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NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, 26th February 2015

***** NOTE CHANGE OF DATE *****

THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF HARINGEY

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www.ashastro.co.uk

SOCIETY NEWS

MEETING VENUE

Music Block, Ashmole School, 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 - **AS FOR THIS MONTH** - 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:
www.ashastro.co.uk. Latest update: February 2014.



More on the re-launched ASH Facebook page, and how to access it - see the next page

OBSERVING EVENINGS

Regarding any changes to Observing Evening meetings, this is a continuing message to let Observing Officers Jim Webb or Alister Innes know your mobile phone number, and if not already on the list, your email address; emailing to observing@ashastro.co.uk reaches both of them. The Facebook page will now also be used.

2015

February 26th : Michael Franks; "Alan Turing : The Enigma" **NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**

March 19th : Observing Evening at the Observing Site

April 16th :

May 21st :

June 18th :

COVER:

A sculpture of Alan Turing on display at the Bletchley Park Museum. Turing, besides being the subject of the recent British film, is the subject of Michael Frank's talk this month

Photo: Mat Irvine



And for more up-to-date information, we are now using that 'necessary evil' - Facebook.

Note as this is an Open Group you do not have to be a member of Facebook to read posts and messages, you just need some form of Internet access.

However if you want to 'interact' (ie post messages), you have firstly to join Facebook, then on the ASH Facebook page, ask to join our Group, and you will get 'signed up'.

Up until now there appears to have been some problems accessing the ASH Facebook page, with any search coming up 'Not Found'. This appears to have been sorted now, but if you still have problems, copy the URL <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ASHastro/> directly into you browser window. If you are reading the digital version of this, you can click directly on the above link.

[Note that at the moment, posts on Facebook from your Editor will come up under his wife's name, Georgina Liddle, as your Editor has himself yet to take that massive step into the 21st Century and do what he said he'd never do, and contrary to his Groucho Principle - join Facebook... but watch this space...]

[PS ... and if you are unaware of the Groucho ((Marx) Principle, this states that he could never possibly join any club that would consider having him as a member...]



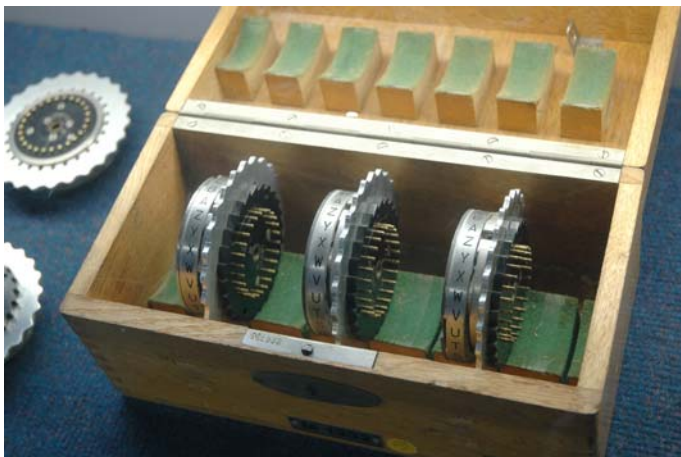
SOCIETY NEWS MEETING ROOM

We currently meet on the first floor of the Main Music Block. This is the two-storey building, next to our original room, the original Music Room. This is marked with the X in the photo on left, (and although it is demolished, the site is currently being redeveloped with a new structure). The route in red is shown from the main gate of the School. We hope a first floor will be suitable for all, as there isn't a lift. If anyone feels they will have difficulty, please let the Chairman know. Contact details on back page.

MEETING PREVIEW : 26th February 2015 **Michael Franks : "Alan Turing : The Enigma"**

Michael will be giving a talk on this the most enigmatic of British scientists. Although primarily known for his work at Bletchley Park during the Second World War and his expertise in breaking the German Enigma, and other, codes, he also had an interest in astronomy and relativity.

He will also be looking at Turing's love of puzzles, in itself one of the unofficial requirements for the Code Breakers, and how this led to him be one of the major 'cogs in the wheel' of the work done during the War. Michael will also be explaining how the Enigma Machine works. It was initially a commercial machine for purely encrypting commercial-sensitive messages.



It was only because of the Second World War that the German scientists and engineers developed it to an even higher complexity. Amongst Michael's demonstrations for the evening will be a paper model of the Enigma Machine; a lesson on decoding messages and - linked to one of Michael's other passions - a geocache based on Enigma codes. He will also look into the strange circumstance of Turing's untimely death.

The geocache site - <http://coord.info/GC46CFP> - give this piece of Enigma code, OAEZXV Z ZA E.XPL Y T.GDA which Michael says he's managed to decipher. And if you can't decipher it yourself, (you actually need more information - that can be found on the 'site'), you will have to come along to the meeting to find out what it says!

Images : One of the Enigma Machines and its rotors at Bletchley Park *Photos - Mat Irvine*

MEETING REVIEW : 15th January 2015 Observing Evening

A very good turn out at the Observing Evening. It was a bit difficult to be sure of the exact numbers as it was dark and too much light from torches would have ruined what 'night vision' we'd managed to achieve! However there were over 20 people there and quite a few were first-timers. Hopefully we showed enough for them to come again!



For once the skies were perfectly clear and it was one day after Full Moon, so as dark a sky as we could expect in London.



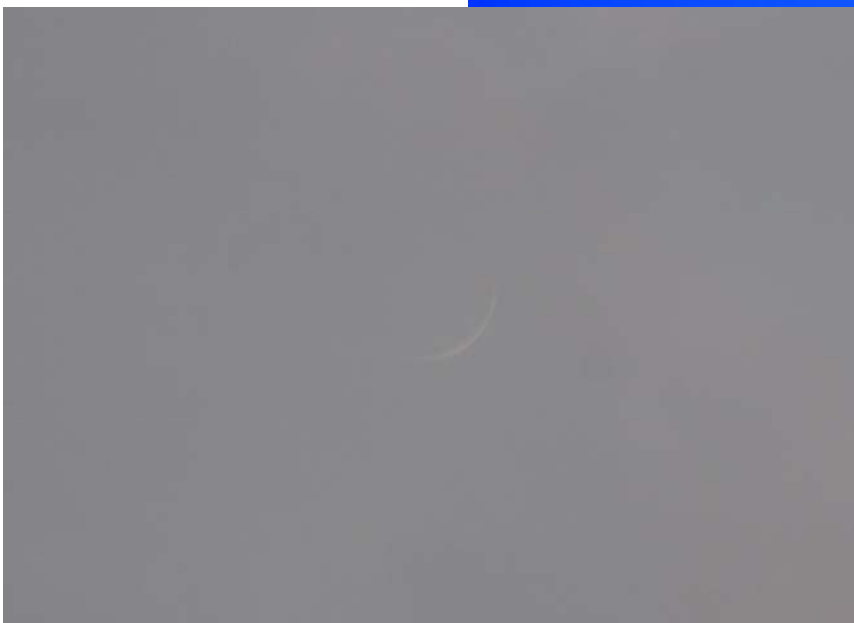
Jupiter was easily spotted, along with the Galileans (well three of them), and Comet Lovejoy was also located and viewed by the majority there, though it only appeared as a 'fuzzy blob'. Most could however discern the greenish tinge.

Mat Irvine

SKY VIEWS



What a difference a day - or in these cases, two - makes. Left: Venus and Mercury on 16th January, and - below - on 18th Mercury has faded considerably and needs the arrow to locate...



And, above, the very new Moon - above - on 22nd January when it was under two days old and only just visible

Right: two days later on 24th



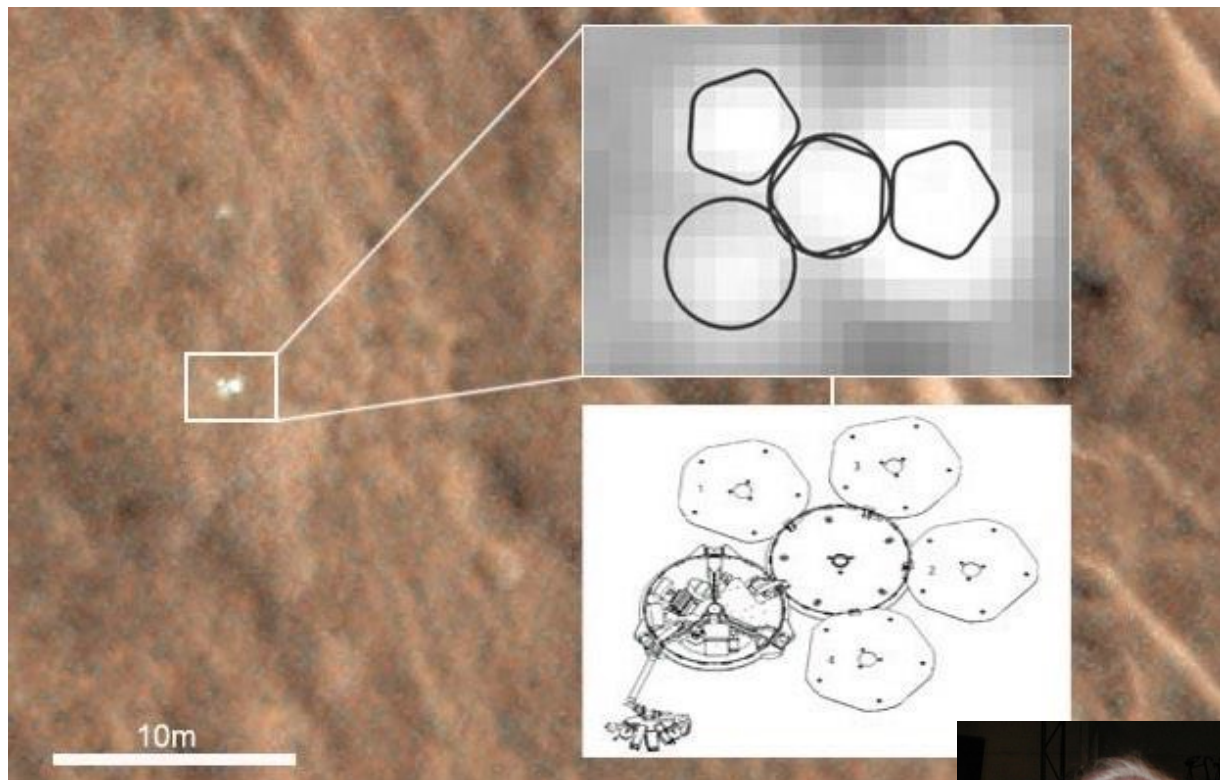
SPACE NEWS

Stargazing Live will be covering the Total Solar Eclipse on 20th March, during a special programme in the morning. This will be the final day for the series, which will start on 18th.

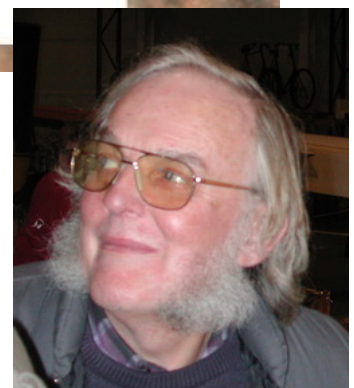
As detailed last month, the path of totality only runs over a few areas of land, the nearest to the British Isles being the Faroe Islands. Britain and Ireland will have a partial eclipse with the closer you go north, the more percentage you will get - but even the far north of Scotland will only get 99% and 99% is not 100%. Image, above, is of the 2006 Total Eclipse.



However tours are still being advertised, primarily for cruise ships and aircraft flights, so it could be worth searching for more information if you want to take the trip.



The best news for British space projects recently has been the discovery of Beagle 2 on the Martian surface, in an image from NASA's MRO (Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter). Contrary to the supposition that it entered the tenuous Martian atmosphere at too steep an angle and crashed into the Red Planet, no, it appears that Beagle 2 made it safely to the surface. The only thing that then went wrong is that two of the four panels failed to open, and they needed to all open as this uncovered the antenna. So poor old Beagle 2 was likely transmitting away like fury, but the signals were going nowhere. Sadly Beagle's Project Leader Professor Colin Pillinger, who never lost faith in his creation, hasn't lived long enough to learn of this news, as he died in May last year.



THE NIGHT SKY : THE PLANETS February - March 2015

MERCURY : The planet was at inferior conjunction on 30th January, and now in the morning skies, but faint and low. At greatest elongation west on 24th February and likely not observable until the end of February/beginning of March. However the Moon is close on 17th February, so could be a pointer. Close to Neptune on 17th March.

VENUS : Still bright, though low in the southwest evening skies. Over 17th - 26th February, Venus and Mars are close - but with Venus at -3.9 magnitude, it is far brighter (about 100 times) than Mars at +1.2. On 17th Venus is about two degrees (4x Moon widths) from Mars. They stay within two degrees until 26th. Closest approach is the 22nd when they are 23 arc minutes apart, but due to the vast differences in brightness, Mars could be difficult to spot.

(Image from the Jodrell Bank site)

On 20th they are joined by thin waxing crescent Moon, six degrees to the right. In conjunction with Uranus (.1 degree) on 4th March.



MARS : Low in the southwest after sunset. Magnitude -1.1 in Capricornus. Close to Uranus 11th March.

JUPITER : Reached opposition on 6th February. In Leo at the beginning of February, then moving into Cancer. High in the evening skies, bright at magnitude -2.6 and due south at an elevation of around 55 degrees at midnight. There is another multiple satellite shadow transit on 26th February

SATURN : In the morning skies at magnitude +0.6, in Scorpius rising around 03.00hrs UTC/GMT. Not that well placed for viewing. But if you can get a glimpse, the ring system is open to around 25 degrees - about as wide as they get as viewed from Earth. Moon close on 12th March

URANUS : In Pisces, magnitude +5.9. In conjunction with Venus on 4th March (.1 degree) and Mars on 11th March (.3 degree).

NEPTUNE : In conjunction with the Sun on 26th February, so not visible even with magnification!

METEORS

The next major shower is the Lyrids in April

COMETS

Comet Lovejoy has faded from naked-eye visibility. Watch out for the next viewing - in the year 2550.

THE MOON

The Full Moon in March is the 'smallest' Full Moon this year.



New 28th February

First 25th

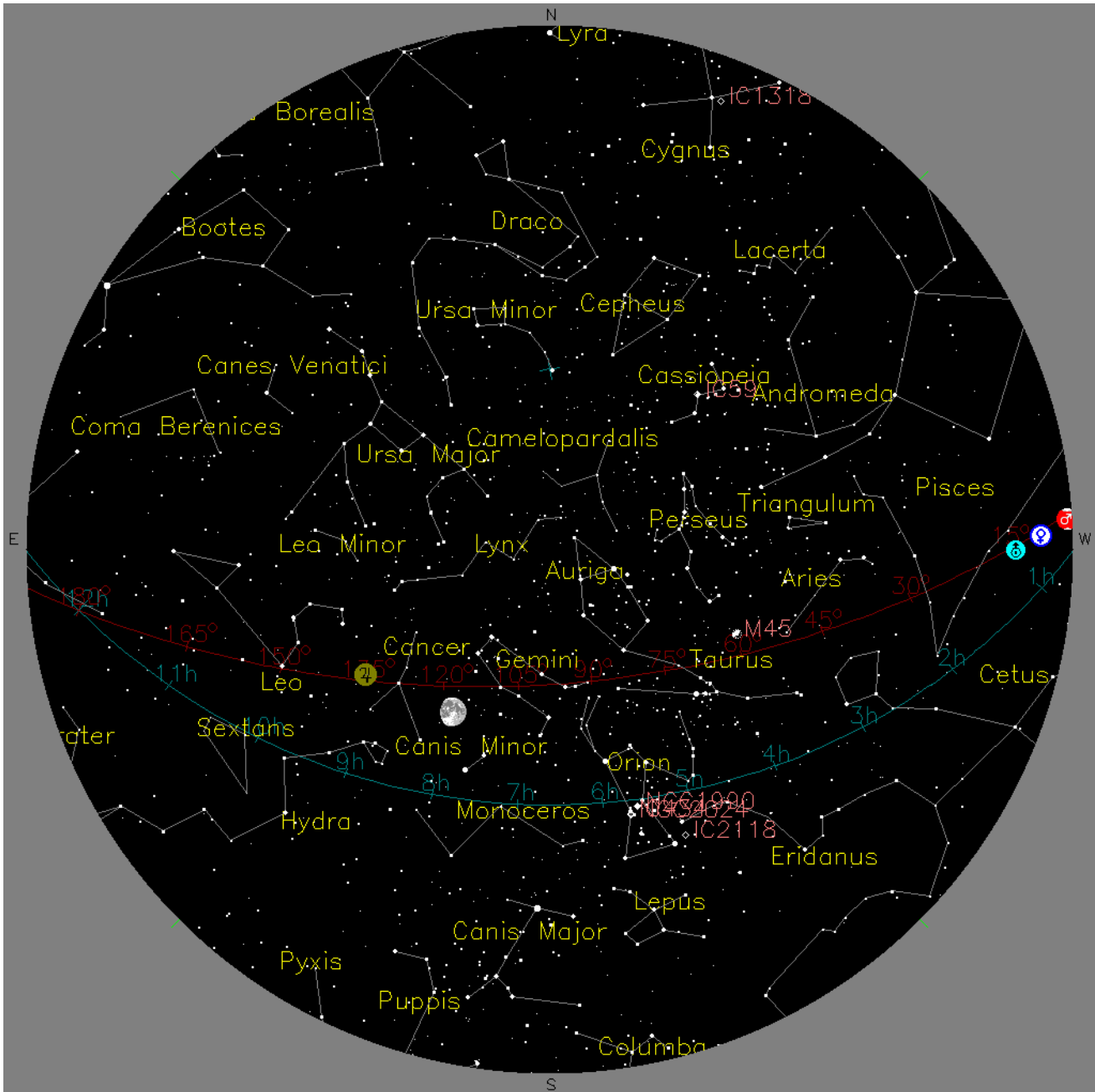
Full 5th March









Last 13th

New 20th

THE NIGHT SKY : MAP

1st March 2015 : 20.00hrs GMT/ UTC



KEY	
 MERCURY	 SATURN
 VENUS	 URANUS
 MARS	 NEPTUNE
 JUPITER	 PLUTO



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