

Janus



Ewell Astronomical Society Newsletter – Winter/Spring 2007

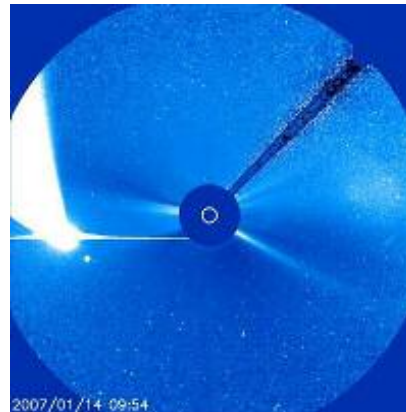
Serving skywatchers in SW London and north Surrey

www.ewell-as.co.uk

Ewell Astro Soc c/o David Fishwick, Nonsuch HS for Girls, Ewell Road, Cheam, Surrey SM3 8AB
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Your new Committee – elected at Dec 8th 2006 AGM – contact them if you have any Society queries.
Chairman - David Cooper: Secretary - Richard Gledhill: Treasurer - Valerie May
Committee members - Clive Cook, David Fishwick [Dep Chairman], Maurice Gavin [Janus Editor+Webmaster], James Gordon, Anita King [Assist Secretary], Alex Mirza [Librarian].



Comet McNaught, discovered by Rob McNaught at Siding Springs last August 7, put on a spectacular appearance as it closed with the sun as the best comet for a decade.

Many members caught sight of it about sunset on Jan 10/11 including Ron Johnson, David Fishwick and Anita King [who all emailed me] – some viewing from Epsom Downs and the School's Observing Deck to ensure a perfectly clear horizon.

Member Gary Walker emails: "I observed Comet McNaught on January 10th and 11th [cloud stopped earlier and later attempts], from home at Banstead.

At first, seeing the comet was slightly confusing, due to a number of jet trails, which can resemble comets, especially if travelling away from you! The comet was just visible to the naked eye as a tiny speck, but it was clearly visible with a 6x30 finder. With 10x50 binoculars, it was seen as a ball like, dull yellowish coma, which I estimate to be of about the same angular size as Venus. The tail was probably approaching 1 degree in length. Oh, how so much more glorious it would have been, had it been seen high up in a dark sky! "

Pics above on Jan 10 – left by Maurice Gavin from Epsom Down [300mm lens + Canon 300D DSLR] lower right by David Fishwick from NSHS Observatory Deck [28cm Celestron + digital camera to eyepiece] upper right-SOHO C3 solar camera [solar disk occulted] on Jan 14 with Mercury close to the comet's head.

EAS Meeting dates for your 2007 diary – see www.ewell-as.co.uk

All held at Nonsuch HS for Girls – Ewell Road - Cheam [unless otherwise noted] and start at 8pm.

Ordinary Monthly Meetings [in bold] in Common Room start at 7.40pm.

Headley Heath meetings *phone 01252 382940 from 7pm on evening to check observing is 'on'.

Door subscriptions – arriving at meetings with small change in your pocket and not tendering £10 and £20 notes is greatly appreciated. Many thanks

Fri Jan 12 Dr Chris Arridge - Mullard Space Sci Lab - *Cassini at Saturn*

Mon-Thu Jan 15-18 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Feb 9 Norman Walker -RGO - *Variables -Getting the Measure of the Stars*

Mon-Thu Feb 12-15 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Wed Feb 21 – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck

Fri Mar 9 – Tom Boles – BAA – *Discovering Supernovae – Methods, Motivation & Rewards*

Mon-Thu Mar 19-22 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Apr 13 – Dr Lucie Green – Mullard Space Sci Lab –*International Geophysical year 2007– the Sun*

Mon-Thu Apr 16-19 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Wed Apr 18 – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck

Fri May 11 - TBA

Mon-Thu May 14-17 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Jun 8 - Dr Stuart Eves - Surrey Sat Tech Ltd - *Sophisticated Small Satellites from Surrey*

Wed Jun 20 – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck

Fri Jul 13 – Dr Stewart Moore – BAA – *The Deep Sky*

August – no main meeting

Wed Aug 15 – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck

Mon-Thu Sep 10-13 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Sept 14 - TBA

Mon-Thu Oct 8-11 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Oct 12 - TBA

Wed Oct 17 – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck

Fri Nov 9 - TBA

Mon-Thu Nov 12-15 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Mon-Thu Dec 10-13 Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Dec 14 – AGM+ talk TBA

Wed Dec 19 – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck

Observing Sessions on Headley Heath will be held monthly [Sept to May] on dates noted on the **EAS Diary** at NT carpark adjacent the cricket pitch. Phone 01252 382940 from 7pm to check meeting is on.

The Users Group Meeting is held on Wednesdays from 8pm sharp on alternate months on dates noted on the **EAS Diary** in the School's Geography Room via Main School Entrance facing playing field.

Society email register – want to know instantly about special events like aurora, meteor showers, changes to the Society programme etc? Send an email to mgavin@ntlworld.com under subject matter "Ewell email" and you will! A quarter of members are already signed up – join them!

Janus contributions – can you help? If you have any astro observations, pictures, articles or notes please email it to mgavin@ntlworld.com or hand it to Maurice Gavin on a floppy disk or CD.

Telescopes for disposal and free to members submitting an article suitable for *Janus* or practical observing services as judged by the Editor. Meade products includes ETX-70s [GOTOs needs attention], 114mm Newtonian, 70mm f/10 refractor, eyepiece+colour filter boxed set, portable 12v powerpack etc. Submit to Maurice Gavin via mgavin@ntlworld.com Thanks for your interest.

Chairman's Report – 2006 AGM

As most of you are aware I am now retiring as Chairman of the Society. I feel that after 9 years it is time for a change and to give an opportunity to someone else to take on this role. I am very pleased to announce that David Cooper has volunteered and I know that the Society will continue to flourish under his influence. I had not intended to stay as Chairman for so long but I wanted to ensure that the Society had a really good venue to hold their meetings. I am sure you will agree that Nonsuch High School for Girls has come up to expectations. I wish to express my thanks once again to Mrs. Genefer



Venus+Moon 2007 Jan 20 – Brian Taylor[Epsom Downs] MauriceGavin- [WP-right]

Espejo for providing us with such wonderful accommodation for our meetings and viewing evenings; also to David Fishwick for his assistance over the past two years.

I want to take this opportunity to give special thanks to our Treasurer Jeff Haywood who took on a very difficult situation with the Society's accounts at the beginning of 2006. Over the past year Jeff has managed to sort out most of the problems which had arisen and has produced a satisfactory set of accounts which have been approved by Thalia Hessey - our

Independent Financial Examiner. I would just like to offer our congratulations to Thalia, who gave birth to James on 12th October and I am pleased that she and the baby are in good health. On the 22nd October, whilst Thalia was overseeing the accounts at my home, James was very well behaved, sleeping most of the time except when he was hungry. Due to various reasons, not least his impending move from Sutton in the near future Jeff decided that he would like to stand down as Treasurer. I am pleased to tell you that Valerie May has agreed to become Treasurer as from January.

My thanks also to Anita King, who took on the role of Secretary at very short notice due to the sudden ill health of Richard Gledhill and has done so much for the Society in such a comparatively short time - not least in arranging with David Cooper our 40th Anniversary Dinner at Horton Park Golf & Country Club on the 20th October. Due to her work commitments, Anita has reluctantly decided that she will not be able to continue as Secretary but I am pleased to advise that she will however remain on the Committee. Richard Gledhill, who I am pleased to report has now recovered from his illness, has agreed to resume the position of Secretary and I wish him good health in the future.

As you will observe from the provisional list of Speakers for 2007, we have a good selection of topics for next year, but David Cooper has told me that it is becoming more difficult to obtain speakers, due to their other commitments. My thanks to David for his efforts and also to Ron Johnson for coming in at short notice to assist David in this difficult task.

My thanks to Maurice Gavin for editing and arranging the printing of *Janus* and the Programme Cards at NESOT, not forgetting the updating of our website which is essential for keeping our Society before the general public to encourage new members. My thanks to David Fishwick for our Users' Evenings at Nonsuch and for providing refreshments. I hope more of you will come along to these meetings, which are very enjoyable and rewarding. Mike Fantham has recently advised that he is unable to continue with the Viewing Evenings on Headley Heath next year due to other commitments. The Committee would be pleased to hear if anyone else in the Society can provide a telescope regularly at Headley so that these meetings can be maintained. [Mike advises he will continue the Headley Meetings but would appreciate some regular assistance to deputise - MG].

For me, the astronomical event of the year was the Total Solar Eclipse on the 29th March which I viewed in Turkey. This was a truly wonderful spectacle especially the diamond ring effect and Bailey's beads. We were so fortunate with the weather, very warm with clear skies and a really lovely position right by the sea, good accommodation and food. A memorable occasion indeed. I for one will not

forget the floorshow and dancing girls! The second event was our 40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner at Horton Park Golf & Country Club, which was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. It was good to see some of our older members there.

Coming back to astronomy, the main events for 2007 will be the total lunar eclipse on Saturday 3rd March, commencing at 20.26 hours with totality at 22.43 hours finishing at 23.58 hours. There will also be an occultation of Saturn at 02.00 hours on the 2nd March - an occasion for keen and hardy astronomers. There are also several other occultations during the year so make a note in your diaries.

Although I will not be Chairman, I will still take a keen interest in the Society. In the New Year I shall be visiting a number of schools in the area giving talks on Astronomy and generally promoting our Society wherever possible. Finally, I would like to express my thanks to you, the members, for your continued support of the Society and to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful New Year. *Neville Grabaskey* – Chairman

Secretary's Report - 2006 AGM

2006 has been an eventful year both for astronomical and society events. There are three main events, which I would like to share with you and that have stood out both for the society and me. The first event being the total eclipse of the sun on the 29th March from Turkey. I definitely have the so-called bug now; it was just an amazing sight - just like *out-of-a-movie* and the emotion felt by everyone was astounding. Both Neville and I could have not wished for better weather with clear blue skies. The 2nd event was our own 40th Anniversary dinner, which was held last October. It was a great success, with an excellent speaker, Dr Ian Morison from Jodrell Bank Observatory talking about possible life outside our solar system. The 3rd was a personal ambition for me, which was of course to meet our very own patron Sir Patrick Moore. This was quite a surreal experience. To just sit in his garden having a glass of wine or two and of course putting the world to rights - or should I say the Universe!

I was asked to take over as Secretary at short notice at the beginning of the year, after being on the committee for only a few months. I have enjoyed this role immensely during the year and found it to be a challenge in some areas but with great opportunities to meet people and members that share a great passion for the sky, and from various backgrounds that I may never have encountered.

The monthly lectures have been an interesting range of topics covering light hearted and fascinating beginner's subjects to advanced astronomy. Something for everyone to enjoy. Our Users' Evenings, that we hold every two months, have become very popular thanks to David Fishwick and the school letting us use the telescope on the roof. It's not just for new members and it's helpful even for us old-hands. We love to share our own knowledge about the sky and learn about new technologies that are out there. It is also interesting learning the old fashioned ways when modern technology fail us!

The society has such a lot to offer its membership and we are lucky to have such good facilities and good people on the committee, who give up a lot of their own time to organise our monthly meetings and events so we can all enjoy. However *YOU* are the society, and your feedback and help in any way you can is always appreciated. It's welcomed by all the committee members, and is crucial to the success of the society. Without it we would have not been celebrating our 40th Anniversary this year.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking all the committee members and other helpers for their continued support over the last year. In case you are unaware of who they are, I would like to ask the committee members to stand -Neville who has served as Chairman for nearly ten years and is retiring this year, David Cooper, David Fishwick, Jeff Haywood, Maurice Gavin, Richard Gledhill, James Gordon, Alex Miza and of course myself. Could I also ask that the following helpers also stand - Ron Johnson, Mike Fantham and of course Edna as with out her we would have a lot of dry evenings. Would you please put your hands together to say a big thank you to all of them for all of their hard work. Thank you. *Anita King* – Secretary

