

THE
NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.
BULLETIN.

NO. 8.

MARCH, 1947.

COMMENT.

As this issue of 'The Bulletin' is prepared, there are some indications that the long-awaited thaw is here and with it the end of the longest spell of cold and snowy weather on record.

It is surprising to record a remarkably good attendance for the March meeting, considering the climatic conditions. The unpleasantness of travel to which members had to submit in attending both the March and the February meetings is an indication of interest and loyalty which are worthy of high praise.

Amongst the casualties directly attributable to the hard weather was Mr. Lane Hall, who was laid low by influenza. Fortunately, he recovered sufficiently to attend the recent meeting and he is now well again, although he is going away for a well-earned holiday at Easter and will be absent next month.

Mr. Howard Stirling also appears to have suffered for he was unable to give his talk on 'How to make a Telescope' as arranged. This talk has had to be postponed until a later date.

A note will be found elsewhere in this issue of 'The Bulletin' regarding a broadcast talk to be given by Mr. R.F.T. Granger on astronomy as a hobby on March 17th. News of the Nottingham Astronomical Society has evidently reached Birmingham for your Secretary recently received a correctly titled letter from the Midland Region Office of the B.B.C., requesting a speaker on astronomy in a series of talks on hobbies. After slight preliminary (should I say - inevitable!) confusion between astronomy and astrology by the producer, Mr. Granger was approached and kindly agreed to try his broadcasting ability.

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THE SKY IN APRIL.

The Julian Date for April 0 is 243 2276. For other dates add the date.

The Sun.

Rotation No. 1251 began on March 17th and rotation No. 1252 begins on April 13th. South pole is well in view but moving back towards the south limb. Spots should be plotted on a two-inch disk, the horizontal line noted and timed to a tenth of an hour.

The Moon.

Full on April 5th. At best altitude from April 23rd to 28th, before First Quarter. Mare Crisium, Petavius (24th), Theophilus (26th) and nearby formations are well placed for observation.

The Planets.

SATURN is up until a few hours after midnight. A line projected down from Alpha through Beta Geminorum passes near it. Saturn is approaching Gemini until the 3rd and then slowly turns back towards Delta Cancri, passing just north of it in late June.

Titan is at east elongation on the 11th and 27th, and is north, west and south at four-day intervals.

JUPITER rises before midnight but is very low in the sky; unmistakable by its brightness. Eclipses of the three inner moons will occur whenever they approach the planet from the preceding side and they will disappear into the shadow before they reach the planet.

There is a very close approach by the moon on the 8th, at about 8 hrs. GMT.

URANUS sets at midnight, and NEPTUNE is up all night 1° south of Gamma Virginis (a fine and easy double star). Both need a chart (see B.A.A. Handbook) for certain identification.

Occultations.

One bright star is occulted - Kappa Geminorum (mag. 3.7). It disappears at 11 h.13 m.G.M.A.T.

Variable Stars.

Algol is unfavourably placed in the sky for observation of minima, and Mira Ceti has disappeared into the evening twilight.

A. W. Lane Hall.

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GLOSSARY.

BINARY STARS.

Double stars physically connected with each other and rotating round their common centre of gravity. There are two classes of binary stars: Visual - observable as double stars with or without a telescope, and Spectroscopic - detectable only by their spectral lines which appear double at intervals.

BUTTERFLY DIAGRAM.

A graph showing the latitudinal position of sunspots over a cycle of 11 years resulting in a marked resemblance to the shape of a butterfly.

BARLOW LENS.

A lens which may be attached to the eye-piece of a telescope for the purpose of increasing considerably the focal length of the object glass or mirror. This results in an increase of magnifying power amounting to almost double the normal power of the eye-piece.

CASSEGRAIN.

A type of reflecting telescope in which the light rays are reflected by a small convex mirror at the upper end of the tube, through a central hole in the main mirror at the lower end, to focus at the base of the telescope.

CEPHEIDS.

Variable stars, whose periods of variability are related to their absolute magnitudes (i.e. intrinsic brilliancy) in the same manner as shown by Delta Cephei. Comparison of the absolute magnitude thus revealed with the apparent magnitude enable the star's distance to be determined independent of the parallax method.

CLOCK STARS.

Selected stars, whose positions are accurately known, used for time determination

COUNTER-GLOW.

A faint luminosity seen on dark, clear nights at a point in the sky directly opposite the Sun. It is associated with the Zodiacal Light and is believed to be caused by the reflection of sunlight from dust particles in space. Also known as the "Gegenschein".

STAR NAMES.

<u>A Guide to Pronunciation.</u>		<u>Pronunciation.</u>
<u>Name.</u>	<u>Constellation Designation.</u>	<u>Pronunciation.</u>
x Achernar.	Alpha Eridani.	ā'ker-nar
Albireo.	Beta Cygni.	al-bī'rē-ō
Alcor.	80 Ursa Majoris.	al-kor'
Alcyone.	Eta Tauri	al-sī'ō-nē
x Aldebaran.	Alpha Tauri.	al-deb'a-ran
x Algol.	Beta Persei.	al'gol
Alioth.	Epsilon Ursæ Majoris.	ali-oth'
Alnilam.	Epsilon Orionis.	al-ni-lam'
Alpheratz.	Alpha Andromedæ.	al-fē'rats
x Altair.	Alpha Aquilæ.	al-ter'
x Antares.	Alpha Scorpæ.	an-tār'rēz
x Arcturus.	Alpha Bootis.	ark-tū'rus.
Asterope.	21 Tauri.	as-ter'ō-pē
Atlas.	27 Tauri.	at'las
x Bellatrix.	Gamma Orionis.	be-lā'triks
Benetnasch.	Eta Ursæ Majoris.	be-net'nash
x Betelgeuse.	Alpha Orionis.	be-el-guz
x Canopus.	Alpha Argus.	ka-nō'pus
x Capella.	Alpha Aurigæ.	ka-pel'a
Caph.	Beta Cassiopeia.	kaf
x Castor.	Alpha Geminorum.	kas'ter
Cor Caroli.	Alpha Canum Venaticorum.	kor kar'o-lī
x Deneb.	Alpha Cygni.	den'eb
x Denebola.	Beta Leonis.	de-neb'ō-la
Diphda.	Beta Ceti.	dīf'da
x Dubhe.	Alpha Ursæ Majoris.	dōb'he
Electra.	17 Tauri.	ē-lek'tra
x Fomalhaut.	Alpha Piscis Australis.	fō'mal-hawt
Hamal.	Alpha Arietis.	ham'al
Kaus Australis.	Epsilon Sagittarii.	kaws os-trā'lis
Maia.	20 Tauri.	mā'ya.
Markab.	Alpha Pegasi.	mar'kab
Megrez.	Delta Ursæ Majoris.	meg'rez
Merak.	Beta Ursæ Majoris.	me'rak
Merope.	23 Tauri.	mer'ō-pē
Mira.	Omicron Ceti.	mī'ra
Mirfak.	Alpha Persei.	mīr'fak
Mizar.	Zeta Ursæ Majoris.	mī'zar
Nath.	Beta Tauri.	nath.
Pleione.	28 Tauri.	plī-ō-nē
x Polaris.	Alpha Ursæ Minoris.	pō-lā'ris
x Pollux.	Beta Gemini.	pol'uks.
x Procyon.	Alpha Canis Minoris.	prō'si-on
Ras Alhague.	Alpha Ophiuchi.	ras al-ha'gwe
x Regulus.	Alpha Leonis.	reg'ū-lus
x Rigel.	Beta Orionis.	rī'gel
Scheat.	Beta Pegasi.	she-at'
Schedar.	Alpha Cassiopeia.	shed'ar
Sheratan.	Beta Arietis.	sher'a-tan.
x Sirius.	Alpha Canis Majoris.	sir'i-us.
x Spica.	Alpha Virginis.	spī'ka
Thuban.	Alpha Draconis.	thōb'ban
x Vega.	Alpha Lyrae.	vē'ga

Note:- The above stars are those whose names are to be found in books on popular astronomy. Only stars marked x are named in the Nautical Almanac - the official astronomical publication in this country. The Constellation Designation column gives the equivalent Greek letter and constellation name (in its genitive form) for each star, with the exceptions of the Pleiades - 17 to 28 Tauri - and Alcor which have Flamsteed numbers instead of Greek letters.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

BROADCAST TALK ON ASTRONOMY.

By the time this issue of 'The Bulletin' is circulated, members may have heard the short broadcast talk on astronomy as a hobby, which is to be given by Mr. R.F.T. Granger on Monday, March 17th, at 7.30 p.m.

The title of the series is 'Is this your hobby too?' and it is to be broadcast as part of the Midland Home Service.

Mr. Granger's talk follows one on 'Magic' in the same series.

The current issue of the 'Radio Times' obligingly refers to Mr. Granger as Vice-President of the Nottingham Astronomical Society and, incidentally, mistakenly spells his name as 'Grainger'.

However, it is indeed a happy thought that our Society should be called upon to provide a speaker for the B.B.C., and perhaps new members may be attracted to the astronomical fraternity as a result. If this does occur, the Society will have good cause to be pleased with itself, whether potential amateurs join it or others of its kind.

COMPUTERS.

The Director of the Observing Section appeals to all members with an elementary knowledge of trigonometry and an interest in figures to undertake simple computing work for the Society.

He will be happy to advise and assist any volunteers, who will be doing really useful work.

NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting will take place in the Mechanics Institution, Burton St., Nottingham, on Thursday, 3rd April, 1947 at 7.30 p.m.

Mr. Lake Aske will give a talk on 'The Stars and the Poets'.

Mr. Lane Hall will be away on holiday but it is hoped to have his notes on the Night Sky in April read by a deputy.

ADDRESSES.

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Nottingham.
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