JANUARY’S “BLUE SUPERMOON” IMAGED BY GARETH DAVIES

using a Canon 700D at the prime focus a Skywatcher 127 Maksutov-Cassegrain

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Thursday, March 1st
Gotham Memorial Hall
Gotham, NG11 0HE

8 pm (doors open at 7 pm)
Tonight we give a warm welcome to

Bob Mizon, MBE, FRAS

of the
BAA Commission for Dark Skies

who will be speaking on

Dark Future?
Can the UK’s dark spaces survive?
The Northern Hemisphere **Spring Equinox** occurs at 4:16 pm on March 20\textsuperscript{th}, when the Sun will be exactly above Earth’s equator for the first time this year.

**British Summer Time** begins on Sunday, March 25\textsuperscript{th}. Clocks should be advanced by one hour at 1 am on that date.

### PHASES OF THE MOON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Date and time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Moon</td>
<td>12:52 am on March 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Quarter</td>
<td>11:21 am on the 9\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Moon</td>
<td>1:13 pm on the 17\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Quarter</td>
<td>3:36 pm on the 24\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Moon</td>
<td>1:38 pm <strong>BST</strong> on the 31\textsuperscript{st}</td>
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*(Expect more media hype on the theme of Blue Moons)*

This month the Moon is closest to the Earth on the 26\textsuperscript{th}, and furthest on the 11\textsuperscript{th}.

### THE PLANETS

The middle of March provides one of the best opportunities for observing **Mercury** in 2018. The planet will be an evening object throughout the month, reaching greatest eastern elongation on March 15\textsuperscript{th}, when it will be 18 degrees from the Sun and shining at magnitude –0.6. Look west at about 7 pm in mid-month to spot both Mercury and the much brighter Venus a few degrees above the western horizon. Earlier, on March 3\textsuperscript{rd}, Mercury, although very low in the west after sunset, will be 1.4 degrees north of Venus.

**Venus** is an evening object, gradually moving away from the Sun as the month unfolds, and shining at magnitude –3.9. It will become much more prominent as the summer approaches.

Looking due west at 7 pm on March 15\textsuperscript{th}.
**Mars**, shining at magnitude 0.8 and displaying a disk nearly 7 arcseconds across, rises at about 3 am in early March. Being 23 degrees south of the celestial equator it will be a challenging object to observe telescopically.

**Jupiter** is better-placed, being at about 17 degrees southern declination, and shining at magnitude –2.2. By the end of March, Jupiter will be rising well before midnight, and its angular diameter will have reached 40 arcseconds.

**Saturn**, at magnitude 0.5, will be a more difficult target to observe, not rising until nearly 5 am as March begins. If you happen to be out-and-about before sunrise at the very end of the month, watch out for Mars closing in on Saturn. (The two planets will be a little over a degree apart on April 2nd).

> Looking due south at 5 am on March 17th

> A trio of superior planets among the southern zodiacal constellations

**Uranus** and **Neptune** must now be regarded as unobservable as they are very close to the Sun.

**METEORS**

The **Virginids** begin to show weak activity in the second half of March, although you will be very lucky to see a handful of events in an hour of watching.
DIARY DATES 2018

Monthly Meetings of the Nottingham Astronomical Society

1) Meetings at Gotham Memorial Hall
Nottingham Road, Gotham, NG11 0HE

Held on the FIRST Thursday of each month except August
Doors open at 7pm for 8pm start.

These events are normally centred around a talk by a visiting speaker, except Open Evenings, when NAS members provide the activities. Normally we have a Library and a Helpdesk open at each meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1st</td>
<td>Dark Future? Can the UK’s dark spaces survive?</td>
<td>Bob Mizon, MBE, FRAS BAA Commission for Dark Skies</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5th</td>
<td>Jodrell Bank 60 years on</td>
<td>Prof Ian Morison University of Manchester</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 3rd</td>
<td>Lucky Planet – why Earth is exceptional and what it means for life</td>
<td>Prof David Waltham Royal Holloway, University of London</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 7th</td>
<td>Diamonds in the Sky White Dwarfs in Modern Astrophysics</td>
<td>Professor Martin Barstow University of Leicester</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5th</td>
<td>Cassini’s Final Science</td>
<td>Dr Phil Sutton University of Lincoln</td>
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<td>August 4th (Saturday)</td>
<td>Annual Society BBQ at the Observatory</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 6th</td>
<td>The Adventures of Curiosity on Mars</td>
<td>Prof Sanjeev Gupta Imperial College, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 4th</td>
<td>Juno – the Answers</td>
<td>Prof Emma Bunce University of Leicester</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1st</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 6th</td>
<td>Transient Events in Astronomy or things that go bump in the night</td>
<td>Prof Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell DBE, FRS, FRSE, FRAS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2) Social and Practical Astronomy Meetings
at the Burnside Memorial Hall, Plumtree

Church Hill, Plumtree, Nottingham, NG12 5ND
Held on the **THIRD Thursday** of each month from **7:30pm**

*These meetings are of a more informal nature, providing opportunity for members and guests to share their hobby over a cup of tea or coffee, as well as listening to a short talk.*

The next meeting will be on March 15th

Check our website: [www.nottinghamastro.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamastro.org.uk) for the latest information about the Society’s meetings and for further information about the talks and speakers

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Events in the coming months open to everyone
(follow hyperlinks for more information and how to book)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28th February</td>
<td>A brief history of women in astronomy, Open Dome Event, Clifton</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th March</td>
<td>BAA Deep Sky Section Meeting, Bedford</td>
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<td>10th March</td>
<td>BAA Back to Basics Workshop, Bristol</td>
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<td>17-20 March</td>
<td>The Photography Show, The NEC, Birmingham</td>
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<td>29th March</td>
<td>A live surface of the Sun, Open Dome Event, Clifton</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st April</td>
<td>Society for the History of Astronomy Spring Meeting, Cambridge</td>
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<td>25th April</td>
<td>Heavenly Place on Earth, Open Dome Event, Clifton</td>
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<tr>
<td>24th May</td>
<td>Flat Earth Rising, Open Dome Event, Clifton</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8 July</td>
<td>BAA Summer Meeting, Coventry</td>
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<td>12-13 October</td>
<td>International Astronomy Show, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 October</td>
<td>Society for the History of Astronomy, Autumn Conference, Birmingham</td>
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The Nottingham Astronomical Society: **E - SERVICES**

Whether or not you are a NAS member, you can keep up to date with details of the Society’s meetings and other events by visiting the NAS website: [www.nottinghamastro.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamastro.org.uk)

**NAS on Facebook**
You are welcome to connect with other members and friends of the NAS on Facebook by going to: [http://www.facebook.com/nas.org.uk](http://www.facebook.com/nas.org.uk)

**NAS on Twitter**
The Society has a Twitter account at [https://twitter.com/NottinghamAstro](https://twitter.com/NottinghamAstro)

**NAS Journal e-mailing list**
To register for your monthly e-mailed copy of the NAS Journal, just e-mail secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk

You don't have to be a Society member to take advantage of this service.

*If you happen to change your email address, please remember to inform the Society by emailing us at treasurer@nottinghamastro.org.uk*
Social and Practical Astronomy, Plumtree

The February meeting at Plumtree was an educational quiz, organised and delivered by our own Astrophysicist, Dr Julian Onions, from The University of Nottingham.

Those attending were divided up into two teams, and all members of the teams took it in turn to answer a question. The questions were ranked in difficulty from 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest); individuals were asked what level of difficult question they would like, and the harder the question, the more points it would attract for their team. If they struggled with the question the rest of their team could help them though this would halve the number of points awarded if they were correct.

All of the questions were to define or describe an astronomical term. These ranged from "Blue Moon" to "AGN". Brief discussion and an explanation was subsequently given by Julian once the team member had attempted to define their term, and a slide was projected with the correct definitions and often a useful graphic. The technical side of the evening was run by myself and Tobias, who is also at The University of Nottingham, an undergraduate reading physics.

The scores were very close at the end, and Julian provided treats for the winners (and the runners up). It was a very educational and fun evening. Thank you Julian.

The March meeting at Plumtree will see Leigh run a session on telescopes. At the April meeting, David Lukehurst is going to give us a talk on eyepieces. The May meeting is yet to be confirmed, and in June, Alan Heath will talk to us about observing the planets.

James Dawson
NAS Helpdesk
helpdesk@nottinghamastro.org.uk
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 Commission for Dark Skies

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Observatory line: 07726 940700 (line open during observing sessions)

Meetings
Our formal meetings, often with an illustrated talk by a guest speaker, are held on the first Thursday of each month (except in August) at:

Gotham Memorial Hall
Gotham
Nottingham NG11 0HE

Doors open 7.00pm
Meetings start 8.00pm
Meetings end 10.00pm

These meetings are open to the public, and visitors are welcome to attend.

Annual subscriptions 2018

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>£30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint rate for partners living at the same address</td>
<td>£45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-18s and full-time students</td>
<td>£5</td>
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Subscriptions become due on 1st January. Half-price subscription is charged if joining after 30th June (minimum subscription £5).

Please make cheques payable to: Nottingham Astronomical Society.

If you would like more information about the Nottingham Astronomical Society, or would like to become a member, please contact the Secretary secretary@nottinghamastro.org.uk or speak to any NAS committee member at one of the regular monthly meetings. A membership application form is inside this issue of the Journal.

The Nottingham Astronomical Society
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