Nene Valley Astronomical Society

STARGAZER

JUNE 2026

M88 In Coma Berenices

Seen in this image from the Hubble Space Telescope, M88 lies some 63 million light years away.

M88 is an active galaxy, which means that its centre harbours a supermassive black hole. Astronomers estimate that the black hole is around 100 million times as massive as the Sun, and it appears to be powering outflows of gas from the galaxy's centre

A population of old, reddish stars around the black hole give M88 its warmly glowing heart. Spreading out from it's centre are several tightly would, symmetrical spiral arms, each outlines by sparkling pint and blue star clusters and knotted clouds of gas. We see M88 from an angle that makes it appear elongated.

www.neneastro.org.uk

Forthcoming Meetings

All meetings held at Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road, Chelveston NN9 5AT at start at 8pm. Doors open from 7.45pm. Please use the entrance doors at the rear of the building (the front door is locked for security purposes).

Monday 1st June
Guest Speaker Meeting
Jerry Workman
'Solar Eclipses'
Admission £6

Monday 15th June
Solar Observing & Annual Review Meeting
Admission £3.

Monday 6th July
Club Night Meeting including a look at upcoming events in the Summer Sky.

Monday 20th March
Guest Speaker Meeting
Martin Braddock
'The Challenges Facing Astronauts'
Admission £6.

Committee Members

Chair
Vacant

Vice Chair
Steve Williams

Secretary
Kevin Burton
enquiries@neneastro.org.uk

Events Co-Ordinator
John Wynn-Wernick

Membership Secretary
Paul Blackman
members@neneastro.org.uk

Treasurer
David Jones

Newsletter/Website
Steve Williams
newsletter@neneastro.org.uk

Committee Member
Paul Jamison

Annual Review Meeting

Our Annual Review Meeting will take place on Monday 15th June at Chelveston Village Hall at 8pm.

The meeting will include a look back at events over the last year, a report from the Treasurer and include the election of officers for the next 12 months. All committee positions are available for election (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Events Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter & Website Editor and Committee Members). We'd like to encourage any member who is interested in joining the committee as we have had a couple of vacancies over recent years. For further details please contact Kevin Burton.

We hope that as many members are able to attend as possible, new ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

Subject to the weather, we also hope to be able to do some solar observing as part of the evening.

NVAS Facebook Page

We'd like to encourage more members to post their astronomical images and news to the group Facebook Page. If you'd like to participate, then please speak to Steve Williams who can arrange access.

Meeting Preview – Monday 1st June

Our June Guest Speaker Meeting sees Jerry Workman making his annual return to the society (Jerry was actually the groups first guest speaker back in 2009!).

This year, his topic is 'Solar Eclipses' which is timely given the upcoming eclipse this August. Jerry has travelled extensively over the last couple of decades, viewing both Total and Annular Eclipses and is a seasoned 'Eclipse Chaser'.

Jerry has lectured extensively across the Midlands and South of England for a number of years and is well known in the astronomy community, having served on the council of the Society for Popular Astronomy. A Lab Technician by day, he holds a Chemistry degree.

In addition to solar eclipses, Jerry also observes the Moon and planets using his 10-inch Dobsonian telescope whenever possible from his home in Barking.

The Solar System This Month

New Moon 15th June
Full Moon 29th June

The Sun continues to show a reasonable number of sunspots in visible white light. With this month seeing the Summer Solstice, clear skies permitting, there should be plenty of observing opportunities! As ever ensure that you take the usual precautions when observing the Sun.

Mercury is an evening object, visible low above the north-western horizon. Look around 10.30pm to the lower right of Venus. By the third week of the month, it disappears from view into the twilight.

Venus is an unmistakable object, in the north-western evening sky. Look regularly during the first half of the month as Venus passes close to the fainter Jupiter.

Mars rises above the north-eastern horizon by 3.30am by mid-month, but remains very low by the time of morning twilight

Jupiter is reaching the end of its current apparition and is visible low in the north-western evening sky. It's main attention this month will be it's conjunction with Venus. Telescopically Jupiter is probably too low for observing.

Saturn is a morning object in the Eastern Sky. Rising around 2.30am during mid-June, the Moon lies above the planet on the morning of 10th June.

Uranus starts to emerge into the pre-dawn Eastern Sky. During the last week of the month, it will be visible in the same binocular field of view as Mars.

Neptune is also a morning sky object this month. It can be found amongst the stars of Pisces.

The Evening Sky This Month

The above chart from Stellarium shows how the evening sky looks on June 1st at 1am, June 15th at mid-night and June 30th at 11pm.

The long twilight nights of mid-summer mean that there is very little observing time available this month. Nevertheless, if you are prepared to wait until around mid-night, there is still plenty to observe and the warmer temperatures at this time of year are very welcome.

At the time of our chart, low above the southern horizon lies the zodiacal constellation of Scorpius and its first magnitude star Antares. From our latitude Scorpius does not fully rise above our horizon, but there are still plenty of deep sky objects in this part of the sky to look at. Antares itself is a red supergiant star which is that varies irregularly between magnitudes 0.6 to 1.6.

To the immediate west of Antares lies M4, a globular cluster lies approximately 6,000 light years away, making it one of the closer examples of these type of objects. Tracking northwards from M4, you reach M80, 32,600 light years away and one of the densest globular clusters in the Milky Way.

Scorpius is also home to two open star clusters, the 'horizon huggers' M6 and M7(the Butterfly and Ptolomy clusters), they only scrape a matter of a few degrees above the southern horizon and are a real challenge.

If you fancy a nebula in Scorpius, then how about the Cat's Paw Nebula? NGC 6334 can be found three degrees to the north-west of the star Lambda Scorpii, another far south object that barely rises above our southern horizon.

Noctilucent Cloud – June sees the start of the annual Noctilucent Cloud season.

Whilst observing clouds does not normally form an enjoyable side of astronomy, Noctilucent Clouds are somewhat different!

These beautiful high altitude clouds can be observed from now up until around mid-August during the long twilight evenings from mid-latitudes. Noctilucent clouds reside high in our atmosphere at a height of around 80km, far above the similar looking cirrus clouds. They often appear bluish or intense white and remain in sunlight long after the lower atmospheric clouds become dark.

Noctilucent Clouds are extremely thin and tenuous and are thought to form as a result of water vapour which has convected from the lower atmosphere.

The best period to observe Noctilucent Clouds is around 90 minutes after Sunset up until around 90 minutes before sunrise. A clear northern horizon is best.

Contributions for the next edition of Stargazer are welcome from all members and can be sent to Steve Williams via newsletter@neneastro.org.uk

Update On The NVAS Journal

The Society plans to introduce the first issue of our new printed Journal this coming Autumn.

Contributions for this are welcome from all members and can be in the form of observations, articles or even hints and tips that you wish to share with your fellow members.

Contributions can be sent to Steve Williams at newsletter@neneastro.org.uk

Members Observations

Taken on the 24th April by Steve Williams, above is the Rima Hyginus region on the Moon. Imaged with a 180mm Mak, using a ZWO 462 MC Camera. Captured in Sharpcap and processed in Autostakkert, Registax and Affinity Photo.

Jupiter (and shadow transit of Io) As Imaged By Paul Blackman on 25th April through a Celestron 9.25 inch telescope and ASI678MC Camera.