

Missing Telescope

Can anyone help locate a missing 66mm Tasco telescope with tripod, possibly borrowed from the Observatory? If so please contact Tim Martel on 264562.

Planets

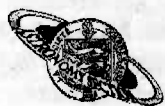
Up to the middle of May is a good time to see all the naked-eye planets in the west just after sunset. On the 13th, 14th and 15th May the five planets are joined by the crescent Moon, which will make for a nice sight. Venus is brilliant and Jupiter, higher up, is also bright. Saturn is less bright but should not be difficult to find. Mars however is faint and Mercury is soon lost below the horizon. It may help to use binoculars to find them. For a detailed day-by-day guide see Sky and Telescope's 'A Rare Dance of Planets' feature on its website skyandtelescope.com.

Comet Ikeya-Zhang

Comet Ikeya-Zhang is fading quickly as it gets further from the Sun on its way out of the solar system. It passes closest to the Earth on April 29th, about 38 million miles away. See it with binoculars in the early morning sky in the north east.

Apologies

The Editor apologises for the late publication of this Edition. He went on holiday at publication time. Also the newsletter is a bit thinner than usual. Send those articles in.



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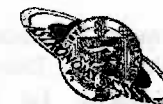
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is 15th June 2002**

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Sagittarius

The Newsletter of the Astronomy
Section of La Société Guernesaise



April - June 2002

Forthcoming events

Observatory Open Days

Tuesday 21st May
at 9.30 pm

Tuesday 18th June
at 9.30 pm

Tuesday 16th July
at 9.30 pm

In addition, the Section meets
at the Observatory every
Tuesday evening, and Friday
if clear for observing.

In this issue

Annual Business Meeting
The Planets
Observatory Events

Inside

Annual Business	2
Meeting report	
Astronomy references	3
The Planets	5
Observatory Events for First Quarter of 2002	6

Centre inserts

Star chart
Sunset, sunrise, moonset
and moonrise times

Annual Business Meeting report by Debby Quertier

The Annual Business Meeting of the Astronomy Section was held at the Observatory on **Tuesday the 29th January 2002.**

Present were Laurence Guilbert, Geoff Falla, Frank Dowding, Peter Langford, David Le Conte and Debby Quertier

1. **Officers.** Officers of the section were re-elected en bloc.
2. **Treasurer's Report.** The Treasurer presented his report. Our income is up and the funds fairly healthy, though a little down on last year due to some additional expenses and purchases. The newsletter is now printed at Rex Stationers.
3. **CCD Camera.** David Le Conte updated us on the spec if we needed a new CCD. The cost would be about £2,500 plus £300 for the software. This would eat into our funds and it was discussed whether our budget could cover it or if the funds would be needed elsewhere.
4. **Fund Raising.** We had found that many summer visitors were not paying their £1 donation and we needed to ensure this was collected. Our times of opening were discussed and it was decided to open less frequently rather than every Tuesday. We would select an opening date once a month, nearest a good moon and publish the dates in the media and at the

Tourist Board. We decided to open every Tuesday during the summer school holidays. We decided that we would not do any of the summer shows but possibly continue to sell the glow-in-the-dark wands/necklaces etc. David Le Conte pointed out that we could sell the star clocks and make our own planisphere to sell. It was considered selling them to other sources also. We need to keep fundraising to keep our bank balance up. Jessica suggested star talks for a small charge, though this would clash with the WEA course.

5. **Viewing Programme.** A programme would be put in the next magazine. There would be an evening when we could view all the planets and we considered other viewing exercises.
6. **National Science Week.** We agreed not to do anything special as we had a lot of commitments, though our proposed Messier Marathon would be at the end of NSW.
7. **Magazine Subscriptions.** We agreed to continue the existing subs and Debby Quertier would continue with our subs to the Campaign for Dark Skies.
8. **Trees.** The trees on adjoining property are growing fast and we may lose our southern view. It was agreed to draft a letter to the owner but first to sound it out with the Conservation Section.
9. **Displays.** David Le Conte wants displays for the summer shows and Floral Guernsey. We need

ideas and the displays should show what we do as a Section.

10. **Visitors.** This was covered earlier.
11. **Youth.** It was discussed how Sections can encourage young people in their activities. We talked about different sections of La Société doing events for the youth. It was suggested that we hold an open evening for members of La Société later in the year. We would look ahead and plan around the Moon etc.
12. **Building Extension.** Any extension to the building would be very expensive and what if the tree problem grew and we had to move. La Société are interested in Fort Richmond, if they use that building it may release our shed. We could use our existing space better and maybe archive some stuff.
13. **Publicity.** We need to get our name out more, places like Gruts and Guernsey Photographics want some of our joining forms.
14. **Salle Publique Licence.** This was discussed in detail, if you charge the public for entry you may need a licence. David Le Conte had had Building Control look at the premises and we do not need one if we ask for donations. Need fire prevention advice.
15. **Any Other Business**
 - a) Frank Dowding said he enjoyed giving his talks and we enjoyed listening. November was not always the best time for them.

- b) David Le Conte said more talks were needed. We also needed a structure to our weekly meetings and our observing programme.
- c) Jessica Harris said we could tackle some of the jobs on a Tuesday rather than our once a year clean-up day.
- d) Jessica and Debby will sort out the posters
- e) The green metal cupboard needs a sort out. A list of suggested jobs to be made up
- f) Our spare table may be used by La Société.

Debby Quertier

Astronomy and Space - References for Further Reading by Geoff Falla

Gravitational Anomaly Discovered. Results from the two spacecraft Pioneer 10 and 11, launched almost 30 years ago and now well beyond the orbit of Pluto, indicate that the gravitational force is stronger than expected at that distance. *The Planetary Report, November/December 2001.*

First Detection of Extrasolar Planet's Atmosphere. Astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope have detected an atmosphere around a planet 150 light years away in the constellation Pegasus. They have also been able to analyse the planet's atmosphere. *Astronomy Now, January 2002*

Jet Emissions from Galaxies. Huge jets of luminous particles emitted from active galaxies are some of the most spectacular phenomena in the Universe. They are also associated with some young stars, and with interacting binary stars in processes which are not as yet understood. *Astronomy Now, January 2002*

Water in Interstellar Space. It is now known that water is present in abundance in interstellar clouds, as well as in comets. The formation of water detected in the Orion Nebula alone would be enough to fill Earth's oceans many times over, in just a few hours. *Sky and Telescope, January 2002*

Double Stars. Some practical advice on the observation of double stars, splitting them into their component parts, and a selected list with a range of difficulty. *Sky and Telescope, January 2002*

The Shadow Universe. There is much more to the Universe than meets the eye. Most of it is 'dark matter', which is only evident from the gravitational effects produced. Physicists have started to accept that a parallel universe may exist. *Astronomy, January 2002*

Solar powered Space Flight. The Planetary Society's plans for Cosmos 1, which will test the concept of a solar sail spacecraft in near-Earth orbit. The mission is planned for

launch early in 2002. *Astronomy January 2002*

The Making of an Aurora. Research to unlock the secrets of the Aurora Borealis, and the pioneering work of the Norwegian researcher Kristian Birkeland. *Astronomy, January 2002*

Canis Major. A selection of the interesting variety of objects visible in this constellation of the winter sky, containing the brightest star visible from our latitude, Sirius. *Astronomy, January 2002*

Giant Telescopes. Cosmic frontiers are being extended with the development of giant telescopes, including the twin Keck telescopes on Mauna Kea in Hawaii. *Sky and Telescope, February 2002*

Unidentified Flying Objects. Why the subject of UFOs should be taken more seriously, and not dismissed out of hand by astronomers, as is usually the case. *Astronomy and Space, February 2002*

Observing the Sword of Orion. A guide to detailed observation of the Sword of Orion, the Nebula (M 42) and the Trapezium. *Astronomy and Space, February 2002*

Hubble Telescope Update. A set of articles on the subject of the Hubble Space Telescope, including its history to date, the installation of

new equipment, plans for the future, and its next generation successor. *Astronomy Now, February 2002*

Occultations 2002. Details of forthcoming occultations of stars by planets and asteroids during 2002, including Pluto on July 1st, visible from the British Isles, and by an asteroid on September 17th, with an occultation track across the English Channel. *Sky and Telescope, March 2002*

Spectroscopy. The science of spectroscopy, the analysis of light to obtain information on the chemical composition and motions of stars, planets, and other objects. A set of articles including professional and amateur work. *Astronomy Now, March 2002*

Binocular Viewing - Orion and Lepus. A summary of more than 20 of the most interesting objects to view in these constellations, and how to locate them using binoculars. *Astronomy and Space, March 2002*

Crossword Solution (Last Edition)
Across

7. Coriolis Force 8. Mean Time
9. Aten 10. Antares 12. Mount
14. Musca 16. Spectra 19. Lion
20. Twilight 22. Cape Canaveral

Down

1. Bode 2. Bianca 3. Albireo
4. Ashen 5. Dorado 6. Achernar
11. Nautical 13. Optical 15. Cancer
17. Chisel 18. Atlas 21. Head

The Planets

With their orbits far and near,
In the great celestial sphere,
Closest to the Sun we see,
The sparkling planet Mercury.
Next, the brightest one by far,
Venus, the morning or the evening
star,
Sometimes takes us by surprise,
When seen near Sunset, or Sunrise.
Planet Earth has all we need,
Water, and the air we breathe,
And a Moon to light our way,
If sometimes from the path we
stray.

Life on Mars may yet be found,
Deep beneath its frozen ground,
With icy poles, a day and seasons,
Much like the Earth for all these
reasons.

As if to fill an empty void,
A belt of countless asteroids,
Rock and ice, with dust between,
Where once a planet may have
been.

Jupiter, greatest of its kind,
Larger than all the rest combined,
With four large moons in company,
And orbits much in harmony.

Saturn's rings a favourite sight,
In a star filled sky at night.
Uranus bland and greenish blue,
Is a gas clad planet too.

Neptune last but one in line,
Is the farthest out at times,
As tiny Pluto swings inside,
Then out, as on some kind of
cosmic ride.

Circling round in timeless space,
All the planets have their place.

Geoff Falla

Observatory Events for First Quarter of 2002

Debby Quartier reports on the Section's activities

This first quarter of 2002 has been fairly busy for the Observatory and its members. We held a WEA course (the Workers Education Association - adult education) over the six-week period from the 31st January to the 7th March inclusive on Thursday nights for an hour and a half between 8 pm and 9.30 pm. It proved to be successful and a repeat is likely next year. It was felt best to hold the course at the Observatory where we had the telescopes and could be flexible about switching between lessons and viewing sessions as the weather dictated. We limited the numbers to 15. This seemed practical considering the size of the Observatory and the need to seat the participants in comfort plus a 'teacher' in front with screen and projector etc.

We talked about a wide range of subjects including the Solar System, gravity, the celestial sphere, general observing and a history of astronomy, combined with observing where possible. In this aspect we were reasonably lucky. Practical observing was managed on three of the six nights with our 'pupils' being able to see Jupiter, Saturn, the Moon and a variety of deep sky objects. They also enjoyed just looking at the sky and having the constellations pointed out to them. The course was greatly enhanced with the use of computers (David Le Conte and Peter Langford doing excellent presentations here) and a selection of slides. Hand-outs were given each

week which added to and included a lot of what we talked about.

We feel that this course was a success and enjoyed by those who attended. Feedback forms were handed out and the response was favourable, though as this course was a first there are things we can change and improve on next time. Overall though we felt we covered the right topics and we enjoyed ourselves. The people who attended the course were a great bunch and we hope they will keep in touch. Several joined as members of the Section and we look forward to them coming to our regular Tuesday evening meetings and other events. Many thanks and well done to all who helped on this course, Frank Dowding, Geoff Falla, Paul Gavey, Jessica Harris, Peter Langford, David Le Conte and Debby Quartier. Particular thanks go to David who co-ordinated and put things together and was the driving force behind things.

Apart from the WEA Course we have had a few group visits. Unfortunately they all had bad weather and were not able to do any observing. A large group of nine and ten year olds from La Houquette School were scheduled to visit us on the 19th February. Being well aware of the problems of coping with a lot of children if the weather was not good, and we had already cancelled one visit due to bad weather, Jessica suggested that if viewing was impossible we use La Houquette

School hall and she would give them a talk with slides. As the weather was completely overcast this is what we did. There was an audience of some fifty children plus ten adults and Jessica talked to them about the history of astronomy, our Sun and the Solar System.

February 26th was scheduled for a visit from the Admiral Yacht Club. They had asked for a talk and viewing if clear. Jessica did a similar talk that was very well received and delivered in a most entertaining way. They were a lively group of about 20 people who intend to visit again when the weather is better.

On the 12th March we were visited by St Saviours WI group. They too picked a cloudy night but I used Jessica's slides and gave a talk to them. When we arrange these visits we always take a gamble with the weather and then tend to ad lib if it's cloudy. We could have a 'set talk' to give if visitors can't see any thing.

Last quarter's newsletter said that the Lt. Governor and Lady Foley were planning to visit. Unfortunately that visit was cancelled due to really bad weather. We have tried unsuccessfully to rearrange the visit and think that this may not now happen until the autumn.

As agreed at our AGM we are pruning the evenings when we open the

Observatory to the public to the following list. We shall also try to arrange group visits etc to take place on Tuesday evenings, though of course we are prepared to be flexible.

Debby Quartier

Open Days 2002

Date (Tuesdays)	Time
12 th March	8.00 pm
16 th April	9.00 pm
21 st May	9.30 pm
18 th June	9.30 pm
16 th July	9.30 pm
23 rd July	9.30 pm
30 th July	9.30 pm
6 th August	9.00 pm
13 th August	9.00 pm
20 th August	9.00 pm
27 th August	8.30 pm
10 th September	8.00 pm
15 th October	8.00 pm
12 th November	8.00 pm