

# Nene Valley Astronomical Society

## Stargazer Newsletter

July & August 2017

[www.neneastro.org.uk](http://www.neneastro.org.uk)

### Forthcoming Society Meetings

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July:** 'Astronomical Aspects' meeting at Sudborough Village Hall, Main Street, Sudborough NN14 3BX at 8pm. Admission £2.

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July:** 'The Outer Planets' – lecture by Jerry Workman at Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road, Chelveston. Note that this meeting will commence at 7.45pm (to allow Jerry sufficient time to catch a train). Admission £3.

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August:** No Sudborough meeting – Summer Break.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August:** Perseid Meteor Watch. Venue to be confirmed.

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August:** 'The Inner Planets' - lecture by John McEvoy. Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road, Chelveston NN9 5AT at 8pm. Admission £2.

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September:** Stargazing Session at Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road, Chelveston NN9 5AT from 8pm (weather permitting – check Twitter feed for confirmation).

Note: Occasionally, it may be necessary to alter the speakers and or subjects at short notice. Where this is the case details will be posted on our website, Twitter and Facebook accounts.

The first edition of our new society 'Journal' will be published for this coming September. Thank you to those members who have already submitted items; it is much appreciated.

There is however still more time for contributions to be submitted, so if you would like to share your observations, comments or maybe write a short article, then please forward them onto Steve Williams.

### Can You Help NVAS?

Our thanks to Paul Blackman who has recently kindly volunteered to take on the role of 'Membership Secretary'. We'll shortly be asking all members to re-confirm details (we last did this over two years ago).

We are however still on the look out for an external speakers organiser to take over from Peta to organise next years lectures. If you would like to volunteer or would like further details then please contact Peta or Steve.

### New Chelveston Meetings From September

Commencing from September, we are introducing a new meeting at Chelveston Village Hall which will be held on the first Monday of each month. This new meeting is being introduced as a result of members comments that they would like a more informal monthly meeting to discuss and share ideas, demonstrate telescope set ups and share observations. If clear, these evenings will also allow a further chance for observing. Chelveston benefits from broadband facilities, so there will also be the chance for software demonstrations to be shown as well as videos on astrophotography for example. The first of these evenings will take place on the 4th September starting at 8pm. Our usual third Monday meetings at Chelveston will of course continue.

Our meetings at Sudborough are also continuing for the remainder of this year on the first Thursday of each month. Meeting attendance levels at this venue will be monitored and a decision as to whether these continue in 2018 will be made in conjunction with members attending that venue later this year.

Unfortunately our planned June Chelveston speaker had to cancel at very short notice (an hour) and we were therefore unable to hold the meeting. We would like to take this opportunity to apologise to those who arrived at Chelveston expecting a meeting. However, with no alternative speaker available at such notice the regrettable decision to cancel the meeting was taken.

On Monday 21st August, a Total Solar Eclipse will be visible from North America. Here in the UK we get to see a very small partial phase of this eclipse at sunset. As this date just happens to coincide with our August Chelveston meeting, members are welcome to arrive from 7pm to see if we can catch a glimpse before sunset at around 7.45pm.



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Northamptonshire's Free To Join Astronomical Society



## Sky Guide - July & August 2017

**Full Moon** On 9th July & 7th August

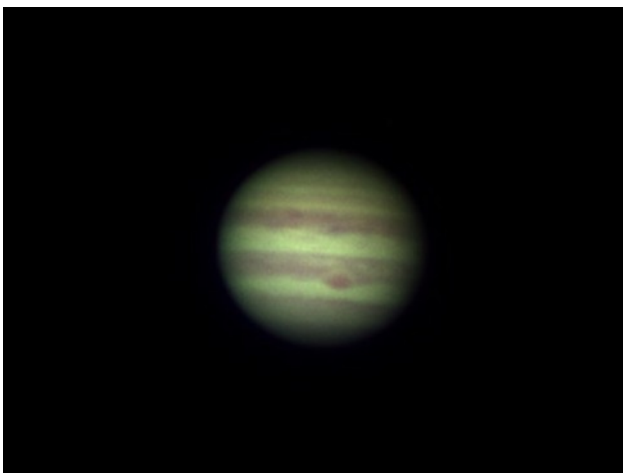
**New Moon** On 23rd July & 21st August

If you fancy a planetary challenge, see if you can spot **Mercury** in the evening sky. It reaches greatest eastern elongation on 30th July, when it will be low above the western horizon. To add to the challenge see if you can spot the planet with the young crescent Moon to the right of the planet on the 23rd July. After about the first week of August, Mercury will disappear from view as it reaches inferior conjunction on 26th August.

The second inner planet, **Venus** is putting on a fine show at present; the only problem is that it's in the eastern sky before sunrise! Venus lies amongst the stars of Taurus during July before moving across into Gemini in August. Look on the morning of 13th July when Venus is located a little to the North of the first magnitude star Aldebaren and then again on 20th July when the waning Moon is close by. The Moon also passes close on the morning of 20th August.

**Mars** is now lost in the glare of the Sun and cannot be observed over the summer.

The giant planet **Jupiter** continues to be visible in the south-western evening sky, although the planet is setting by 11pm at the end of July and by 9pm at the end of August. Good detail can be glimpsed in the cloud belts during moments of steady seeing and the Red Spot is also easily visible at moderate magnifications. Our Moon can be seen nearby Jupiter on the evenings of 28th July and 25th August.



*Above: Jupiter imaged on 26th May 2017 by Steve Williams showing the Great Red Spot along with detail within the cloud belts.*

The ringed planet Saturn is visible low towards the south during the short nights of July and August. Just passed opposition (which it reached in mid-June), the planet's low altitude means that its light is coming through a thick part of the Earth's atmosphere resulting in poor seeing. Even so, the sight of seeing its ring system is enough to tempt



most amateur astronomers. Try using a yellow filter if you have one to see if this counters the poor seeing conditions. Our Moon passes nearby on the nights of 7th July and 30th August.

The distant icy giants of **Uranus** and **Neptune** are both visible in the south-eastern pre-dawn sky in the constellations of Pisces and Aquarius respectively.

The dwarf planet **Pluto** reaches opposition on 10th July. At magnitude 14 however, it's unlikely to attract the attention of many observers.

July is a good month to keep an eye out for **Noctilucent Clouds**. These high altitude clouds appear as bright streaks, illuminated by the Sun even though lower clouds are in darkness. The best times to look are around 90 minutes to 120 minutes after sunset toward the north-western horizon and a similar amount of time before sunrise above the north-eastern horizon.

**Meteor** wise, the next two months are dominated by the Perseids. This year they are predicted to reach maximum on the night of August 12th/13th. Unfortunately the Moon rises at 11pm, so this year we have the bright moonlight to contend with. All is not lost for meteor watchers however, as at the end of July the Delta Aquariids reach maximum rate. Best rates will be seen after mid-night, with the radiant in the south-east.

A **Total Solar Eclipse** occurs on 21st August, however it will only be seen by observers in North America. Here in the UK, we do get to see a very small part of the eclipse at sunset, when a tiny part of the Sun will be seen to be covered by the Moon.

The Nene Valley Astronomical Society  
Stargazer Newsletter Is Compiled & Published  
By Steve Williams.