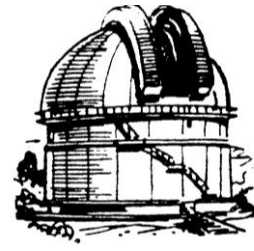

Journal

of the



Nottingham Astronomical Society

September 2006

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This month's meeting is on
Thursday September 7th

at
the British Geological Survey
Nicker Hill
Keyworth

Doors open 7.30pm

Tonight is a

Members' Evening

Including

"THE DAY-NIGHT OF THE MOON"

A presentation of NAS members' images of the
2006 total solar eclipse

COMETS IN THE ASTEROID BELT

David Jewitt and Henry Hsieh of the University of Hawaii have discovered three comets whose orbits lie entirely within the asteroid belt (between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter). The orbits of these comets appear to be stable, and simulations suggest that they are unlikely to have been captured on their way in from the Oort Cloud, and therefore presumably formed within the asteroid belt itself. This would suggest that they have survived close to their present positions since the very early years of the Solar System.

Sky Notes

2006 September

Compiled by Roy Gretton



September is a favoured month for Star Parties and Star Camps, as the sun sets much earlier than it does in midsummer, (in the middle of September sunset is at about half past seven British Summer Time) giving a long evening for observing, with temperatures much more comfortable than those typical of midwinter.

The Autumnal Equinox (the time when the Sun is exactly above Earth's equator) occurs on September 23rd. On this date, day and night have equal length all over the earth (although if you happen to be at either of the poles the Sun will appear to skim the horizon for the full 24 hours).

This month is a particularly poor one for planetary observation, with only the three outermost planets, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, being on show (something we can say now that Pluto has been officially demoted). Saturn is the only bright one visible, and even he doesn't rise until long after midnight.

PHASES OF THE MOON

Full Moon occurs in the early evening of the 7th
Last Quarter occurs in the late morning of the 14th
New Moon occurs around noon on the 22nd
First Quarter occurs in the late morning of the 30th

Historically, the Full Moon in September was called the Harvest Moon, as bright moonlight could provide useful assistance for bringing in the crops over several evenings. This Full Moon is also the occasion of a partial eclipse.

This month the Moon is closest to Earth on the 8th (giving us a "big" Full Moon), and furthest from Earth on the 22nd.

Partial Eclipse of the Moon, September 7th

The Moon undergoes a small partial eclipse on the 7th, partly visible from the British Isles. The Moon will rise at about 18h 40m (7.40 pm BST) when the eclipse will be half-way through its course, with 19% of the Moon immersed in Earth's shadow. (This happens to coincide with our September meeting at Keyworth). A small "bite" will be visible out of the Moon's northern limb, provided you have an unobstructed eastern horizon. The eclipse ends at 8.37 pm BST.

THE PLANETS

Mercury will be at superior conjunction (on the far side of the Sun) on September 1st, and observation of this planet will be difficult or impossible this month.

Venus has virtually disappeared from view in the morning sky, and will not be visible again until around Christmas.

Mars, too, will be unobservable this month.

Jupiter will become lost in the evening twilight as the month progresses.

Saturn will begin to be observable in the morning sky this month, west of Regulus in the constellation of Leo. The planet rises about 02h UT (3 am BST), which is about 2½ hours ahead of the Sun

Uranus, magnitude 5.7, reaches opposition on September 5th, when it will be about one degree east of Lambda Aquarii (magnitude 3.7).

Neptune, magnitude 7.8, is an evening object in the constellation of Capricornus, and is close to the magnitude 4.3 star Iota Capricorni.

METEORS

The Alpha Aurigids, which have a radiant close to Capella, reasonably high in the northeastern sky after midnight, should show maximum activity on September 1st. The Piscids are favoured this year as their maximum activity occurs on the 20th, close to the New Moon. But note that neither of these streams is expected to produce more than a handful of meteors per hour.

COMET

A new comet 2006 M4 is due to reach perihelion in late September. It should be visible (through telescopes) to northern hemisphere observers from mid-September and could reach magnitude 6 in October.

OCCULTATION OF THE PLEIADES

On September 12th the Moon will pass in front of the open cluster called the Seven Sisters or the Pleiades. Viewed from Britain, the event will occur very low in the east, with the cluster reappearing from occultation as the Moon rises. Merope will reappear at 9.30 pm BST, Alcyone at 9.55pm, and Atlas and Pleione at about 10.35 pm, when the cluster will be 11 degrees above the horizon.

Venues for NAS meetings

Keyworth meeting on 7 September

The NAS committee has decided to hold the Society's Members' Evening at **Keyworth** on 7th September. This is because Djanogly City Academy may be unavailable due to rebuilding work.

Do come along to **The British Geological Survey, Nicker Hill, Keyworth on 7th September, from 7.30pm**. We shall have a slide presentation "The Day-Night of the Moon", which includes images taken by NAS members who travelled far and wide in March this year to observe the Total Solar Eclipse.

To find the venue by car:

- Heading out from the south of Nottingham, take the **A606 Melton Road**.
- Stay on the A606 beyond Tollerton and Plumtree, and look for a **right turn**, signposted "**Keyworth ¾, British Geological Survey**". This is Platt Lane.
- Drive along Platt Lane, enter Keyworth and go past the goods entrance to the BGS. You will reach a "T" junction. Turn left into Nicker Hill, then first left again into the main gate of the British Geological Survey.
- After going through security at the gate, please use the car park to your left. After parking, look for the signs directing you to the meeting room.

Notice of a vote at the AGM on 2 November

At the AGM on 2nd November we shall hold a vote of members to see whether the Society wishes to make a permanent move of our meetings to Keyworth, from December 2006.

The British Geological Survey has offered the NAS the use of a room, **free of charge**, for our monthly meetings. This would result in a saving of expenditure for the Society.

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

The NAS committee recommends the move to Keyworth. But it is for the members to decide - so please let us have your views, whether "for" or "against" a move.

Vote at the AGM, or by e-mail if you wish: nottinghamastro@yahoo.co.uk

Please make your views known!

Paul Stocks
NAS Secretary

DIARY DATES 2006

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.

Thursday 7 September
British Geological Survey
Nicker Hill,
Keyworth
From 7.30pm

Members' Evening
Including
"THE DAYNIGHT OF THE MOON"
NAS members' images of the 2006 total solar eclipse

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

Thursday 2 November
Djanogly City Academy, Room 105
Sherwood Rise
Nottingham

doors open 7.30pm

Annual General Meeting 2006

Thursday 7 December
Doors open 7.30pm
The Barwell Meteorite
Professor Jack Meadows
Loughborough University

The Widescreen Centre in Nottingham

As you will see from the advertisement section of this issue of the Journal, the Nottingham branch of The Widescreen Centre will close down this month and Jack Grossman has decided to retire.

Jack has supported the NAS over the years and has provided sound advice on telescopes and binoculars to experienced amateur astronomers and people new to astronomy. On behalf of everyone in the NAS, I would like to wish Jack a very happy retirement.

The Widescreen Centre continues at 47 Dorset Street, London W1U 7ND and Dr Simon Bennett is the new owner. Best wishes for every success, Simon!

Paul Stocks
NAS Secretary

DIARY DATES: Other Events

The Autumn Equinox Sky Camp Monday 18th September - Thursday 28th September 2006

Talks Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th September 2006
Trade Stands Saturday 23rd September 2006

Venue: Kelling Heath Leisure Park, Weybourne, Holt, Norfolk

Organised by **Loughton Astronomical Society** in conjunction with the **Society for Popular Astronomy**.

This is the UK's biggest star party, attracting hundreds of observers every year. The Norfolk skies are among the darkest in England, and overnight stays for the event cost just £10 a night for a camping pitch with electrical hook-up (the site has excellent facilities and the normal fee would be £15 per night plus £2 for a Gazebo). Other accommodation is also available. Day visitors are welcome on the main day, Saturday 23 September, when there are numerous trade stands and talks, and a tour of the telescopes on the main field. This is your chance to see the latest telescopes and find out more.

Admission is free (just report to reception please), with a small extra charge for the talks.

Saturday speakers will include:

Ian Morison (SPA, Jodrell Bank): The Great Debate -- Reflector versus Refractor
Ian Phelps (SPA Planetary Section): Observing Saturn

Sunday speakers will include: Owen Brazell: Deep sky Basic CCD Imaging of deep sky objects.

Planetary imaging Registax workshop by Norwich Astronomical Society-Tommi Worton and Martin Stirland.

To book, ring Kelling Heath direct on: 01263 588181 and quote 'Star Party'.

(Red & Yellow fields are reserved for the sole use of astronomers during the above period)

BBC TV Sky @ Night programme will be filming at this year's event, so bring along any images in case of inclement weather.

For pitch locations and more info

visit www.starparty.org

or telephone **Andy Robertson** on **01986 892498**

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**

ADVERTISEMENT

The Widescreen Centre

18, Lady Bay Road,
Nottingham, NG2 5BJ
Tel 0115 945 5459 fax 0115 945 5362
E-mail: jack@widescreen-centre.co.uk

From Jack Grossman at The Widescreen Centre, Nottingham:

The Widescreen Centre has been sold to Dr Simon Bennett as of the 30th June. Beryl & Tony Shapps have now officially retired and are having a very well earned rest.

I too have decided that I will also retire from Widescreen and as a result the Nottingham shop will close as from the end of September, we wish Simon who has worked for us for the past three years every success with the business and know that he will continue to serve the astronomy community with good quality products.

Simon will continue at our London address, **The Widescreen Centre, 47 Dorset Street, London W1U 7ND**, Telephone **020 7935 2580** or simon@widescreen-centre.co.uk

I have made many friends in the astronomy community over the past 8 years and will miss you all. Simon and I will be at the Star Party at Kelling Heath on 22nd/24th September hope to see some of you there.

The result of all this is that Simon and I have decided to hold a sale to save carting the stock down to London. **The sale will start on 29th August and continue through until the stock is sold.**

Some of the items are ex display so may not be boxed, it will be on a first come first served basis, so get your order in early.

Regards,

Jack Grossman
The Widescreen Centre, Nottingham

The list of sale items is available from jack@widescreen-centre.co.uk

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@nrc.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

HONORARY SECRETARY:

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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 Honorary 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.
