The Messenger

Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society

Celebrating 40 Years

February 2018



The Front Page of the First Club Newsletter
November 24th 1978

The Chairman's Notes from the First Edition Newsletter – Nov 1978



Well here is the first edited Journal of our Club Members notes.

I hope you will all give your interest for the future of keeping it in print by sending to me notes of what you as members wish to be edited for other members of our club to read.

Our Club is now approximately seven months old and on behalf of myself and the Committee I would like to say how much we have progressed in the past few months.

From our first meeting at the Station Hotel, Swinton we formed a committee and started our first astronomy meeting the following week. We then moved to Wath for a few weeks, and then to Hotpoint, Swinton. But, then we found that meetings could no longer be held there because public transport did not run on Sunday mornings. We then got the opportunity to rent the room we now have.

Many thanks to all who spent there time alterating and decorating the room, as a very good job has been done.

Membership is now progressing uphill, as, I believe, we are topping up to twenty-five members now, and hope that more will hear of our Club and join us.

We have, up to now had some interesting lectures and slide shows from Mr. R. Hepworth and also from our younger members – Nigel Houghton, Nigel Palmer and Tony Trickett – and hope that in the near future we will register our club with an association so that we will be able to request lectures and shows from professional astronomers in a higher field than we are.

Also, now we have settled down in a place of our own, I would like to point out that it is your privilege, as members, that if you could help with ideas which would benefit the future of our Club, all you have to do is write your idea on paper and hand it to out secretary, Mrs P. Clarke and she will, at the Committee Meetings, read out your proposal and I am sure the Committee will do all in their power to carry out your ideas.

We have now got as far as to edit our own Club Journal. As this is our first edition, it will not be perfect, but as time goes on it should get better, so keep sending your knowledge to whoever is responsible for the quarterly journal.

The resignation of being Clubs Secretary by Mr R. Hepworth is very upsetting but unfortunately owing to his working at London all week Ralph finds it difficult to keep the position. But I'm sure we all agree and thank him for the time he ran as secretary. Mr. Hepworth still wishes to be an active Member by giving us lectures as and when needed.

On the 3rd November proved a success when we visited High Melton to recognise the constellations, we had clear sky for an hour and half and it sure learn't us to wrap up warm next time we have an open air meeting.

E. C. Richardson.

[Notes – I have kept the original syntax and spelling of the comments – Editor]

Mike Hall's February 2018 Skynopsis



Diary (all times BST Greenwich, except Sunrise/Sunset, local (Sheffield) time).

1st	Sunrise 07.49, Sunset 16.49; Regulus 1°. South of Moon
7th	Moon at Last Quarter; 20.00 Jupiter 4°. South of Moon
8th	Sunrise 07.36, Sunset 17.03
9th	05.00, Mars 4°. South of Moon; Minor Planet Vesta 9°. North of Moon
11th	Saturn 2°. South of Moon
15th	New Moon; Sunrise 07.34, Sunset 17.05
17th	12.00, Mercury in superior conjunction
20th	08.00, Uranus 4°. North of Moon
22nd	Sunrise 07.07, Sunset 17.30
23rd	Moon at First Quarter; 18.00 Aldebaran 0.7°. South of Moon
28th	Sunrise 06.54, Sunset 17.40

The Solar System

Mercury	Not visible this month
Venus	An evening star this month but too close to the Sun for viewing
Mars	Culminates at sunrise, North of Antares in Ophiuchus
Jupiter	Lying low in Libra as a morning view
Saturn	Very low in the morning, above the Teapot stars in Sagittarius
Uranus	Visible in Pisces for two hours after dark

Galactic Goodies Pleiades, Morning Mars close to Antares, Aldebaran in daytime occultation, Sirius is very bright in the early evening.

Eskimo Nebula in Gemini NGC 2392, RA: 07h 29m 11s, Dec: +20°54'39'', Mag. +9.9

Anyone Remember this? [1976 ish?]



Some of the pupils and guests who attended a concert and exhibition at the Thomas Rotherham College in aid of the College's Observatory Fund.
More than 100 people attended, and the event realised £42 for the fund. A highlight of the evening was a concert by the Rotherham Schools' Jazz Band.

The Story of Andromeda



The constellation Andromeda is well placed in the sky at the moment. So let us gaze upon Andromeda, the daughter of King Cepheus and his wife Cassiopeia, chained in the sky, as she was to the rocks of the ocean!

Her father, Cepheus, was king of Ethiopia, and Andromeda his daughter, the princess. Queen Cassiopeia was a bit of a show-off, was well fit and thought herself the bee's knees. She boasted that her daughter Andromeda was more beautiful than the Nereids, the sea nymphs. (Don't these Ancients ever learn not to insult Nymphs and Titans and the like!)? As could be expected these Sea Nymphs get all upset and go and submit a grievance claim form to Poseidon, the God of the Sea.

So Poseidon feels he has to do something, he is bound by the employment regulations of Nymphs. So he opens the cage of his pet Sea Monster, Cetus, and instructs it to ravage, devastate and do other unspeakable stuff to the coast of Cepheus's kingdom.

As you can imagine Cepheus isn't well pleased, his favourite yacht is now match wood, and the local fishermen are a little upset. So King Cepheus submits a claim to the Supreme Court and the Head Honcho, Zeus. Zeus ponders for a while, as these Greek Gods tend to do, and then issues his wisdom, such as it is. He suggests that the only way to put things right with the Nymphs and Poseidon is to sacrifice the lovely Andromeda.

So King Cepheus, and his wife, tears streaming down their faces, instruct the guards to take Andromeda to the local harbour, chain her to some rocks and let the monster Cetus feast on her broken and mangled body! Oh dear the monster is coming, what can she do…….

But then in the sky – Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Faster than a speeding arrow – It's Perseus on his flying horse, Pegasus! (Cue the William Tell overture!). Just one look, that's all it took, yeah, just one look, and he fell in love with her (apologies to the Hollies there!). So Perseus leaps off Pegasus, sword in hand and does battle with the fearsome Sea Monster, Cetus. Backwards and forwards they fight, over rocks, in tidal pools, until in the seventh round, by virtue of two falls and a submission and having its head cut off, Cetus loses the fight.

Perseus then releases Andromeda, goes to King Cepheus and asks for her hand in marriage. But all is not well, no it isn't, Andromeda's uncle, Phineus, (who'd just returned from a round the world trip) fancied Andromeda and thought he had been promised the maidens hand, and the rest of her as well. So there they are outside the pub around the corner from the palace having a bit of an argy-bargy when Perseus suddenly remembers that he's got Medusa's head stuffed in his backpack along with his ham sandwiches, and before you can say "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" the little park outside the Palace has a new statue of Uncle Phineus.

So a happily married Perseus returns home with his new "trouble and strife", only to discover that cad, bounder and bothersome Polydectes is still chasing after his mother. Perseus ain't going to stand for any of that nonsense, you bet your sweet bippy he ain't and s0 not long after that Polydectes has a statue on Serifos himself. After a bit more mess/0ing about and stabbing people, Perseus and Andromeda settle down in Tiryns (not the one on Anglesey) and have seven sons and a daughter – and they live happily (aside from a few normal disagreements, misunderstandings, pouts, silent treatments, and unexpected calamities) ever after.

Guy Ronson

Keep Your Eyes Open



Dr Allan Chapman

Friday, 2nd Feb **"Charles Messier, 'The ferret of comets'"**

Charles Messier 26 June 1730 – 12 April 1817 was a French astronomer most notable for publishing an astronomical catalogue consisting of nebulae and star clusters that came to be known as the 110 "Messier objects". The purpose of the catalogue was to help astronomical observers, in particular comet hunters such as himself, distinguish between permanent and transient visually diffuse objects in the sky.



Thursday, 8th Feb **"Pickering's Harem"**

The women who discovered the stars - At the beginning of the 20th century, a group of women known as the Harvard Observatory computers helped revolutionize the science of astronomy

Club Speaker – Roy Gunson



Thursday, 15th Feb **"Deep Sky Observing; Equipment & Techniques Pt 1"**

How to get the best out of your equipment and take those marvellous photographs of the sky

Club Speaker – Tony Morris



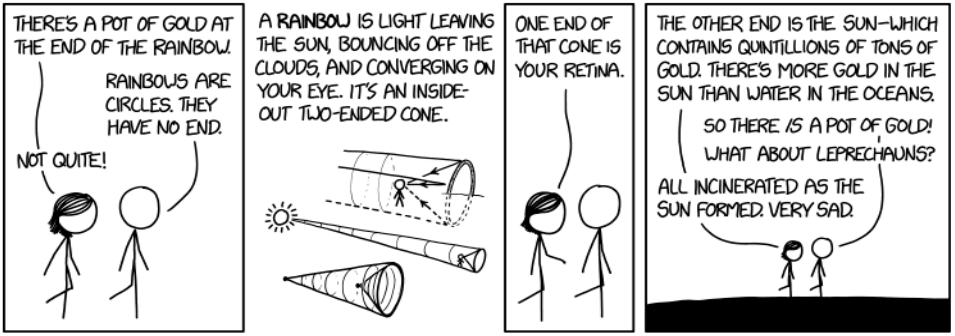
Saturday 17th Feb **"Planets in the Park VII"**

6.00pm to 8.30pm

Clifton Park Walled Garden, Rotherham

Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society in association with The Friends of Clifton Park Presentations and displays will complement the observing of the evening sky. If you would like advice on your telescope bring it along.

Moon will be a 2 day crescent that evening.



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Nature & the Night Sky

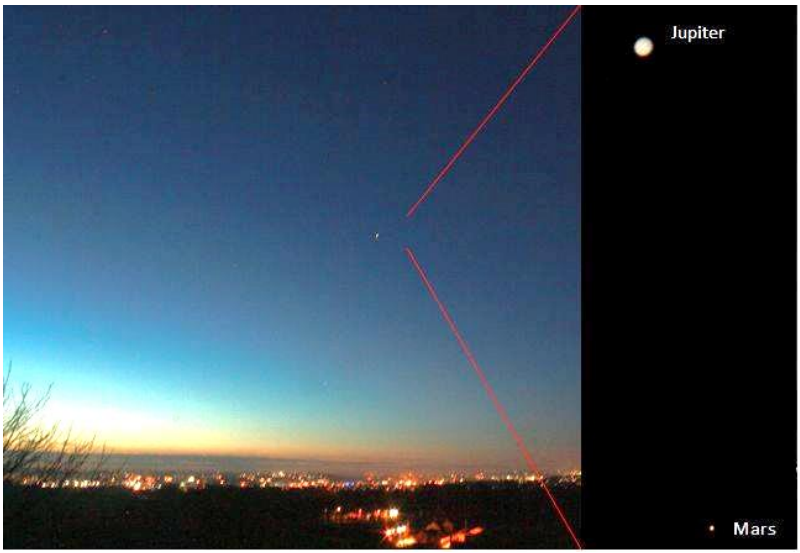




Members of MSAS spent the evening at RSPB Old Moor for an evening of 'Nature and the Night Sky' on Saturday January 13th. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate with blanket cover but the crowds were entertained and informed by talks and demonstrations led by Les Marsden and Phil Muffett. Other members, Paul D'Silva, Mike Hall, Mick Collinson, Adrian Coffey, Roy Gunson and Tony Hood help to make the evening a success for those that attended. The club is going back to the RSPB, Old Moor, on 17th March for another "Nature & Night Sky".
On the 17th of March for those bringing telescopes Mercury will be an early evening object no more than 10° above the horizon, Venus will be lower in the sky but might just be visible with luck! The moon is close to being New.

Sunday Morning 7th January

Jupiter and Mars passed very close to each other on the morning of 7th January. Paul D'Silva and Roy Gunson were at the Hoober observatory to capture the event. A General view from in front of the observatory about 6:30am with a close up view through the Tak 120 taken about 5:45 am Jupiter and Mars appear as one object on the left as they are so close together.



The Thoughts of Chairman Les



This is our 40 YEAR as a society
We all need to help celebrate this so give us some ideas of what you would like to be included.
Would you be able to help with the organisation?

Les Marsden

Chairman

The Planets go into Hiding

It may not have escaped your attention that over the last couple of months planetary observing has got a little difficult. If you look at this screen shot from Stellarium below, showing the sky on the morning of Saturday 16th December last, we have Saturn, Venus, Mercury, Mars and Jupiter all lurking with intent close to the sun. Hopefully things will get better soon. The planets will line up for opposition throughout the summer and autumn, this means however the ecliptic will be low in the south (Winter oppositions are always the best)
Jupiter in May, Saturn in June, Mars in July, Neptune in September, Uranus in October.



ISS Passes

International Space Station passes visible from Hoober Observatory in the near future

DATE	TIME	Mag	Height in Sky / Direction
Feb 3rd	6:54 pm	-3.7	63° in the South
Feb 4th	6:02pm	-3.6	63° in the South
Feb 5th	6:46pm	-3.4	55° in the South
Feb 6th	5:53pm	-3.5	62° in the South
Feb 6th	7:30pm	-2.1	29° in South-West
Feb 8th	5:45pm	-3.1	52° in South-South-West

Diary

Date	Time	Location	Subject / Event	
Thu Feb 1st	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Astro Clinic**	*Various*
Fri Feb 2nd	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Charles Messier – The Ferret of Comets**	*Allan Chapman*
Thu Feb 8th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Pickerings Harem**	*Roy Gunson*
Wed Feb 14th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Executive Committee Meeting**	
Thu Feb 15th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Deep Sky Observing; Equipment & Techniques – Part 1**	*Tony Morris*
Sat Feb 17th	**18:00**	**Clifton Park**	**Planets in the Park VII (PO)**	
Thu Feb 22nd	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Spring Sky**	*Andy Kirton-Vaughan*
Fri Feb 23rd	**19:45**	**Observatory**	**PVE**	*Les Marsden*
Thu Mar 1st	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**TBA**	*TBA*
Thu Mar 8th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**TBA**	*TBA*
Wed Mar 14th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Executive Committee Meeting**	
Thu Mar 15th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**TBA**	*Prof Brad Gibson*
Sat Mar 17th	**17:30**	**Old Moor RSPB**	**"Nature and the Night Sky" (PO)**	*Les & Phil*
Thu Mar 22nd	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Annual MSAS Astroimaging Comp**	*Tony Morris*
Thu Mar 29th	**19:45**	**Club Room**	**Deep Sky Observing; Equipment & Techniques – Part 2**	*Tony Morris*

(Details correct to time of publication)

Old Moor RSPB – Manvers Way, Barnsley, S73 0YF
TCP - Thryberg Country Park
PVE – Public Viewing Event – Bookable Only
CAE – Community Access Event
PO – Public Outreach
TBA – To be announced – (otherwise – We don't know!)

Web site: http://msas.org.uk
Meeting room is at Swinton Working Men's Club, Station Street, Swinton, South Yorkshire, S64 8AU.
Observatory is at Lee Brook Lane, Hoober, S62 7SH
Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society is Registered Charity N° 1064103 in England & Wales

For submissions to The Messenger - Editor: Roy Gunson: royg@gmx.co.uk

Coming Soon

40th Anniversary Solstice Dinner
June 15th 2018
Rotherham Golf Club