

## COMMENT.

Apart from Mr. Lane-Hall's "Night Sky for the Month", which appears in the Bulletin with unfailing regularity there is little in the paper dealing directly with astronomy. Admitted this serves us very well as a medium for notices and announcements, but is this enough?

Articles are urgently needed to improve our publication and there must be quite a few members who could write a short discourse relating to astronomy. There is, for instance, the B.A.A. monthly journal from which many interesting papers could be written and this journal can always be had from the secretary. Surely some of us could give short biographies of famous astronomers, a series which would be more than welcome to us all.

May we from now onwards count on at least one article each month from members, for after all they need not be of any great length nor filled with abstruse technicalities.

THE NIGHT SKY FOR JULY 1948.

The Julian Date for July 0 is 243 2733. For other dates, add the date.

## THE SUN.

Solar activity showed a marked revival in early May, and there will probably be similar outbreaks at intervals. An approximate check on longitudes of activity can be made by estimating the "age" of the Solar Rotation; activity often repeats in the same longitude. Solar rotation No. 1268 began on June 22nd. Rotation No. 1269 begins on July 19th.

## THE MOON.

Moon-light occurs in mid-month; Full Moon on the 21st. There are no prominent occultations.

## THE PLANETS.

Mercury was picked up by several members during and after the Whitsun holidays when atmospheric conditions were very favourable. It may be seen in the morning sky about July 10-22nd, with Venus again acting as a convenient signpost.

Venus has now reappeared on the "preceding" side of the sun and is prominent in the dawn sky.

Jupiter is visible in the early part of the night, easily identified by its great brightness low in the South.

## COMETS.

A new bright comet, 1948g, has just been recorded. It is about 4th magnitude faintly visible to the naked eye and has been seen in this country. No orbit ephemeris is available but the following history is published.

June 2.7 R.A. 2h.40m. + 43°      June 6.0 R.A. 2h.25m. + 46° 4  
 " 5.0 R.A. 2h.30m. + 44° 07.      " 7.0 R.A. 2h.15m. + 47° 7

It should be looked for about midnight (G.M.T.) or after. Will any observers keep in touch with me by telephone as better particulars should soon be available.

Bester's comet and Mrkos's comet were both seen by members but are now faint and beyond the reach of small instruments.

## METEORS.

The number of meteors is much greater in the late summer and early autumn than at other times in the year. Early Perseids may be seen, swift and leaving streaks, late in the month, radiating from a point low in the North East.

## ALGOL.

This variable is coming round again. Early morning minima, for those who happen to be about from other causes, are on July 6th. and 26th. These are G.M.T. dates, i.e. starting at midnight.

## EXTRA NOTES.

Any suggestions for additional notes in the "Night Sky" series whether from the struggling beginner or the very advanced would be welcomed. They should cover everyone's needs - if we know what the needs are.

A.W.LANE-HALL.

## NOTES, NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Members may have read in the daily press that the 200 inch telescope is now in action. Full details will no doubt be available from the B.A.A. but the following preliminary announcement, for which we have to thank the "Manchester Guardian" may be of interest. It is a report from their own correspondent from New York, June 7th.

"The two hundred inch Palomar telescope, one of the great and loving engineering marvels of our time, was peered through for the first time at the week-end at a dedication ceremony open to noted scientists and scientific correspondents at Mount Palomar, in Southern California.

Although visibility was reported to be fairly poor, Saturn was seen with a rare brightness, 'producing the effect' said one visitor, 'of a strong flash-light suddenly brought close to the eye'. The observers clearly saw three of its nine satellites and two of its concentric rings. But this glimpse, the authorities explained, is to be a rare treat, for the telescope will seldom be used for looking at the planets. Not the least of its marvels is the nice system of contradictions between what it is meant to do and what the public assumes it was built for.

The telescope, it was announced, has the light gathering power of a million human eyes, but this does not mean that a human eye with a million times its present visual power could see what the telescope sees. It possesses that amount of visual power as well as the light accumulated on a vastly sensitive photographic plate. The telescope, in fact, was built as a giant camera, and will enable astronomers to photograph objects one billion light years away from the earth. The best that any telescope ever built has been able to do so far has been the comparatively modest of the 100 inch at Mount Wilson, an object at a mere half billion-billion light years. The concave lens, which alone took two years to grind, is accurate to within two-millionths of an inch. The observatory dome is 137 feet in diameter and 135 feet high. The part that revolves weighs 1,000 tons, yet may be moved by an electric motor of one-twelfth horse-power."

## ORDINARY MEETING.

The next ordinary meeting will take place at the Mechanics Institute, Trinity Square, Nottingham on Thursday, July 1st. 1948 at 7.30 PM. This will be preceded by a committee meeting and members of the committee should arrive not later than 7.0 PM.

**APOLOGY.** In the May bulletin No. 22 the ordinary meeting was announced as taking place on Thursday, June 13th. which was so obviously an error that fortunately most members disregarded the date announced. This should have read June 3rd. Nevertheless, the Editor tenders his sincerest apologies and trusts that no member has been put to any inconvenience through this unfortunate mistake.

## OVERHAULING AND CLEANING TELESCOPES, ETC.

As announced in the May bulletin a party of strong armed volunteers are required for this work. Members wishing to help should meet at Trent Boulevard Schools, West Bridgford, on the third and fourth Thursdays of the next three months. These will be:- June 24th. July 15th and 22nd.

(Contd)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS ETC. Contd.

August 19th and 26th.

The time of meeting will be about 7.30 pm. and if members have spanners, screwdrivers and any other useful tools which they can bring along they will assist materially in this important work. Mr. Lane-Hall is in charge of operations and points out that many hands will make lighter and shorter work. Please lend a hand.

You catch a No. 12 bus from South Parade, times being:-  
6.27 p.m. 6.42 p.m. 6.57 p.m. 7.12 p.m. and every 15 minutes, and alight at Lady Bay Road. Weather is no deterrent as we can work indoors so don't let the summer weather stop you! Members with large Thermos flasks will be particularly welcome!

## SOCIAL OUTING.

There is to be an outing for members, their friends and relatives on Sunday July 11th. We shall leave Nottingham from Trinity Square at 10.30 a.m. and return there about 9.30 p.m. We will have a picnic lunch, therefore members should bring food and either coffee or tea sufficient for themselves - we hope to have the necessary heating apparatus for water. Tea will be taken at a cafe, probably in Castleton - Derbyshire has been chosen as the best area for this trip. The cost is £1 for adults and 10/- for juniors, but only eight seats can be reserved for juniors. This charge covers all costs, tea tips etc. Application for seats should be made as soon as possible to the Secretary. We are limited to 32 so apply immediately if you want to be sure of a seat.

Lastly, we have decided on Derbyshire, interested members are invited to make suggestions as to places they think would be of greatest interest and we will try and incorporate at least some in the itinerary - please let the Secretary have your suggestions at once.

## TALK.

Following Mr. Lane-Hall's "Night Sky" Mr. B. O. Davies will give an address entitled "Astronomy and Architecture"

## AFTERMATH.

The verse appended is the direct result of our President's experience at Monsal Head when for three successive nights he gazes upon the elusive little planet Mercury - his description was so vivid and so well related to less fortunate members that at least one has called upon the muses to extol the event!

### TO MERCURY.

Hail! Thou fleet wing'd messenger of the gods,

'Tis not often we see thy face,

Save when thou turns't to cast

Thy glinting eye on us poor mortals

On our homeward way,

Refreshed with sweetest Nectar

From Bacchus store!

W. E. FOX.