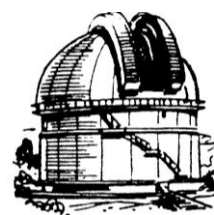

Journal

of the
Nottingham Astronomical Society



September 2002

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Thursday 5th September

Djanogly C.T.C.

Doors open from 7.30pm

The evening's talk is

The Humanization of Space

We welcome our guest speaker

Dr. Michael Martin-Smith,
author and member of
Hull Astronomical Society

October's meeting

Thursday, 3rd October

Doors open from 7.30pm

Annual General Meeting

*Please try to attend – there is much to discuss!
See inside this issue for more details.*

THE NAS OBSERVATORY AND LARGE TELESCOPE PROJECT

Two significant items of news this month

Observatory annexe repaired and security improved

During August, the roof of the observatory annexe was repaired and weatherproofed to a high standard by a builder. The annexe has also been made very much more secure. It now boasts a new reinforced concrete roof, and a new window frame with shatterproof window. Purpose-built steel security grilles have been fitted over both the door and the window. Many thanks to Mike Provost for suggesting a builder to the committee and arranging for the work to be done.

The Large Telescope will be ordered soon

The NAS committee will shortly be placing an order for the construction of the Society's 24 inch reflector telescope. 2003 should therefore see the installation of the large telescope in the observatory dome and the realisation of a long-standing aim of the Society! More details at the meeting.

Sky Notes

September 2002

The Autumn Equinox is on September 23 at 05h UT.

The Moon

New Moon	7d 03h
First quarter	13d 18h
Full Moon	21d 14h
Last Quarter	29d 17h

The Planets

Mercury: Unobservable from UK latitudes this month, the planet reaches greatest eastern elongation on 1 September.

Venus: Magnitude in late September is a brilliant -4.5 , but the planet is badly placed low down in the western sky. Worth looking for after sunset, if you have a good horizon in that direction.

Mars: Badly placed for observation this month, effectively lost in the morning twilight.

Jupiter: Rising in the early hours of the morning during September, Jupiter is at magnitude -2.0 in the constellation of Cancer. Close to M44 early in the month.

Saturn: The ringed planet is in the constellation of Orion at magnitude 0.0. By month's end, Saturn will be rising at around 21.30 UT and the rings are nicely on display. Well worth a look! The Moon will be near on 1st and 28th.

Uranus: In Capricornus at magnitude 5.7.

Neptune: Also in Capricornus, but a much fainter magnitude 7.9.

Meteors

There are no major meteor showers this month.

Why not join the NAS committee?

As mentioned elsewhere in the Journal, our Society's 2002 AGM is on Thursday 3rd October 2002 at Djanogly CTC. At the AGM, Nottingham Astronomical Society members will be electing their new committee for the year 2002-03.

Some new face would be very welcome on the committee, so why not think about standing this year? Don't forget that you can join the committee as an "ordinary member" without any specific responsibilities and have your say in how the Society moves forward into 2003 and beyond.

NAS committee meetings are usually held about once every two months and last a couple of hours or less. All you need do as an ordinary committee member is turn up and put your views forward. You do not need to have a detailed knowledge of astronomy or telescopes! But perhaps you have some ideas on how we can develop our Society for the benefit of all members? For example, you may have some thoughts on

- how we can raise the Society's profile in Nottingham and attract new members;
- how we can raise funds for our observatory and large telescope project;
- how we can encourage more of our members to visit our observatory and help with the various tasks that need doing there, both before and after the large telescope is installed;
- and last but not least, how the Society can help its member to get the most out of their hobby of amateur astronomy!

So please do give some thought before October to the possibility of becoming a new committee member for 2002-03. If you are able to spare a couple of hours or so every two months to attend committee meetings, then either

- let NAS Secretary Carl Brennan know (his contact details are on the back page of the Journal)
- or just step forward at the AGM on 3rd October when the committee is elected.

Your help to the Society will be very much welcomed.

Paul Stocks

NAS Journal Editor and 2001-02 committee member

DIARY DATES

by Carl Brennan

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY 2002

September 5th Djanogly C.T.C.

Doors open from 7.30pm

THE HUMANIZATION OF SPACE

Talk by Dr. Michael Martin-Smith, author and member of Hull Astronomical Society

September 9th Committee Meeting

Usual venue – committee only please.

October 3rd Djanogly C.T.C.

Doors open 7.30pm

A.G.M.

Please do make a special effort to attend this AGM. There are a number of proposed changes to the Society, which will be very important.

November 7th Djanogly C.T.C.

Doors open from 7.30pm

HISTORY OF THE CONSTELLATIONS

Madeline Cox, Bassetlaw Astronomical Society

December 5th Djanogly C.T.C.

Doors open from 7.30pm

SUNSPOTS

Dr. Paul Mathews, University of Nottingham **T.B.C.**

OTHER EVENTS

6th to 15th September THE 8TH EQUINOX SKYCAMP. Main event Saturday 7th September. At the Dower House Touring Park, East Harling, Thetford, Norfolk. For full programme send an A5 SAE to Mike Cook, 2 Sunset Drive, Broxhill Road, Havering-Atte-Bower, Essex, England, RM4 1QL, telephone 01708375146 or 07961832827

9th to 13th September BA FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE comes to LEICESTER -Take part in Europe's' largest science extravaganza - your chance to dissect and debate the biggest issues in the world of science and discover the link between science and the quality of life. For further information email festival@the-ba.net <<mailto:festival@the-ba.net>> or call 020 7973 3052 or visit the BA website at www.the-ba.net <http://www.the-ba.net>

September 13th to 16th - BAA Horncastle Astronomy Weekend + Lincolnshire Groups. Paul Money, 18 College Park, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9 6RE, (SAE required), or paul@astpace.demon.co.uk

John Dobson UK Tour

John Dobson (The Sidewalk Astronomer, and inventor of the Dobsonian Telescope) will be touring the UK this summer

September 13th to 16th - BAA Horncastle Astronomy Weekend + Lincolnshire Groups. Paul Money, 18 College Park, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9 6RE, (SAE required), or paul@astpace.demon.co.uk

September 17th - North Norfolk Astronomers, <http://www.acis.freereserve.co.uk>

September 19th - Cotswold Astronomical Society <http://www.cotswoldas.org.uk>

September 20th - Liverpool Astronomical Society, <http://www.liv.ac.uk/~ggastro/home.html>

September 27th - Mid Kent Astronomical Society, 01634 308035 for info

September 28th - West Yorkshire Astronomical Society. 1pm to 5pm Carlton Grange Club, Pontefract.

October 2nd - SAGAS (complicated details contact nick@nquinn.demon.co.uk or visit <http://www.nightlife.demon.co.uk>

October 4th to 6th - Whirlpool Star Party, Birr, Ireland, <http://goree.indigo.ie/~sdbell>

21st September (Saturday) BAA Exhibition Meeting. To be held at the Cavendish Laboratories, Madingley Road, Cambridge. Awards and a special lecture by Dr. Richard M^cKim.

4th to 6th October Whirlpool Star Party, Birr, Ireland, <http://goree.indigo.ie/~sdbell>

Spears include, Jack Newton, Danny Lennon, Barrie Jones, Johnjoe McFadden, David Lunt, Antony Hewish, and John Dobson

19th October (Saturday) FAS AGM AND CONVENTION. Lecture Theatre 1, in the Ken Edwards Building, University of Leicester. There will be a separate display. Exhibition and general "milling about" area in the Belvoir City Suite. Speakers so far confirmed are Professor Ken Pounds, Dr. Martin Barstow, Dr. Allan Mills, Dr. Ann Bonnell, and Paul Money. Should be a very good out, and within easy reach of most NAS members. Advance tickets (£7) from Alan Drummond, 27 York Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 5JS, (make cheque payable to "The Federation of Astronomical Societies") - Tickets £8.00 on the door.

30th October BAA AGM 17.30 hrs at 23 Savile Row, London. Might be worth a special effort to visit as the Presidential Address is by Mr. Guy Hurst - "**UK Nova/Supernova Patrol: The first 25years**" (Guy has been the editor of *The Astronomer* since before I can remember.

6th to 8th December SPA Astronomy Weekend to be held at Preston Montford Field Centre, Shropshire. A great list of speakers including Dr Ian Morrison. A £15 deposit is needed by September 20th, full weekend cost £95 (full board). For more information contact Frank Tobin, 16 Penton Hook Road, Staines, Middx. TW18 2PF

10th May 2003 Eclipse 10.30am to 4.15pm National Maritime Museum. A simple day course to look at this natural phenomenon and the science we can learn. Interesting collection of speakers. Cost £28.00 (£16 concessions). More information on 02083126747/6648, E-mail openmuseum@nmm.ac.uk , lstone@nmm.ac.uk or visit ww.nmm.ac.uk

6th June 2003 Extraterrestrial Life 10.30am to 4.15pm National Maritime Museum. Cost £28.00 (£16 concessions). More information on 02083126747/6648, E-mail openmuseum@nmm.ac.uk , lstone@nmm.ac.uk or visit ww.nmm.ac.uk

Future Events

The next National Astronomy Week. On 27 August 2003 the planet Mars will come to a particularly good opposition. To celebrate this event, Britain's astronomers are planning another National Astronomy Week <<http://www.astronomyweek.org.uk>>.

**Nottingham Astronomical Society
Provisional Programme 2003**

January 2nd

MEMBERS NIGHT; Bring along some examples of your work/projects

February 6th

OBSERVING THE UNIVERSE; Alfonso Aragon-Salamanca, Department of Physics and astronomy, University of Nottingham

March 6th

EINSTEIN VERSUS STAR TREK; Les Jepson, Bassetlaw Astronomical Society

April 3rd

LARGE-SCALE STRUCTURE AND EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE; Dr. Steve Maddox, School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Nottingham

May 1st

Provisional speaker booked but not confirmed

June 5th

No speaker booked as yet

July 3rd

Provisional speaker booked but not confirmed

September 4th

MARS ODYSSEY; Andy Lund, The Planetary Society, UK Regional Coordinator

October 2nd

OBSERVATORY MEETING NIGHT –DETAILS TO FOLLOW

November 6th

A.G.M.

December 4th

No speaker booked as yet

Other News

A special, and sad Goodbye to Mrs. Morris. She sets off on a World Tour, which will be taking in the Eclipse in December (from Australia), and then she and her husband Tony are retiring to live in Wales. Mrs. Morris has been member of the Society for many years, (BG informs me, “Gladys joined the NAS as a visitor to the Comet Halley / NAW exhibition at the YMCA in 1985”), and it is sad to lose her, but I am sure we all join in wishing her and Tony a lovely holiday and long and happy retirement.

Can I also draw your attention to the August 2002 BAA Journal. There is a great short article about the Heath-Meredith Spot observed last year on Venus. Congratulations to Alan Heath.

If you are able to visit the Royal Observatory (Greenwich/London) there is a special exhibition running from December 2002 until August 2003 about the Beagle 2 mission to Mars.

Nottingham Astronomical Society

The Secretary compiles these Diary Dates. Contributions are always welcome (please include source acknowledgement). Nottingham Astronomical Society, and/or the Secretary accept no responsibility for any errors that may occur within this publication. Any views expressed in *Diary Dates* are those of the individual authors and not necessarily endorsed by the Secretary, Nottingham Astronomical Society, it's Committee or Members.

For more information about the Nottingham Astronomical Society please send a C5 SAE to the Secretary Carl Brennan at 40 Swindon Close, The Vale, Giltbrook, NOTTINGHAM, NG16 2WD. Telephone 0115 854 8687

E-mail carl.stella@virgin.net

AGM NOTICE

It is proposed by the 2001/02 Committee that “the Annual General Meeting of the Society should be moved from October to November as from 2003 and thereafter.”

This motion will be put to members at the Annual General Meeting to be held on **2002 October 3rd**. There are two main reasons for considering moving the AGM to November. The first is a simple matter of the clash with the Goose Fair, which in recent years has meant meeting attendance is down simply because some members just could not get to the venue with the traffic in the city. The second is a little more complex. The treasurer would like more time to present a full end of session account(s) to the members. In cases of the AGM being on October 1st the Treasurer has less than 24hours in which to finalise the account(s) and get them approved by an outside (non-member).

Committee asks in advance that you consider this motion and make know any objection in advance to the Secretary at:

40 Swindon Close, The Vale, Giltbrook, Nottingham, NG16 2WD

Telephone 0115 854 8687

E- mail carl.stella@virgin.net or carl.brennan@ntlworld.com

Vote “yes” and get 13 months membership for the price of 12!

(Lack of space in the Journal prevents the full text of the following news release being reproduced, but I have included the key points. - The Editor.)

“Society for the History of Astronomy founded”

“ Saturday 29th June 2002 saw the founding of the UK's new national Society for the History of Astronomy.

The Society's principal aims are:

- To promote an academic, educational and popular interest in the history of the science of astronomy and related subjects.
- To encourage new research into the history of astronomy, especially amateur research at the local level, and to facilitate its collation, preservation, publication and dissemination both by conventional means and through the internet or such other new means as may subsequently become available.
- To bring together those with a common interest in the subject, whether amateur or professional researcher or general enthusiast, and to organise activities for the benefit and interest of the members.

The Founding Meeting concluded with a Presidential Address by the new Society's Hon. President Dr. Allan Chapman and the formal handover of the Chair to Emily Winterburn. “

For general enquiries, please write enclosing a stamped s.a.e. to:

Mr. Stuart Williams FRAS LRPS, Secretary, SHA, Flamsteed Villa, 26 Matlock Road,
Bloxwich, WS3 3QD,.

For membership details and a membership form, please send a stamped s.a.e. to

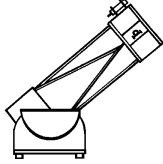
Mr. Ken Goward, Treasurer, SHA, 14 Keightley Way, Tuddenham St Martin, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 9BJ

Web site: <http://www.historyofastronomy.fsworld.co.uk/>

Small Advertisements

David Lukehurst

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gildor@ntlworld.com

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Selection of eyepieces, Barlow lens, star diagonals.

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on 0115 923 0040**

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BEST OF THE WEB SPECIAL:
What has happened to the CONTOUR mission?

At the time of writing (19 August), it seems that disaster may have befallen NASA's **CONTOUR** (Comet Nucleus Tour) mission. The robotic probe had been intended to visit Comet Encke in 2003 and Comet Schwassmann-Wachmann-3 in 2006, sending back close-up pictures of their nuclei.

But contact was lost with the probe after it left Earth orbit. The "**Spaceflight Now**" website reports that a Spacewatch telescope has imaged what appears to be two objects in space, beyond the orbit of the Moon, which is where CONTOUR should be. The current theory is that CONTOUR's solid fuel rocket may have exploded, putting an end to the mission. However, attempts to communicate with the probe will continue until December 2002. Full details are on:

<http://spaceflightnow.com/news/n0208/16contour/>

and the mission's own website:

<http://www.contour2002.org/>

Nottingham Astronomical Society

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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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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, 2001-02

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

(Full time student, UB40, Senior Citizens)

Subscriptions become due at the October AGM. 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.
