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NOTTINGHAM ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

B U L L E T I N

NO. 13

AUGUST, 1947.

COMMENT

The long inaugural session of the Society is drawing to a close and in accordance with its constitution, new office bearers and Committee members will have to be elected for office in the 1947-48 session commencing on October 1st.

It was originally decided to submit nominations in the form of a ballot paper, by post to all members, but difficulties, due chiefly to the holiday season, have made it necessary to put forward the alternative suggestion that the selected candidates shall be proposed for election at the general meeting on October 2nd.

The Committee will be asked to consider this proposal at the next and last meeting of the current session. If approved, it will add strength to the plea to all members to attend the general meeting.

This will be the most important meeting of the year and it is essential that everyone gives his or her support in the interests of the Society, as several business items affecting the Society's affairs are likely to be on the agenda.

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THE SKY IN SEPTEMBER

The Julian Date for September 0 is 243 2429. For other dates add the date.

The Sun

Solar Rotation No. 1257 began on August 27. Rotation No. 1258 begins on September 23.

The evenings are short with the end of Double Summer Time, but it is hoped the good series of two inch discs can be continued to the end of the year, when a second summary will be compiled.

The Moon

Moonlight interferes at the beginning and end of the month. Full Moons are on August 31 and September 30.

There are no noteworthy occultations.

The full moon at the end of September is the "Harvest Moon" which rises several nights in succession at about sunset on account of its rapid northward movement, and presents a favourable chance to see the Mare Crisium area and the Petavius group of craters under a setting sun.

Planets

Venus is about to appear in the evening twilight, and naked-eye observers can try for their first glimpses during September when the horizon is really favourable; Venus sets about twenty minutes after the Sun in the second half of the month. Telescopically the disc is almost full.

Jupiter sets early and is always at a poor altitude in the south-west, but unmistakeable on account of its brightness.

Uranus rises before midnight, north of Zeta Tauri and can be followed as a faint naked-eye, or easy binocular, object.

Mars rises about midnight, is about first magnitude in line with Castor and Pollux and below them (similar to Saturn's position early this year). The telescopic disc is very small, about 5 seconds of arc.

Saturn is reappearing in the morning sky.

Meteors

No major showers in September, but the autumn "frequency" is always higher than at

other times of the year for minor showers.

Variable Stars.

Convenient minima of Algol occur on September 8 at about 11 hours GMAT. and on the 11th at about 8 hrs. GMAT. If the sky is clear on either night a practice should be made to retrain the eye and learn the comparison stars for the mid-winter campaign. Early efforts are usually disappointing but skill can soon be acquired by anyone, and no optical aid is needed. Further charts will be printed for anyone interested, and a post-card request before the meeting would be appreciated.

o Ceti has now reappeared, very faint, and binocular search can begin at once for the first signs of its brightening. The winter maximum should be well seen with the naked-eye.

A. W. Lane Hall
Director, Observing Section.

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A GREAT METEORITE

Some details have been received of a remarkable meteorite which fell 30 miles north-east of the village of Kharkovka near the Pacific coast of Siberia on February 12th, 1947.

The meteorite appeared at a height of 15 - 20 miles as a small, faintly luminous reddish sphere. By the time it had dropped to 7 or 8 miles - leaving behind it a trail of reddish brown smoke visible over 100 miles - it had grown brighter than the Sun according to eye-witnesses.

At 5 miles up it appeared to burst with the noise of thunderclaps lasting 4 or 5 minutes and heard 50 miles away into dozens of fragments which fell almost vertically to earth.

The fragments produced craters scattered over an area of a tenth of a square mile. The largest was 25 yards across and others varied between 15 and 20 yards. Some were driven into hard rock.

The U.S.S.R. Acadamy of Sciences have sent an expedition to the spot.

Its mass appears to have been at least 1,000 tons (Discovery, June, 1947). The meteoric iron is unusual in containing only 6% of nickel and no cobalt.

Following the Earth in its orbit, the meteorite owed its velocity of approach to gravitational attraction, which explains its small relative velocity of 8 m.p.s. and its near approach before exploding. Much of its mass was preserved intact.

This is in contrast to the Siberian meteorite of June, 1908, which was moving in the opposite direction to the Earth and came in head-on collision, with more spectacular results but leaving no fragments of any note.

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NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in the Mechanics Institution on Thursday, September 4th.

Mr. Lane Hall will be back to give another of his popular talks on current events in the sky.

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NOTTINGHAM
21 Aug. '47.