

Janus



Ewell Astronomical Society Newsletter – Winter/Spring 2009

Serving skywatchers in SW London and north Surrey

Ewell AS homepage www.ewell-as.co.uk

Ewell Astro Soc c/o David Fishwick, Nonsuch HS for Girls, Ewell Road, Cheam, Surrey SM3 8AB

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE for 2009 elected at AGM on 2008 Dec 12 – contact them with any queries.

Chairman: David Cooper: 01737 351184 Deputy Chairman/Speakers Organiser: David Fishwick

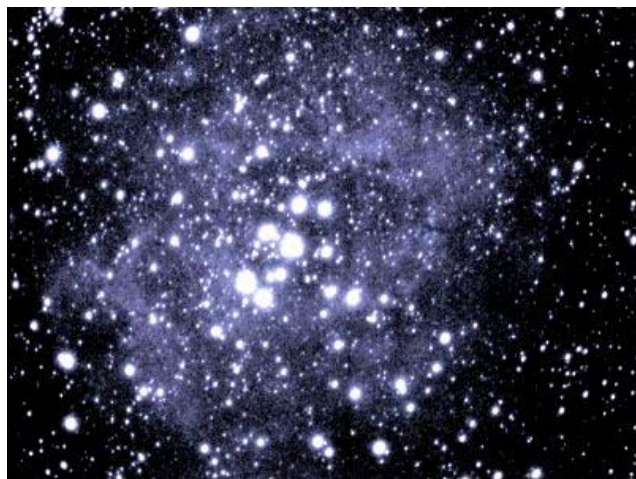
Secretary: Anita King: 01372 722097 Treasurer: Valerie May – see subscription slip herein.

Other elected committee members: Louis Barman [Librarian]; Mike Wright [Registrar], Richard Gledhill

Janus Editor + Webmaster: Maurice Gavin mgavin@ntlworld.com Janus deadline Jan/Mar/May/ Sep/Nov main meeting

JANUS-ON-LINE-IN-COLOUR: For a full colour version of any recent Janus log-on to www.ewell-as.co.uk / Janus / Janus pdf file. Cut + paste web addresses [URLs] therein direct to your Internet Browser and save typing errors!

MEMBERS EMAIL LIST: email mgavin@ntlworld.com to receive rapid news of astro events or programme changes



WINTER DEEPSKY WONDERS

Rosetta Nebula NGC2237] in Monoceros [top left]

Pleiades [M45=*Seven Sisters*] in Taurus[top right]

Great Orion Nebula- M42 >



Meade ETX-70+SX CCD in 5, 4, 3min unfiltered exposures respectively.

California Nebula e-finder overpage - January 2009 by Maurice Gavin @ WPO



EAS Meeting dates for your 2009 diary – see www.ewell-as.co.uk

All held at Nonsuch HS for Girls-Ewell Road - Cheam [unless 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'.

Moon's phase at Users' Group meeting shown [>Q3] = after 3rd quarter [<Q1]= earlier than 1st quarter = crescent moon.

Door subscriptions £1 and £3 for visitors - Arriving at meetings with small change in your pocket and not tendering £10 and £20 notes is greatly appreciated.

Fri Jan 9 – Norman Walker - *Members Astro Question & Answer session*

Mon-Thu Jan 19-22 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Feb 13 - Dr Emily Hall -*Interaction between the Solar Wind & Outer Planets* – Nonsuch/UCL PhD student.

Mon-Thu Feb 16-19 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Wed Feb 18 @ 8pm – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck [>Q3]

Fri Mar 13 – TBA

Mon-Thu Mar 16-19 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Wed Apr 15 @ 8pm – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck [>Q1]

Fri Apr 17 – TBA

Mon-Thu Apr 20-23 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath* **Mercury on view**

Fri May 8 – TBA

Mon-Thu May 18-21 @ 9pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Jun 12 - Bob Mizon - *Fourteen Pioneers of Astronomy*

Wed Jun 17 @ 8pm – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck [>Q3]

Fri Jul 10 – Dr Mike Leggett - *Astronomy in the Medieval World*

August – no main meeting

Wed Aug 19 @ 8pm–Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck [new moon]

Fri Sept 11 – TBA

Sat Sep 12 – Ewell AS Headley Heath Picnic & Star-Party

Mon-Thu Sep 21-24 @ 8.30pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Oct 9 – Alan Drummond - *Andromeda Galaxy*

Mon-Thu Oct 19-22 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Wed Oct 21 @ 8pm – Users Group Meeting – NSHS Observatory Deck [<Q1]

Fri Nov 13 - Jack Martin – *Astronomical Stellar Spectroscopy*

Mon-Thu Nov 16-19 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Fri Dec 11 – AGM + talks TBA

Mon-Thu Dec 14 -17 @ 8pm Observing Session Headley Heath*

Wed Dec 16 @ 8pm –Users Group Meeting– NSHS Observatory Deck [new moon]



California Nebula via e-finder MG

GRESHAM COLLEGE LUNCHTIME LECTURES at Staple Inn Hall -London at 1pm by Prof. Ian Morison.

These lectures are free – just turn up. Info supplied by Jeff Heywood. See <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/event.asp?>

**The Search for Other Worlds* - 22 Jan 2009 - **Harbingers of Doom* -19 Feb 2009 – **It's about time* - 19 Mar 2009

Gresham Astronomy Weekend - 6 Mar 2009 @ Farncombe Estate - The Cotswolds – you need to book!

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 -map www.ewell-as.co.uk

OBSERVING SESSIONS ON HEADLEY HEATH will be held monthly [Sept to May] on dates noted on the EAS Diary at the 'dark of the moon' at NT carpark adj cricket pitch. Phone 01252 382940 from 7pm to check meeting is on. **Note** – if Headley Heath OS clash with the Users Gp meeting at NSHS [Feb/Oct/Dec] then observing held at NSHS.

EWELL AS SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE! The Society annual subscriptions are due in January. Please forward your sub [member £15; family £18; junior £5 made payable to Ewell Astro Soc] to...

EAS Treasurer - Valerie May, 41 The Green, Burgh Heath, Tadworth, Surrey KT205NP; phone: 01737361486

AGM & QUIZ EVENING - 2008 DEC 12 summary by Alan Lane

The meeting began with the Society's AGM. Our Chairman said the Society had had a successful year with the usual high standard of speakers. Total membership at around 90 remained high although slightly below the previous year. Attendance was a little disappointing and he urged members to persuade any non-attendees they knew to come along.

David thanked the members of the committee for their hard work and also non-committee members who do important jobs to aid the running of the Society. Nominations had been received to fill all the posts for next year although only one

in each case so there were no contests. After the AGM a long break was taken to enable members to have coffee and complete answers to the quiz. Edna Eckershall received a present on behalf of the Society from our Chairman for arranging our refreshments during the past year which members greatly appreciated.



There followed two short talks by Ron Johnson and David Cooper. Ron spoke about solar observing, beginning with the most important message **NEVER LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN THROUGH AN UNFILTERED TELESCOPE OR BINOCULARS OR THE WITH THE NAKED EYE.** Ignoring this can result in serious damage to the eyes or even blindness.

Ron then demonstrated, using a 120mm refractor, his methods of observing the sun. First fit the solar filter, do this before mounting the telescope on its tripod. Placing the telescope so that it presented the smallest possible shadow behind it enabling it to be lined up to capture the sun without looking through the finder. Then cap off the finder, both ends, the sun's rays concentrated though it can burn you or set your clothes on fire!

Ron then fitted the digital camera, looping the strap around a suitable part of the telescope so that should the camera become loose it will not fall on the ground. A similar procedure was used to secure other attachments. Ron showed images he taken of sun spots and flares some using a computerized mask over the sun's disk to highlight the flares. Many of the flares were tens of thousands of kilometers in height.

David then spoke about "how not to present the sky at night talk"(or anything else for that matter). He said that in giving any talk certain rules must be followed. Make sure you know your subject and keep within what you know. Don't drift or wander away from your subject matter. Keep within your time limit and make the length proportionate to the subject. Don't leave your audience disappointed by your brevity or bored by going on too long.



If you are using aids such as slides or computer graphics make sure they are set up and working correctly and that you can operate them accurately when needed. Don't have your slides upside down or press the wrong key on the computer. The worst is to get in a complete muddle and have to beg for technical help. Make sure your audience can hear you at the back without shouting down those at the front. Don't stand in front of the screen, with your back to the audience, or wander about irritatingly. Say if you want questions as you go or at end. Questions asked in the talk may be more relevant but interrupt the flow. At the end of the talk the questioner may have forgotten what you said. Make sure your talk is suitable for your audience, not, instance too technical for children or people unfamiliar with subject, or too basic say, for EAS! David then gave out the quiz answers and prizes and the raffle prizes.

PATRICK MOORE ON CELEBRITY BIG-BROTHER ?

The *Sunday Mirror* [2008 Dec 14; p16] reported our society patron – Sir Patrick Moore – was to appear in Channel 4's *Celebrity Big-Brother* show for early January - complete with supporting medics. At 86 next month Patrick is confined to a wheelchair away from home. Patrick immediately contacted Dr John Mason – Publicity Officer for the British Astronomical Assoc [to which our society is an affiliated member] with his displeasure at this erroneous reporting "as a substitute for Sir Cliff Richard" and was equally uncomplimentary about *BB* and the *Sunday Mirror*.

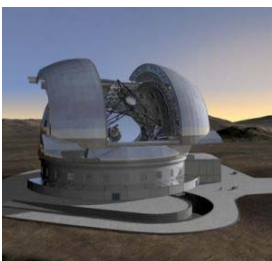
IN MEMORY OF HORACE OAKLEY – Alan Lane & Ron Johnson

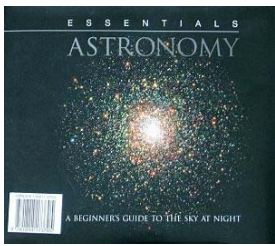
Society members were sad to hear of the death of our first treasurer, Horace Oakley in June 2008. Horace was a founder member of the Society in 1966 with Phil Ringsdore and others. In those days annual membership was £1 and the meeting fee was one shilling (5p)! On his retirement as treasurer in 1976 Horace became the Society's auditor and subsequent treasurers were grateful for his swift and helpful tidying of the Society's end-of-year accounts. Although Horace was not an active observer, he enthused and encouraged an interest in astronomy and gave great support to the Society in its early days and was instrumental in its success. Our condolences are extended to Mrs Oakley and family.

WORLD'S LARGEST OPTICAL TELESCOPE IN EUROPE? SURELY NOT!

The prime site for the extraordinary 42m [140ft] *European-Extremely Large Telescope* [E-ELT] was assumed to be Chile where most of ESO's facilities are based but, according to *New Scientist* [Dec 2008], Europe's Roque de los Muchachos - Las Palma is in the running – this is where most of the UK's lesser telescopes like the *William Herschel* and *Isaac Newton* are based.

ESO's OWL [Overwhelming Large Telescope] at 100m diameter was deemed too complex and abandoned in favour of E-ELT which will still outsize American scopes planned for this century. Its 42m primary mirror will be a mosaic of 906 hexagonal segments, each 1.45m across – the segmented mirror technology has been proven on the twin 10m Keck telescope on Hawaii. Starlight bounces off a further four smaller mirrors, including one with adaptive optics to remove atmospheric 'tremors', before being sent to the detector. Despite the current downturn in world economies the project remains on track. For the science options goto <http://www.eso.org/public/astronomy/projects/e-elt.html>





MINI-BOOK REVIEW - Astronomy by Paul Southerland: Igloo Books 2007-Essentials series; A5 hardback; 160 pages full colour; ISBN 978-1-84817-370-5; price £12.90 - Aldi discount 75%. This is a nicely presented book intended for the practical newcomer to astronomy. The first half covers the seasons, sundials and the moon's phases and progresses outwards from the sun – solar observing and eclipses, planets Mercury to Pluto, comets and atmospheric phenomena like shooting stars and aurora. The section extended beyond our solar system with star clusters, nebulae and galaxies - all profusely illustrated.

The second half of the book shows what can be seen in the night sky from your back garden with charts for each season and prominent constellations and objects for viewing. The book concludes with a guide to observing – from naked eye to binoculars and telescope and how to sketch and image the moon, planets and stars. Computer software for astronomy is there and an excellent glossary. Recommended. Maurice Gavin - Ed

EWELL AS PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY 2009 (IYA) - David Cooper - Dec 2008
As you are aware this year has been designated the IYA and Societies everywhere will be busy planning to mark this year with various events. At our December Committee meeting we discussed briefly and came up with a few ideas, some of which I am including here. The purpose of this article is to give you a foretaste of what to possibly expect, although I emphasise at this early stage there is much to organise. Please watch this space, the Website, read Janus and listen out at future meetings for further announcements on our plans, as they develop.

- Sutton shopping centre:** to organise a society display there.
- Library talks** at possibly three venues, as requested of us by Carshalton Library Manager to take place in the Autumn 2009 with possible talk/display about the 40th anniversary of the Lunar landings amongst other astronomical topics.
- National Trust event**, possibly in 2009/10 - are interested in a viewing evening at Polesden Lacey with Ewell AS.
- A social evening** along the lines of the 40th Anniversary Event to be held at a large venue including a meal.
- Society visits by mini-bus** for limited numbers but to be cost effective members will need to pay a deposit.
- More public participation at viewing sessions** whether at Headley Heath or NSHS roof-top observatory.

More details will follow when known and arranged. Please be aware that we would love to add a Visits Organiser to our Committee—if you fancy doing this please come along to our next Committee Meeting on Wednesday February 18th, front entrance 730pm to NSHS, approaching the David Lloyd Centre or alternatively you can speak to anyone on committee including myself and we will be happy to assist you. Any members, wishing to participate in the organisation of these events is most welcome.

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SOCIETY INSTRUMENT CHECK - David Fishwick - Instruments Curator - December 2008
It's that time of the year again when we need to check our stock of instruments and revise what we keep or sell off as necessary. Over the years we have been fortunate in receiving various donations from members or kind beneficiaries, not necessarily being members of the Society. Society policy confines instrument loans to members of at least 6 months standing. Visitors may not loan instruments.

To assist us with this annual check on the instrument you have on loan please contact us by telephone, letter, email to mgavin@ntlworld.com or return this slip to me David Fishwick so we can check/update our records. Thank you.

Your name: _____ phone no _____ Society Instrument[s] _____

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EWELL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY Membership Application/Renewal [del] Date / / 2009

Name _____

Renewals - my address etc. are the same as last year, please tick _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ phone _____ email _____

Herewith my annual subscription of £ _____
Adult £15: Junior [under 18] £5: Family [two adults + children under 16] £18 - cheques payable to **Ewell Astro Soc**-Valerie May [Treasurer], 41 The Green, Burgh Heath, Tadworth, Surrey KT205NP
Where did you hear about the Society _____