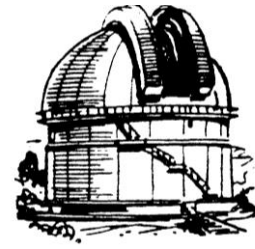


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# Journal

of the



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## Nottingham Astronomical Society

October 2007

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**Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> October**  
at the

**British Geological Survey**

Nicker Hill, Keyworth

**8 pm** (doors open at 7.30pm)

Tonight we welcome

**Mike Frost**

whose talk is entitled

**Beneath the Shadow  
of the Moon**

### **50<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Space Age**

Where were you when you heard the news of Sputnik One? (You will need to be well over fifty to answer that question). I was in bed on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1957 when my mother, having heard the headline on the 8 am or 9 am news on the BBC Home Service, burst into my room to announce, *The Russians have launched a satellite!*

The news caused consternation and anxiety in the USA. American pride was hurt. People feared the threat of nuclear attack implied by the Soviet ability to send payloads across the globe on rockets that were much larger than any available in the West at that time. Barely a month later things got even worse when the Russians launched Sputnik Two, carrying an unfortunate dog, on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

If I remember correctly, the then Astronomer Royal, Richard Woolley, described space travel as "bilge". Now, of course, satellite technology is an indispensable part of everyday life, like microwave ovens, freezers and mobile phones.

# Sky Notes

## 2007 September

Compiled by Roy Gretton



**British Summer Time ends** on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Clocks go back one hour at 2 am.

### PHASES OF THE MOON

This month's lunar phases all occur in the morning:

Last Quarter occurs on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
New Moon occurs on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>  
First Quarter occurs on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>  
Full Moon occurs on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup>

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 26<sup>th</sup> (so the Full Moon should look **BIG** – in fact it will be the largest Full Moon of 2007), and furthest from Earth on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

### THE PLANETS

**Mercury** is not well-placed for northern hemisphere observers this month, and will be at inferior conjunction (between us and the Sun) on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Venus** is a brilliant morning object (magnitude -4.3) and will reach greatest western elongation (46 degrees) on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Look for it in the southeast before dawn.

**Mars** is getting brighter week by week, being at magnitude -0.1 at the start of October, and magnitude -0.6 at the end. It rises mid-evening and remains visible for the rest of the night, in the constellation of Gemini. By the end of the month the planet's angular diameter will be 12 arcseconds.

You may be able, at the start of the month, to glimpse **Jupiter** low down in the southwest just after sunset, but its current apparition is now drawing to a close, particularly for observers in the northern hemisphere.

**Saturn**, is starting to reappear in the morning sky shortly before sunrise, but will not be well-placed for observation until later in the autumn.

**Uranus** (magnitude 5.7) is an evening object in the constellation of Aquarius, while **Neptune** (magnitude 7.8) is also an evening object, in the constellation of Capricornus.

## **METEORS**

The Orionids should reach their maximum activity (about 25 events per hour) on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The best chances of seeing these meteors occur after midnight, by which time the 9 day-old Moon will be moving out of the way, leaving favourable conditions in the early morning. Orionids tend to be fast-moving, and leave visible trails.

## **VARIABLE STAR: Algol**

There are five minima of the dark-eclipsing variable star Algol (Beta Persei) visible from the UK this month. They occur on October 1<sup>st</sup> (10.05 pm BST), the 16<sup>th</sup> (6.15 am), the 19<sup>th</sup> (3 am), the 21<sup>st</sup> (11.45 pm) and the 24<sup>th</sup> (8.35 pm). The star dims from its normal brightness (magnitude 2.1) to magnitude 3.4 over a period of about five hours.

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## **INVITATION TO MEMBERS**

The Mayor of Rushcliffe (Councillor Christine Jeffreys) will officially open the observatory dome at the home of our Treasurer, Sam Boote, on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, at 2.00pm. The address is 17, Rannock Gardens, Keyworth, NG12 5FQ.

Members of Nottingham Astronomical Society are warmly invited to attend, as the event will be reported in Council papers and will be a good opportunity to showcase the Society and its activities. Light refreshments will be served. A Coronado PST will be available for solar viewing (weather permitting). There will be a collection for the Mayor's charity - the Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance.

The opening of Sam's dome is not an official part of the Society's programme, but it is hoped that his observatory might form part of future members' evenings and other events as a complement to the Society's main observatory.

## DIARY DATES 2007-08

### Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

Our programme for the coming months is below. Don't forget to check our website:  
<http://beehive.thisisnottingham.co.uk/nottinghamastro>  
for the latest information about the Society's meetings and observing sessions.

**Thursday 4 October 2007**

British Geological Survey, Keyworth  
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

**Talk: 'Beneath the Shadow of the Moon'**  
**Mike Frost**

**Thursday 1 November 2007**

British Geological Survey, Keyworth  
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

**Annual General Meeting 2007**

**Thursday 6 December 2007**

British Geological Survey, Keyworth  
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

**'The Discovery of New Worlds'**  
**Andrew Lound**

**Illustrated by some amazing images, accompanied by music  
and supported with various props!**

**Thursday 3 January 2008**

British Geological Survey, Keyworth  
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

**Members' Evening**

**Thursday 7 February 2008**

British Geological Survey, Keyworth  
8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)

**Talk: 'Simple Sums for Astronomers'**  
**Dr Roy Gretton**  
NAS Vice-President

## The 2007 Annual General Meeting

The Nottingham Astronomical Society's 2007 AGM will be held on **Thursday 1 November** at 8.00pm at The British Geological Survey, Nicker Hill, Keyworth, Nottingham.

*All of the 2007-08 committee posts are open to NAS members aged 18 and over. So far, we have the candidates shown below, all of whom have served on the 2006-07 committee.*

New committee members are always welcome as they bring new skills and new ideas. If you can spare a little of your time to help the society, please consider standing for election to the committee! Meetings are held every six weeks or so, and last between one and a half and two hours. Committee members are trustees of the society, which is a registered charity.

If you would like to know more about committee work, please e-mail me at:

[nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

Or just have a word with me or any committee member at the next meeting at BGS Keyworth.

**Paul Stocks**

NAS Secretary

### NAS 2007-8 Committee Candidates

<b>President</b>	Fred Hopper
<b>Vice-President</b>	Roy Gretton
<b>Secretary</b>	Paul Stocks
<b>Treasurer</b>	Sam Boote
<b>Journal Editor</b>	Roy Gretton
<b>Curator of Instruments</b>	John Hurst
<b>Director of Observing</b>	John Hurst
<b>Campaign for Dark Skies Officer</b>	<i>No candidate yet</i>
<b>Committee ordinary members</b>	Kevin Greally, Dorothy Sowerby, Joe Sowerby

## OTHER EVENTS

### **The Flamsteed Lecture 2007 University of Derby 10<sup>th</sup> October**

This year the title is "Fifty Years in Space" and the speaker is Professor Colin Pillinger. It is on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at 6:15pm. Court Room (OL2), University of Derby, Kedleston Road Site.

There are free refreshments afterwards.

**Admission is by ticket only.** These are free and available from Angela Drinkwater, Marketing Dept., University of Derby, DE22 1GB **Tel. 01332 591046**

### **Federation of Astronomical Societies AGM & Convention Birmingham & Midland Institute Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

The 2007 AGM & Convention will once again be held at the BMI (Birmingham & Midland Institute) on Sat 13<sup>th</sup> October 2007. There is a busy schedule of talks and trade stands.

The BMI is a 5 minute walk from Birmingham New Street station. Tickets: £12 on the door or £10 if pre-booked. Advanced tickets can be obtained from Callum Potter. email: [president@fedastro.org.uk](mailto:president@fedastro.org.uk) or tel: 01684 773256 - the booking form can be found at <http://www.fedastro.org.uk/FAS2007.pdf>

#### **Programme:**

- Prof Mike Cruise, University of Birmingham 'The Search for Gravitational Waves'.
- Prof Colin Pillinger, Open University 'Space is a Funny Place: 50 Years and more of space exploration' (Colin Pillinger will be signing copies of his new book "Space is a Funny Place")
- Prof Phil Diamond, University of Manchester 'Jodrell Bank: at the heart of the past and the future of radio astronomy'
- Jerry Stone: How to book and run a public star party
- Samuel George: The International Year of Astronomy- What's Happening?
- Traders & Society Displays.

An **Imaging Competition** will also take place at lunchtime, see: <http://www.fedastro.org.uk/photocomp.shtml>

We will also be hosting a raffle with a variety of astronomical prizes.

**Further info and directions can be found at <http://www.fedastro.org.uk/>**

## Small Advertisements

### Various items of equipment for sale

Celestron Nexstar 5 telescope and tripod etc.	£395
Tele Vue 8-24 click zoom eyepiece	£75
Vixen Lanthanum 20 eyepiece	£50
Meade 9.7 Super Plossl eyepiece	£25
Celestron 3.6 Plossl eyepiece	£10
Celestron 90-degree erecting diagonal	£10
sodium light pollution filter	£10

**Reasonable offers from Society members considered**

**Please contact Sam Boote  
s.boote@bcs.org  
0115 937 4644**

**This advertising space is available  
free of charge to society members**

### For Sale

10 inch reflector telescope, focal length 63 inches  
with RA Drive  
two eyepieces  
and storage shed

Any reasonable offer accepted

Phone **Mr Chambers**  
0115 914 1454

## 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](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

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

#### 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, 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:

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

Please tick and enter your e-mail address if you wish to receive:

- the monthly **NAS Journal** (in 'Word' format) by e-mail
- e-mail notifications of dates & times of observing sessions using the large telescope at our observatory.

Your e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_



# 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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## PRESIDENT:

**Fred Hopper**

e-mail: [fwmh@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:fwmh@nerc.ac.uk)

## VICE PRESIDENTS:

**David Lukehurst**

e-mail: [gildor@ntlworld.com](mailto:gildor@ntlworld.com)

website: [www.dobsonians.co.uk](http://www.dobsonians.co.uk)

**Dr Roy Gretton**

e-mail: [roygretton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roygretton@hotmail.co.uk)

## SECRETARY:

**Paul Stocks**

Tel: 0115 914 8185

e-mail: [nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk)

## TREASURER:

**Sam Boote**

e-mail: [s.boote@bcs.org](mailto:s.boote@bcs.org)

## JOURNAL EDITOR:

**Dr Roy Gretton**

e-mail: [roygretton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roygretton@hotmail.co.uk)

## CURATOR OF INSTRUMENTS

**David Lukehurst**

e-mail: [gildor@ntlworld.com](mailto:gildor@ntlworld.com)

## DIRECTOR OF OBSERVING

**John Hurst**

Observatory line: 07726 940700

## CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES:

**Duncan Collins**

e-mail: [duncan.collins@talk21.com](mailto:duncan.collins@talk21.com)

## ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

**Joe Sowerby**

**Dorothy Sowerby**

**Kevin Greally**

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## **Meetings**

Our meetings, often with an illustrated talk by a guest speaker, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except in August & October) 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 2006-07**

Adult	£25
Junior (under 18 years)	£12.50
Concessions*	£12.50
(*Full-time student, jobseeker's allowance, basic state pension)	

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

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If you would like more information about the **Nottingham Astronomical Society**, or would like to become a member, please contact the Secretary, Paul Stocks, 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.

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