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NEXT MEETING
THURSDAY, 18th April 2013
THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF HARINGEY
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SOCIETY NEWS

MEETING VENUE

Sixth Form Centre, Ashmole School, Southgate, London N14 5RJ.

The day for meetings is usually the third Thursday of each month. The exceptions are August, when currently we do not hold a meeting, and December, when the Christmas Meet has always traditionally been held during the second week.

However, in case of changes, it is always advisable to double-check the dates below.

Note we have a change of meeting room. The old Music Room building has gone the way of our original meeting place at the School, and has been demolished. We will now be meeting in the Sixth Form Centre, which is a similar building, but to the right, not left, of the car park. However it is closer to the playing field, so conveniently for any viewing sessions. See the next page.

There are also on-going discussions as to whether we hold more regular 'observing evenings', likely in the week before the main meeting.

**For more on this, and general meeting information, also check the website:
www.ashastro.co.uk. Latest update April 2013**

Doors open - 7.30pm : Main speaker - 8.00pm : Finish - 10.00pm sharp!

New or updated information is in *italics*

2013

April 18th : Jerry Stone : "The Way to the Stars"

Note change of speaker and topic

May 16th

June 20th

July 18th

August : summer break

September 19th

October 17th : AGM

November 21st December 12th : Christmas Do – *possibly...*

COVER :

This month's talk – 'The Way To the Stars'. One method could be the British Interplanetary Society's Project Daedalus, an engineering plan for an unmanned probe to travel to Barnard's Star - a mere seven light years from Earth.

For this month's meeting, Jerry Stone will be looking at a number of other potential methods of star travel. So come to the next meeting to find out more. Parking, even for Star Ships, available...

Cover model and montage by Mat Irvine

SOCIETY NEWS

MEETING ROOM – ALL CHANGE



The meeting room at the school has changed due to the Music Room being demolished!

We are now meeting in the Sixth Form Centre, (see left). The building has two rooms, and we now hope to meet in the one on the right as you enter, (previously it has been the one on the left).

MEETING PREVIEW : 18th April Jerry Stone : "The Way to the Stars"



Note there has had to be a change of guest speaker and subject for this month.

Jerry is well known to the Society, he was even a member in past years. He gives talks all over the country to schools and other organisations, and has entertained us over the past few years with a variety of topics.

This time he will deal with that simple subject of 'The Way to the Stars' – will we ever be able to,

"Boldly go where no-one had gone..."? - and if so, how could this be achieved? This is a new talk by Jerry and originally devised for the event, 'From Imagination to Reality', we both produced for the BIS last year. The pictures show Jerry during this talk, the larger image also including an artist impression of a Bussard Ram-Jet design on the screen.

The talk "The Discovery of Neptune" by Roy Goldsmith has had to be postponed, but it is hoped to take place later in the year.

Mat Irvine



MEETING REVIEW : 21st March Mat Irvine : "Deep Skies"



Due to various changes that have had to be made recently, both to the meeting venue, and potential speakers, it has thrown the Society into slight disarray! The March meeting was eventually filled by your Editor, giving an updated talk on a topic I had covered in earlier years.

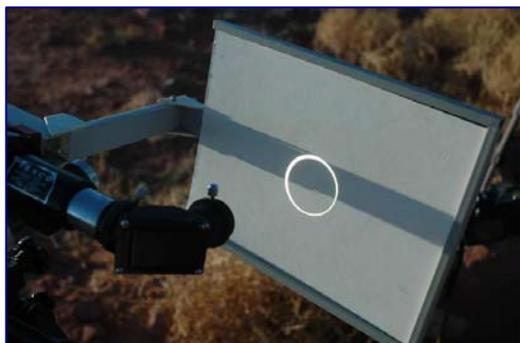
DEEP SKIES - as depicted below right, taken in Arizona - is the overall title I give to these as they are, in effect, travelogues, of journeys I have made around the south-western states of the USA. An area that encompasses Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and bits of Texas and California, so a lot to cover – and a lot of interesting skies!



Top left : the Area 51 Research Center (now gone) in Rachel, Nevada.

Left and below left : The Annular Solar Eclipse of 2012, taken from northern Arizona .

Below : Sunset Crater, near to Flagstaff, AZ





Above : Snoopy and Woodstock on an Aerobee rocket!

Left : Flagstaff, AZ. Route 66 with Mars Hill and Lowell Observatory in the distance.



The Very Large Array, 27 radio telescope dishes in New Mexico – from the air. The dishes are just visible in the 'Y' formation, from the line running up the centre to near the top where it splits into the branches of the Y.

Below : The Pima Air and Space Museum, near Tucson, AZ. Left I'm below an X-15 carrier B-52; right with 'my' plane – though the MATS really stands for Military Air Transport Service!



CHAIRMAN'S QUARTERS



As you might have been gathering, I've been doing a lot of travelling recently. (With more to come - I may even be 'out-Mat-ing' Mat with all these trips!) I was recently in southern China – just north of Hong Kong, (which I didn't get to visit because I hadn't got the right Visa!). One of the places I stayed in was Shenzhen. I got to see a little bit of the city centre and a little of the outskirts. The sheer scale of the place is mindboggling! Until about 30 years ago it was a little fishing village of around 30,000 people. Then Deng Xiaoping (who took over after Mao Zedong) noticed that Bao'an County, as Shenzhen was generally known then, was very close to Hong Kong which was due to be returned to the Chinese. He, correctly, reasoned that Shenzhen would be an economically strategic place, so it was designated a Special Economic Zone. It proceeded to swell to the megalopolis it is today, now sporting a population of around 17 million people! Many high-tech companies have been set up there. What is amusing is to find factories 'hiding' among the old backstreets, making laser and LED equipment. Even more bizarre is that when one is driven through the factories' security gates, the guards will stand to very solemn attention and salute you through!

It is a world of total contrasts. High-rise blocks of flats next to high-rise office blocks of all sorts of business - financial to commodities to international concerns. Yet interspersed with all that are older parts of town littered with small shops selling just about anything one could imagine and, of course, lots of restaurants. Despite all that, there is a sense of extreme luxury when it comes to cars. There are very few bicycles about – everyone drives around in the poshest cars they can afford. Pleasantly enough, the motorists tend to follow most of the rudimentary rules of driving, but manoeuvres one can see are real eye openers – and quite scary! Hotels are also very luxurious – and very reasonably priced.

Further afield is the town of Guangzhou (sounds not too dissimilar to "Gonzo"). This was actually my first port of call. On landing I noticed the Sun (an hour before sunset) was just about visible through the haze as a dark red orb. I had hoped to get a glimpse of comet PanSTARRS but the atmospheric pollution was unbelievable. I was coughing quite a lot for the three days I was there until arriving in Shenzhen (larger, but cleaner air). So no Comet! On the way back from Shenzhen, we went to yet another town called Foshan. We stayed there in a very opulent Crowne Plaza Hotel (amazingly cheap). Round the back of this ultra modern hotel was a little alley way market selling foodstuff. Not the sort of place for the faint of heart! There were tanks full of all sorts of aquatic creatures – crabs, lobsters, shrimps, clams and fish of all sizes. Then there were cages of hundreds of non-venomous snakes and bags of venomous ones (bagged up they cannot strike!). Then there were small cages of dogs, chickens, ducks, lizards, frogs, scorpions, spiders and other creatures writhing about. Further on there were crocodiles – not living – these were already cut up. As I said – a world of contrasts!

While in Foshan we were taken on a two hour drive to a little village (in the middle of nowhere) called Enping. This sported a slew of very high tech electronics companies. Again, the contrast of small farming areas (yes, there were locals sporting the classic, slightly conical, straw hats, water buffalos and paddy fields) and 21st Century technology. We were not out there late enough to see if there were many stars visible but at least the air was pleasantly clean. I may be going back there sometime.

See you at the next meeting

Jim

Feng Ru - Fung Joe Guey

Jim Webb



As a continuation to Chairman's Quarters, when I was taken to Enping, the people that I had gone to see had found out that I was into space travel and aeronautics so they insisted I go and see a local monument. What a pleasant surprise it was too – this was a monument to Feng Ru, the father of Chinese Aviation.

Feng Ru, also known as Fung Joe Guey, was born in Enping and was China's first aircraft designer, manufacturer and aviator. When he was 12, his father took him to the USA to make a living. They eventually moved to San Francisco in 1906 but were driven out by the earthquake and moved to Oakland. Feng had been always fascinated by machinery and was particularly inspired by the Wright Brothers' biplane. When he arrived in Oakland, the first thing he did was set up a

company (the Guangdong Machinery-building Plant) to manufacture aircraft. Within several years he had built a plane powered by a motor of his own design. Then, with his own design of aircraft, on September 21 1909, he became the first Chinese man to fly in the USA.

On January 18, 1911 he built another plane, the 'Feng Ru no. 2', acclaimed to be the most advanced of its time. He was claimed to have 'fitted wings to the Chinese Dragon'. In February of that year he rejected the invitation of some American companies and shortly after returned to China with his assistants and components for two aircraft. He was hoping to launch a Chinese aviation industry. When the Revolution of 1911 broke out he was appointed Captain of the Air Force by the Guangdong Revolutionary Government. On August 25, Feng was flying an exhibition plane in Guangzhou when it stalled and crashed, killing him.

He is buried in the Huanghuagang Cemetery of Uprising Martyrs in Guangzhou, inscribed 'Pioneer of Chinese Aviation'.



THE NIGHT SKY : PLANETS

April – May 2013

MERCURY : In the morning skies, but very low and difficult to spot.. Possibly visible very low down, but be very aware of the rising Sun.

VENUS : Not visible again until the end of May in the evening skies.

MARS : In conjunction with the Sun on the night of the meeting, April 18th. Will not now be visible for a few months, when it re-appears in the morning skies.

JUPITER : Still prominent in the evening skies, visible for about two hours after Sunset. Moon close on May 6th.

SATURN : Well placed for viewing this month, as it is at opposition on 28th April, so visible all night. The rings are open at the moment, around 19 degrees, making a worthwhile visit from even the smallest telescope. The Moon is to the south on 26th April.

URANUS : Was in conjunction with the Sun on 29th March, Mercury to the south on 19th April, Moon to the north on 7th May.

NEPTUNE : Moon to the north on 4th May.

METEORS

The Lyrids peak on 22nd April. Eta Aquarids peak on May 5th and 6th.

COMETS

PanSTARRS never really achieved any visibility in the northern hemisphere. Some images (including one by your Editor) have been seen, but it was no Hale-Bopp! Currently it is in the north-western skies, near to the lower edge of Cassiopeia, but needs optical assistance to find.

Comet ISON, (Comet C/2012 S1 or Comet Nevski-Novichonok), is still being predicted to be, “...one of the brightest comets ever...” But we will have to wait until the end of the year to see if this comes true. It is not due to encounter the Sun until November, though current estimates are predicting it could be magnitude -16, which is brighter than a full Moon, (-12.7)!

THE SUN

Annular eclipse on 10th May, visible over Australia and the Pacific Ocean.

THE MOON



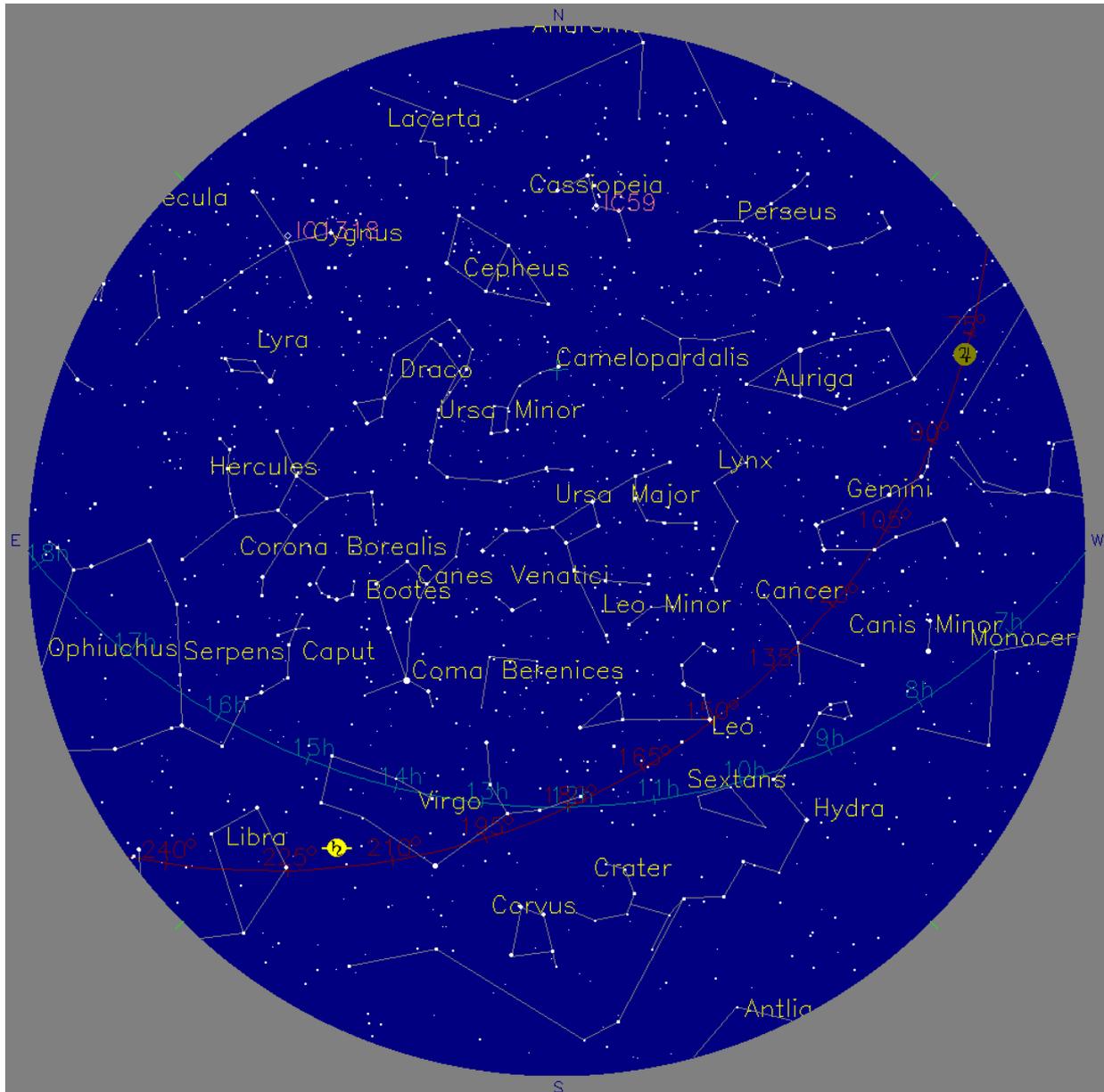
New 10th April First Quarter 18th Full 25th Last Quarter 2nd May New 10th

The Moon will rise in partial eclipse on 25th. As a partial, you may not see any differences from usually – maybe a slight darkening. Unfortunately it will not appear as depicted above, which would be an ideal sight of a full Lunar eclipse!

THE NIGHT SKY : MAP

1st May 2013 22.00 BST [21:00 GMT/ UTC]

Still not a very good time for planetary watchers this month. This map is timed so as to show both Saturn and Jupiter.



KEY	
 MERCURY	 SATURN
 VENUS	 URANUS
 MARS	 NEPTUNE
 JUPITER	 PLUTO



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