

2002



NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, 15th February 2018

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF HARINGEY

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SOCIETY NEWS

MEETING VENUE

**Music and Drama Block, Ashmole Academy, Cecil Road,
Southgate, London N14 5RJ.**

The day for meetings is usually the third Thursday of each month. The exceptions are August, when we do not hold a meeting, and this now currently applies to the July and December meetings, though that may alter in the future.

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

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

For more on this, and general meeting information, also check the website page:
www.ashastro.co.uk. Last minute changes will be on the Facebook page



OBSERVING EVENINGS

Regarding any changes to Observing Evening meetings, this is a continuing message to let Observing Officers : Jim Webb, Alister Innes or Kyri Voskou know your mobile phone number. Last minute changes can then be notified via text messaging. The Facebook page will also be used, but we realise not all have (or want!) Facebook access, so it will be secondary to texting. And if you do not have a computer or cell phone, you can be phoned on your landline.

2018

February 15th : Dale Baker :

"Ray Harryhausen - The Monster Movie Maker" Part 1

March 15th : Mat Irvine : "The View from Serendip - 100 Years of Arthur C. Clarke"

April 19th : TBA

May 17th : TBA

June 21st : TBA

July & August no meetings these months

September 20th : TBA

October 18th : including AGM

November 15th : Jerry Stone : "The Build-Up to the Apollo 50th"

December : no meeting this month

COVER

Possibly the most bizarre 'space' photo ever seen - a bright red Tesla Roadster with the Earth in the background. No, not a CGI composite shot, this is for real, primarily as the car had had one previous owner, by the name of Elon Musk, who just happens to own both Tesla and SpaceX - that launched the rocket, that launched the car...

More inside the mag.

Photo : SpaceX



SOCIETY NEWS

For up-to-date information, we are using that 'necessary evil' - Facebook. Go to : www.facebook.com/groups/ASHastro/

However although originally you could view 'Public' Facebook pages (which ASHastro is), and read posts, without being a member, it now seems you have to be a member of FB to even read them. So, sorry, you'll have to join - *BUT* this does not mean you need to give away information you don't want to give. Although Facebook doesn't go out of its way to tell you, any individual's home page can be blank (as your Editor's is) it does not have to have any information. Even your birth date need not be correct.

However, once a member, if you want to 'interact' - ie post messages – on the ASH Group you will need to ask to join, and you will get 'signed up' by your Chairman or Editor.
The more the merrier!

MEETING ROOM



We currently meet at Ashmole Academy, Cecil Road, Southgate N14 5RJ, on the first floor of the Music and Drama Block. This is the two-storey building, (left) with the entrance marked with the red arrow. We hope the first floor will be suitable for all, as there isn't a convenient lift. If anyone feels they will have difficulty, please let the Chairman know. Contact details on the back page.

For historical reference the X in the photo was our original meeting room, the original Music Studio. This is now demolished, and the site now has a new building.

MEETING PREVIEW

**15th February 2018 : Dale Baker :
Ray Harryhausen - The Monster Movie Maker - part 1**



Anyone with a passing interest of fantasy cinema, particularly from the fifties and sixties, is going to know the name Ray Harryhausen. Even if the name isn't ringing bells, you would know the movies - *Clash of the Titans*; *20 Million Miles to Earth*; *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, and many others. Here the creatures were not generated by computers, they were painstakingly animated by what is called 'stop frame'. An articulated model

was built and filmed a frame at a time, going through the actions. At 24 frames every second this is obviously a very time-consuming process, but it is what Ray Harryhausen excelled at. He himself was taught by earlier pioneers of the process, especially Willis O'Brien, who's best known creation was King Kong from the first movie of that name in 1933. Harryhausen inherited the O'Brien mantle and continued his work.

Stop motion has largely been replaced with CGI these days, though the legacy continues with Aardman Animations, with such as Wallace and Gromit, that are made using virtually the same stop-motion techniques.

Dale will be taking an in-depth review of Ray Harryhausen's life and times. Plus as there is so much to cover, there will be a 'Part 2' at a later date.

MEETING REVIEW 17th January 2018 :

Dr Simon Drake & Dr Andrew Beard : The Skye Meteorite



Given that we had moved the date to Wednesday of the week, so we could get both of our speakers, most seemed to remember, and we had a fair sized audience. (Though more of course is always good!)



Simon Drake and Andrew Beard had led a group of undergraduates from Birkbeck College on a field



trip to the Isle of Skye, with the aim of collective evidence of volcanic activity that formed the Island - instead they discovered something else, arguably of far greater importance.

As Simon had said, *“One of the things that is really interesting is that the volcanological evolution of the Isle of Skye has always been considered to have started with what’s called a volcanic plume, an enormously large bulk of magma which has come up under what then was the crust that Skye was on - we are now suggesting that this may well have been assisted by a meteorite impact.”*

Exploration of Skye wasn’t new, it had happened before, so one question was, “Why hadn’t these earlier explorers found this?” The answer seemed to be a combination that they weren’t looking for it - plus to get to the site in question involved a heck of lot of wading waist deep!



Even after the discovery, getting the facts published was a long process. The slight problem was the invariable question “Where’s the impact crater?”, to which so far can’t be answered. No impact crater, no publication. Eventually however *Geology* magazine, became the publisher, and that had drawn a considerable amount of interest.



Images - from top. Simon Drake (left) and Andy Beard point out their respective interests. Note Andy is using the image that appeared on last month’s cover. Simon shows George Emsden, and Andy, Chairman Jim, examples of their finds. Treasurer Kyri examines both (above right). Finally (above left) our guests received the final two bottles of the ASH Special Bottles of Wine as thanks - well they are Vintage 2002.

MICHIGAN SUFFERS LARGE AIR-BURST



Residents of Michigan in the USA Midwest have experienced a substantial meteor air-burst. A bright light flashing across the sky was followed by the sound of thunder before houses started to shake.

The United States Geological Service reported that the event took place about 10 miles north of Detroit and was captured by a number of dash cams.

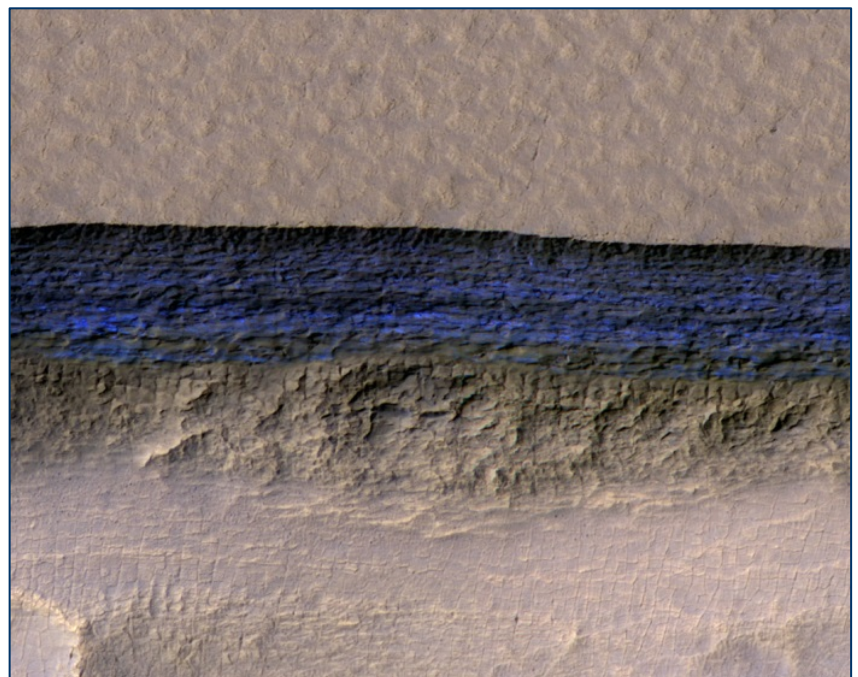
Although the air-burst didn't cause the kind of damage seen during the Chelyabinsk event in 2013 it was still a significant event, resulting in a magnitude 2.0 tremor.

NASA ORBITER 'SEES' WATER ICE ON MARS

NASA has announced that the HiRISE camera on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter has located eight sites on the Martian surface where there are water-ice glaciers just below the surface.

Thanks to its high-res capabilities the camera was able to produce images showing steep eroded slopes containing layers of water ice.

The HiRISE camera uses a telescopic attachment to see objects as small as one metre across so was an ideal instrument to use in such a search.



The layers are clearly visible and have caused excitement on several fronts. Not only could they hold clues about Mars' past climate, they could also provide water for future manned missions.

There are no rovers on the Martian surface capable of reaching this ice, but future missions to reach the area will certainly be planned.

SPACE NEWS - COVER STORY by Mat Irvine

Wednesday February 7th saw the launch of the SpaceX Heavy Lift Falcon on a test flight. Currently the west's most powerful rocket, it blasted off from Pad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center. Not only did the lift-off go flawlessly, all three boosters are recoverable and the two outer returned back to KSC and landed simultaneously. (*bottom of page*) The central third booster was planned to land on a specially-constructed barge, but unfortunately engine failure meant it hit the water instead.

As a test flight it normally would have carried an inert payload, cement blocks or similar. But this was Elon Musk, so the payload was Musk's own Tesla Roadster - as he also owns Tesla. The car has Starman, a dummy astronaut, driving; 'DON'T PANIC' - from *The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* - prominently on the dash and David Bowie's *Space Odyssey* playing on the radio! The payload is not - as initially assumed - 'going to Mars', instead it will be an elliptical orbit around the Sun, which will take it out as far as the Mars orbit. In fact, as the burn was longer than planned, even further towards the Asteroid Belt.



If any aliens discovery this - heaven alone knows what they will make of it????



SPACE VIEWS

January saw two Full Moons, both Supermoons, ie at perigee the closest approach to the Earth, so 14% large and 30% brighter. The second Full Moon in a month is also termed (somewhat arbitrarily, as it depends on which calendar you use), a Blue Moon, and this was also a Lunar Eclipse, but not visible from the UK. However it was seen from the USA, where your Chairman conveniently was, on the 31st. He caught it on his cell phone camera - as here - where it came over far more logically as a 'Blood Moon'.



Meanwhile in the UK your Editor also shot the Supermoon, sans eclipse, where although, yes, it did appear brighter and bigger, it's difficult to show as there's nothing really to compare it with.

Above left :
Having just risen, so some objects are dark on the horizon, and, right, a close up

SPACE VIEWS

- Extra

An intriguing photo, taken by Ollie Taylor and supplied by ESA, shows a view from Iceland that not only has the Aurora Borealis prominent, but also a rainbow. Actually this is a 'Moon-bow', but shows the usual rainbow colours.

Look at the waterfall near the bottom left



QUESTION TIME... THE ALPHA-QUIZ...

The answers begin with consecutive letters of the alphabet

Noble gas

Our Sun is this type of star

The main dozen constellations form...

Flat layer of dust and gas around a star

Bright spots around the eclipsed Sun

Cloud City chief Lando...

Ancient Greek dragon, and magical character Malfoy

Debris thrown out by a meteor strike

Last month answers:



Kilo

Leap

Martian

Neap

Oberon

Picard

Quasar

Rutherford

CHAIRMAN'S QUARTERS



Yet another asteroid managed *not* hit us recently – another disaster avoided! Space borne harbingers of death and destruction abound in the media and strange doomsday websites and of course, SF disaster B-movies. Needless to say, we've been lucky so far. However, according to current data, the dinosaurs weren't! Nonetheless, an impact from any big space object will cause considerable damage to this planet and its population. Being a fairly smart species, [*discuss - Ed!!*], I suspect there will be many survivors and the human race will continue racing in whatever new environment they will find themselves.

That, at least, is the unexpected from space. What about the unexpected from Earth itself? For a start we have volcanoes. Around 1340 BC the Greek island of Santorini blew its top and sent out a tsunami that led to the demise of the Minoan civilisation in Crete. In 79 AD Mt Vesuvius erupted and wiped out the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum. More recently, Mount Tambora erupted in 1815 killing over 10,000 people and a further 50,000 from the effects of ash fallout. It also altered the northern hemisphere weather giving rise to the "Year Without A Summer" in 1816 in Europe and America, with subsequent crop failures and famines. A few years later, in 1883, Krakatoa exploded with an estimated yield of 200 megatons killing an estimated 40,000 or more people and devastating several hundred villages in the area. Not surprisingly, the scientific community has now come up with the notion of the super-volcano of which around 10 have been identified as having occurred within the past 2.5 million years. And Doomsday Predictions abound for a potential one in the Yellowstone Park region of the USA. If that were to erupt, as hypothesised, very little North America would remain and the European west coast with the Asian east coast would be heavily damaged.

All these mentioned are the big, spectacular cataclysms. But there are smaller but widespread events which threaten us almost daily. Earthquakes feature prevalently here due to their unpredictability but are no less deadly. Two 'quakes in Italy (1908 and 1915) killed around 120,000 people. In 1920 a 'quake in China killed quarter million! In 1923 the Japanese lost nearly 150,000 people. Again in 1976, half million Chinese lost their lives. Then in 2004 the Indian Ocean 'quake and tsunami claimed over a quarter million lives. These are just the big ones. Earthquakes happen almost daily and do extensive damage. [*As has just happened in Taiwan. Ed*]

Weather also features. Hurricanes, tornadoes, snow and rain cause regular mayhem. Hurricane Katrina springs to mind with its affect on New Orleans along with other recent hurricanes reaping havoc on Caribbean islands. The USA gets regularly hit by tornadoes. These weather phenomena can be mostly foreseen and preparations can be made, unlike volcanoes, earthquakes etc. Regardless of this the human impact is always enormous. I was just in San Francisco, for my regular visit, and then went up to Sonoma (Napa County). Strong winds, coupled with a warm dry winter, knocked down badly maintained power lines which started a major forest fire. Fuelled by the very strong winds, the fire spread quickly causing major destruction around Napa region. I saw first hand what the forest fires did to the area and the effect on the local population. A fortuitous change of wind saved the town of Sonoma and many buildings on high ground.

This experience served to highlight how vulnerable we are to our environment. With the weather there are changes which have a cause that is both natural (volcanoes) and man-made (global warming). It doesn't take a lot of science to see the changes over the years and the clear links to volcanic activity. Yet there are many who refuse to believe that we are having a direct effect on our environment. The general increase in atmospheric temperature is surely destabilizing the planetary equilibrium which may give a sudden shift to a new state of equilibrium. The indicators are that there is actually a new Ice Age on the way, contrary to popular belief!

See you in February.

Jim

THE NIGHT SKY : THE PLANETS

February - March 2018

MERCURY : Was at superior conjunction with the Sun (on the far side), 17th February, but reappears in the evening skies at the very end of February when it will be accompanying Venus. At magnitude -1.5, bright for Mercury. On March 3rd the planets are at their closest, a degree apart. (The Moon is .5 degree, so 2 x Moon widths.) Crescent Moon itself close on 18th and 19th March. Mercury will disappear into the twilight by 20th, and is at Inferior Conjunction on 1st April.

VENUS : Having spent some time as a 'Morning Star', Venus is now back in the evening skies, brilliant at magnitude -3.9, though very low down, so a clear horizon to the south-west is needed. As above, Mercury also reappears and will be close to Venus at the very end of February

EARTH : March 20th Vernal Equinox. March 25th - British Summer Time begins. Clocks go *forward*.

MARS : In the morning skies, magnitude +1.5. Rising around 03.00hrs, getting earlier at 02.30 in March, in the east-south-east, near to Jupiter. On 12th February it passed by the similarly-shaded red star Antares in Scorpius, The name means 'rival of Mars' and the star is around the same magnitude, +1.0. Moon close on 10th March, and Saturn on 11th.

JUPITER : Now rising very late evening, around 23.30hrs, so still in the morning skies. In Libra and at magnitude -2.2, stands out against the otherwise faint stars in the constellation. Moon close on 7th and 8th March

SATURN : Rising around 05.00hrs in Sagittarius, in the morning skies at +0.5 magnitude, to the lower left of Mars. Saturn and Mars are reasonably close for much of March. Moon close on 11th March.

URANUS : In the east mid-evening, in Pisces, west of star Omicron Piscium. Uranus is still around magnitude +5.8, so still *just* on the theoretical edge of naked-eye visibility. About as well placed for viewing as it gets. Moon to the north on 20th February

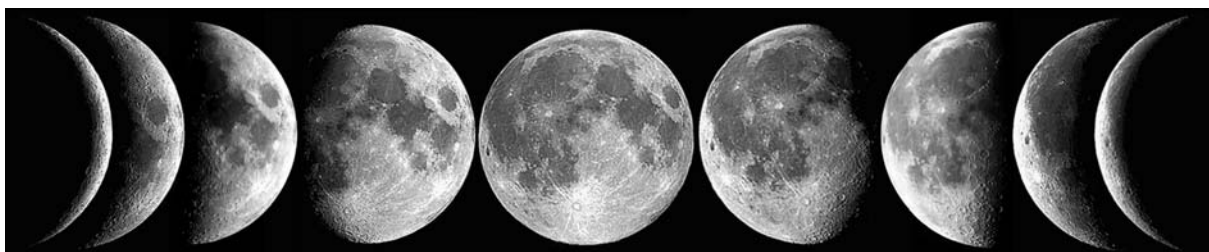
NEPTUNE : Magnitude +7.9 in Aquarius, close to star Lambda Aquarii. Although lower down in the sky, as with Uranus, comparatively well placed for viewing, Neptune however disappears into the twilight during latter half of February, and is in conjunction with the Sun on 4th March. Doesn't reappear until April, and then in the morning skies.

MINOR PLANETS

Minor planet 3752/Camillo passes within .14 AU of the Earth, on 19/20th February. This is 20.6 million km/12.8 million miles. This occurs in Orion, and it is magnitude +13, so will need a modest telescope to see it.

THE MOON

There is a Lunar occultation of Aldebaran on 23rd February. Reappears from the bright limb around 17.30. This also will occur on 22nd March



New 15th February

First 23rd

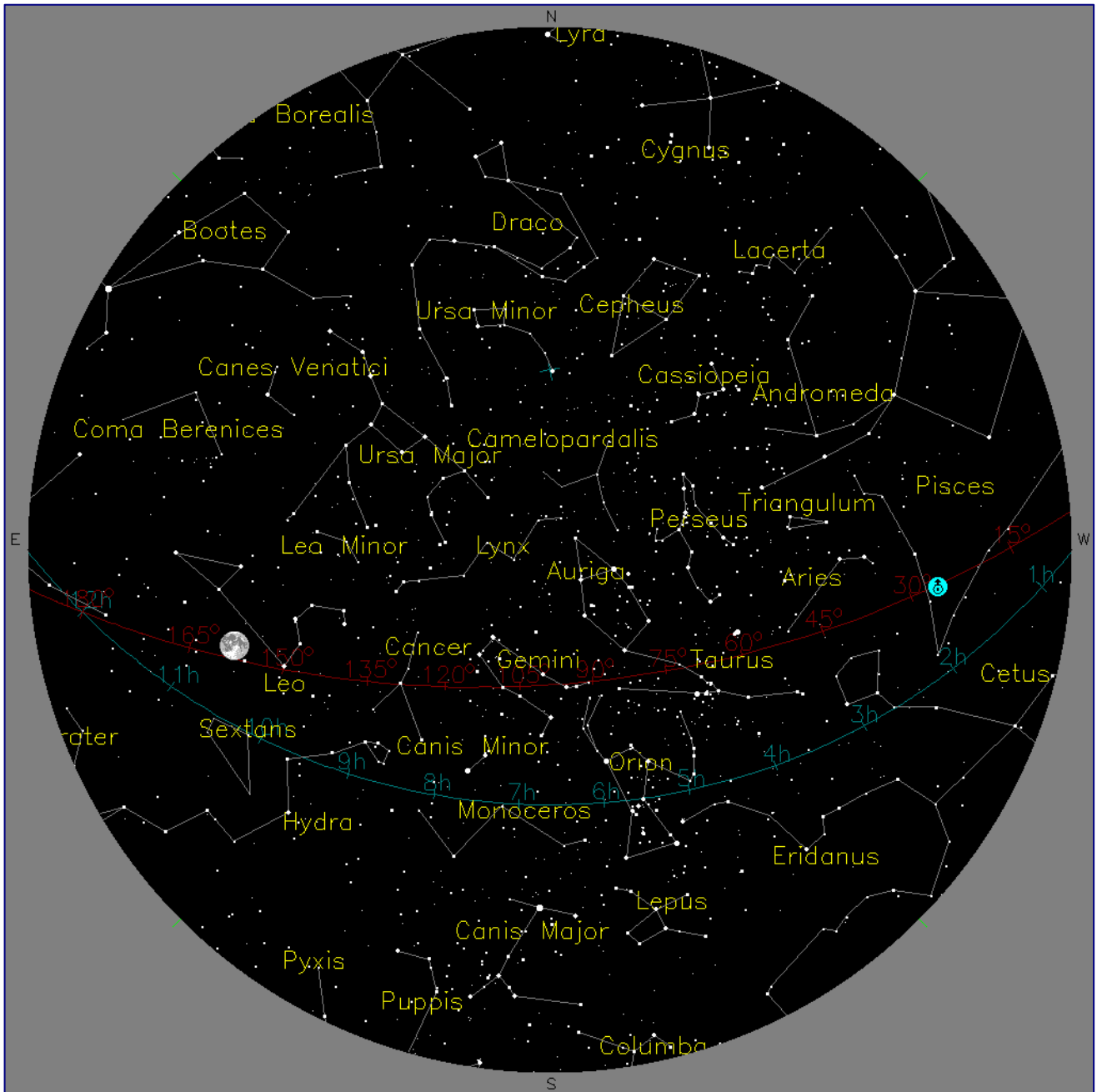
Full 2nd March









Last 9th

New 17th

THE NIGHT SKY : MAP

1st March 2018, 20.00hrs UTC-GMT



KEY	
 MERCURY	 SATURN
 VENUS	 URANUS
 MARS	 NEPTUNE
 JUPITER	 PLUTO

