars is at conjunction with the Sun on October 23rd and so it, too, will be unobservable.

Jupiter is lost in the evening twilight this month, as it will be reaching conjunction with the Sun in November.

Having read thus far, you're probably beginning to think that the planets aren't up to much this month. Thankfully, Saturn and Uranus are coming to the rescue.

Saturn is becoming an increasingly-prominent morning object in the constellation of Leo, about 5 degrees west of the star Regulus. By the end of October it will be rising about midnight, and shining with a magnitude of 0.6.

Uranus is well-placed for observation in the late evening. Through a telescope it appears as a small greenish disc about 4 arcseconds in diameter, one degree east of Lambda Aquarii. At magnitude 5.8 it should be fairly easy to locate with binoculars.

Neptune, at magnitude 7.9 is a more challenging object in the constellation of Capricornus. It is also an evening object, but you will need a star chart to be confident of identifying it.

METEORS

The **Orionids**, which reach maximum activity on October 20th, are favourable for observation this year, with the Moon setting well before midnight during the shower's most active period. Up to 25 events per hour may be seen in the early morning between the 20th and 22nd, although 10 per hour is probably more realistic in average conditions. The Orionids are debris from Comet 1P/Halley, and enter the Earth's atmosphere at 60 km per second. They move swiftly and often leave persistent ionisation trains. The radiant for the shower is close to the star Betelgeuse.

COMET

Comet 2006 M4 (SWAN) is expected to become an easy binocular object in the evening sky this month, although moonlight will be a problem in the first week. Around October 9th it will pass within a few degrees of the star Cor Caroli in the constellation of Canes Venatici, on the 17th it will be close to Gamma Bootis, and on the 28th will be within 5 degrees of the giant globular cluster M13.

DIARY DATES

<p style="text-align: center;">Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society Our programme for the remainder of 2006 is below. Don't forget to check our website: http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro for the latest information about the Society's activities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 5 October NAS Observatory, near Cotgrave from 7.30pm Observatory Evening Members are welcome to bring guests to the observatory. If you need directions to the site, please e-mail nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 2 November Djanogly City Academy, Room 105 Sherwood Rise Nottingham doors open 7.30pm Annual General Meeting 2006</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 7 December Doors open 7.30pm The Barwell Meteorite Professor Jack Meadows Loughborough University (Venue to be decided by the vote at the AGM!)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 4 January 2007 Members' Evening (Venue to be decided)</p>

DIARY DATES: Other Events

Wolverhampton Astronomical Society
SPECIAL EVENT - NOT TO BE MISSED!!

“Proving Einstein Right”

A lecture by Dr Ian Morison BA, MSc, FRAS
(Senior Jodrell Bank astronomer & designer of 217 Merlin Array)

16 October 2006

19.30 hours at

Highfields Science Specialist School,
Boundary Way,
Penn,

Wolverhampton WV4 4NT

£3 adults, £1 students

Tickets at the door

Testing Einstein's Theory of gravity to the limit with the double pulsar system and gravitational lenses observed with the Lovell Radio telescope and the Merlin Array at Jodrell Bank Observatory.

How solutions of Einstein's equations that agree with current observations now require the existence not only of Dark Matter - which we know almost nothing about, except that it must be there - but also Dark Energy, about which we know even less !

Come and hear a real "hands on" astronomer explain these cutting edge subjects in understandable terms.

For more details if required, please contact:

Chris Evans (Hon President, Wolverhampton Astronomical Society)

Home phone: 01299 821236

Annual General Meeting 2006

The 2006 Annual General Meeting of the Nottingham Astronomical Society will be held on **Thursday, 2 November** at our original venue:

Djanogly City Academy, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham

Doors open at 7.30pm.

The committee for the year 2006-07 will be elected and new members of the committee are always welcome. Committee meetings usually last about an hour and a half and are held once every 4 to 6 weeks on a date convenient to all committee members. *A detailed knowledge of astronomy is **not** necessary for committee membership!*

If you are interested in standing for election to the committee and want to find out more, feel free to contact the secretary or any committee member. Committee details are on the back page of the Journal.

Membership vote on whether to move to BGS Keyworth

At the AGM in November we shall hold a vote of members to see whether the Society wishes to make a permanent move of our meetings to the meeting room at the British Geological Survey Keyworth, from December 2006.

The British Geological Survey has offered the NAS permanent use of the room **free of charge**, for our monthly meetings. This would result in a saving of expenditure for the Society and means that the annual subscription rate for 2006-07 could be held at £25 (£12.50 for juniors and concessions).

If we move our meetings to Keyworth, the committee also proposes that meetings should start at 8.00pm. This links better with the bus timetable for those travelling by public transport.

The committee recommends the move to Keyworth and welcomes the views of members – whether “for” or “against” a move. Vote in person at the AGM or by e-mail if you wish: nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk Either way, please do make your views known!

Many thanks

Paul Stocks
NAS Secretary

Small Advertisements

For Sale

Maksutov 6-inch Telescope by Drew

2x2-inch finderscopes, equatorial tripod mount with circles, eyepiece tray, carry box.

Selection of eyepieces, Barlow lens, star diagonals. Buyer collects.

Now reduced to £200

An opportunity for a beginner to obtain some good equipment at a bargain price

**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. 5 years old.

Hardly used, very good condition.

£375 or near offer

**Telephone Terry Naylor
on 0115 9815968**

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

nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

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 £25
- Junior (17 years or under) £12.50
- Concession (*full time student, UB40, etc*) £12.50

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

PRESIDENT:

Fred Hopper

email: fwmh@nerc.ac.uk

HONORARY VICE PRESIDENT

Alan Heath (Ex. Dir. BAA Saturn Section)

VICE PRESIDENTS:

David Lukehurst

e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

website: www.dobsonians.co.uk

Dr Roy Gretton

e-mail: roygretton@speed-mail.co.uk

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e-mail: gildor@ntlworld.com

DIRECTOR OF OBSERVING

John Hurst

Observatory line: 07726 940700

CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

Duncan Collins

email: duncan.collins@talk21.com

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Joe Sowerby

Dorothy Sowerby

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 Academy, Room 105

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, 2005-06

Full Adult:	£25
Junior (17 years or under)	£12.50
Concessions	£12.50

(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 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.
