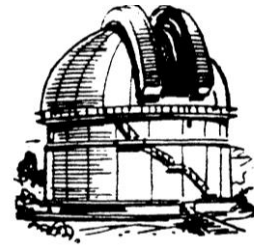

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

October 2008

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Thursday 2nd October

at the
British Geological Survey
Nicker Hill, Keyworth

8 pm (doors open at 7.30pm)

Tonight we welcome
Kevin Kilburn

who will be speaking on

**‘Dr Plot and the Amazing
Double Sunset’**

AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOOK UP

Weather permitting, early October is a splendid time to do some deep-sky observing with binoculars or a small telescope. You will probably need to put on an extra layer of clothing, but the evening should be relatively mild compared with mid-winter. This year, moonlight will not be much of a problem until the second week of the month.

As the evening sky darkens, some glorious sights are available. The ‘summer triangle’ of Deneb, Vega and Altair is still prominent, with the Milky Way passing almost overhead. This is a region of rich star fields, clusters and double stars. Even modest binoculars will give rewarding views. The key to an enjoyable experience is to make yourself comfortable. I find that a garden lounger or low reclining chair is ideal when using binoculars, because it enables you to lie back and observe without the neck-strain that results from remaining in the standing position for more than a couple of minutes. It’s a similar feeling of comfort that you get in a dentist’s chair!

Sky Notes

2008 October

Compiled by Roy Gretton



BRITISH SUMMER TIME comes to an end on Sunday, October 26th. Clocks should be turned back one hour at 2 a.m. on that date.

PHASES OF THE MOON

First Quarter occurs on the morning of October 7th
Full Moon occurs on the evening of the 14th
Last Quarter occurs on the morning of the 21st
New Moon occurs on the evening of the 28th

THE PLANETS

Mid to late October is the best time in 2008 to observe Mercury in the morning sky. The planet reaches greatest western elongation on October 22nd, when it will be 18 degrees from the Sun. If you have a good view of the eastern horizon, look for Mercury shining at magnitude -0.8, as the sky begins to lighten prior to dawn.

Venus is slowly moving away from the Sun in the evening, and by the end of October will be shining at magnitude -3.9, and setting more than 90 minutes after sunset. Watch as the planet gradually comes to prominence during this autumn, for by Christmas it will be a spectacular object adorning the evening sky.

Mars is unobservable this month.

Jupiter continues to be a prominent object low down in the southwest after sunset, and even at the end of the month will still be setting more than four hours after the Sun.

Saturn is virtually unobservable this month, as it is very close to the Sun in the morning sky.

Uranus (magnitude 5.8) is an easy binocular object in the constellation of Aquarius, about three degrees northeast of Phi Aquarii (magnitude 4).

Neptune (magnitude 7.8), is a more challenging object in the constellation of Capricornus.

METEORS

The **Orionids** are the most prominent shower in October. They reach their maximum activity in the early morning sky on the 20th, when under ideal conditions observers may expect to see twenty meteors per hour. However, bright moonlight will spoil things this year!

VARIABLE STAR: Algol

There are four minima of this **eclipsing binary** visible from the UK this month. They occur on October 2nd (11.10 pm BST), the 20th (4.05 am), the 23rd (about 1 am), and the 25th (9.40 pm). The star dims from its normal brightness (magnitude 2.1) to magnitude 3.4 over a period of 4.8 hours.

DIARY DATES 2008

<p style="text-align: center;">Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society</p> <p>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.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 2 October 2008 British Geological Survey, Keyworth 8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">'Dr Plot and the Amazing Double Sunset' Kevin Kilburn</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 6 November 2008 British Geological Survey, Keyworth 8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Annual General Meeting 2008</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 4 December 2008 British Geological Survey, Keyworth 8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The BGS 3-D Suite Another opportunity to view planetary images in 3D. With thanks to Doug Tragheim of the BGS</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 8 January 2009 (Please note that, exceptionally, this is the second Thursday in the month!) British Geological Survey, Keyworth 8.00pm (Doors open 7.30pm)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ordinary meeting (topic to be confirmed nearer the date)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The 2009 programme of talks by guest speakers is now being arranged. Speakers already booked for next year include:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr Mike Leggett FRAS: 'The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence' (June) Dr Ann Bonell: 'Edwin Hubble' (July)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If you know of anyone who is willing to give an astronomy or science-related talk at one of our monthly meetings, please let the Secretary have their contact details.</i></p>

OTHER EVENTS

Birmingham Space Day
Saturday 4th October 2008

**Poynting Physics Building
and the Large Lecture Theatre,
University of Birmingham**

I have the great pleasure of inviting you all along to the University of Birmingham's Space day. This event is free for all and will take place on Oct 4th.

"Forty two". That was the answer to Life, the Universe and Everything proposed by Deep Thought in Douglas Adams' book the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. But how much of the ultimate answer does the Universe actually contribute?

Whilst astronomers at the University of Birmingham are likely unable to find the answer to that question, at their upcoming event, Space Day, they hope to be able to answer many other more day-to-day questions, such as how does a telescope work? What can I look at in the sky tonight? How did NASA get their rovers on Mars safely?

This event, aimed at all ages of the general public, will feature talks by researchers from the School of Physics and Astronomy, including Dr William Chaplin on the "Music of the Sun" and

Dr Somak Raychaudhury on "Einstein's Outrageous Legacy - Black Holes, Cosmic Illusions and

Dark Energy", as well as interactive workshops which tackle telescope making, air rocket creation and launching, and even making Mars rovers out of little more than cardboard and sellotape! Other activities such as a tour of the night sky in a mobile planetarium, a tour of the department's astronomical and space laboratory facilities, a chance to see how many cosmic rays pass through you every second and a raffle are planned for the day.

Space Day is currently planned to run from **10:00am to 5:15pm on Saturday 4th October 2008**. Entrance and all activities are free, but due to limits on numbers certain workshops will be on a "first-come-first served basis."

For more information (including directions to the venue) please see:

<http://www.talkandtelescope.org.uk/spaceday>

best wishes,

Sam

Samuel George www.krioma.net

University of Birmingham Astrophysics and Space Research Group

Secretary, Federation of Astronomical Societies www.fedastro.org.uk

Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society
6th KIELDER FOREST AUTUMN STAR CAMP
Northumberland

29 October - 2 November 2008

The 6th Kielder Forest Star Camp will be staged over five nights from 29 October to 2 November 2008 in the spectacular Border countryside between England and Scotland.

The event is being staged by the Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society, which has been formed to exploit an exciting new £480,000 observatory built 1270 feet above England's remotest village and which is now fully operational.

Star Camp will be based at Kielder campsite and for the fifth year in succession we have kept pitch fees at £12 per night for an electric hook-up and £10 without (per pitch). There's also a minimum two night stay and fees must be paid up front. The main day will be on Saturday 1 November at 18th century Kielder Castle. We will have top speakers and a full line-up of the nation's leading astronomy vendors, including The Widescreen Centre, Rother Valley Optics, Astrosource UK, Astro Trac and (provisionally) Ian King Imaging.

Activities on the main day will be free of charge. Details and a booking form can be found at www.richard.demon.co.uk/starcamp

For further information contact me at starcamp@richarddarn.demon.co.uk, or call **01226 246351**.

We hope to see you under Kielder's dark sky!

Richard Darn

KielderObservatory.org

Small Advertisements

Various items of equipment for sale

Celestron Nexstar 5 telescope and tripod etc. (including nylon cover and power supply)	£395
Pop-up observatory tent	£95
Carl Zeiss 10x50 binoculars with leather case	£25
Meade 9.7 Super Plossl eyepiece	£25
Celestron 3.6 Plossl eyepiece	£10
Celestron 90-degree erecting diagonal	£10
sodium light pollution filter	£10

**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

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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John Hurst

email: jmhurst@hotmail.co.uk

Observatory line: 07726 940700 (line open during observing sessions)

ORDINARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Joe Sowerby

Dorothy Sowerby

Kevin Greally

Robert Bush

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 2007-08

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.

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.
