



STARDIS

The Newsletter of the Tiverton and Mid Devon Astronomy Society

Volume 1 Issue 3

January 2015

In this Issue :

Welcome 1

Editors
Comment 2

Chairmans 3
Column

Members
Section 4

Dates for your
Diary 9

First and foremost may I wish you a, (belated) ,Happy New Year and hope you had a great Christmas with Santa bringing you all those little astronomy related things you wished for.

At the December meeting a great time was had taking part in the quiz night that Angela and Jo had arranged, so a big thank-you to them both for their efforts. It was good to see that everyone's "Blue Peter" skills are still working well.

At this meeting a vote was also made to decide on the Societies new Logo and also for a name for the Societies Newsletter. Both of the winning entries are now displayed at the top of this Newsletter. Congratulations to the winners and thank-you to all who made last minute entries to both competitions.

STARDIS I have been told was inspired by Dr Who's TARDIS and the following; "Stellar Timely Astronomy Reports Digitally Informing Subscribers" is what the letters stand for.



Jupiter
20150117_0024UT-
8"LX200-ASX120MM
Taken By K Brill

Editors Comment:

As you hopefully have seen we have our new Newsletter name and a Society Logo for the new year and very smart they look too. No doubt Tee-shirts will be available soon.

An explanation of the Newsletter's new name by Neil Purves the winner of the competition.

“STARDIS: Stellar Timely Astronomy Reports, Digitally Informing Subscribers
Stellar because the newsletter is brilliant, Timely as it is issued regularly, Astronomy Reports are the content, it is sent out electronically in Digital format to Inform you the Subscriber to our Society.

TARDIS, by the way, stands for Time And Relative Dimensions In Space and is a trademark of the BBC.”

This issue contains a small article on Astronomical sketching and the pleasure of maintaining an observing Logbook, just to prove that expensive imaging equipment is not the prerequisite for astronomy these days and much can be recorded with just a pen, pencil and paper.

With the new year I thought it timely to highlight a VERY small sample of things astronomy related to look forwards to in 2015. I know I'm particularly looking forwards to the Solar eclipse and the New Horizons Spacecraft Flyby.

February 6 - Jupiter at Opposition.

February 6-7 - European Astrofest 2015 - London.

February - NASA's Dawn spacecraft will encounter the dwarf planet known as Ceres.

March - Stargazing Live. Moved this year to coincide with the Total Solar Eclipse.

March 20 - Total Solar Eclipse - Visible from the Outer Hebrides, Partial from the rest of the UK.

April 25 - International Astronomy Day.

May 23 - Saturn at Opposition.

June - International Astronomy Show - Leamington Spa

July - New Horizons - Pluto flyby. NASA's New Horizons spacecraft is scheduled to arrive at Pluto after a nine and a half year journey.

August 12-13 - Perseids Meteor Shower Peak.

September 28 - Total Lunar Eclipse.

October 29 - Conjunction of Venus, Mars, and Jupiter in the early morning sky.

December 13-14 - Geminids Meteor Shower Peak.

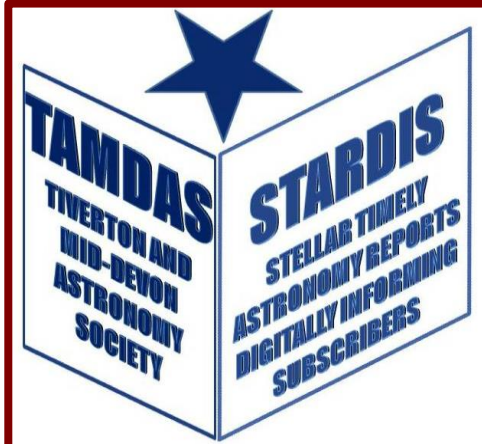
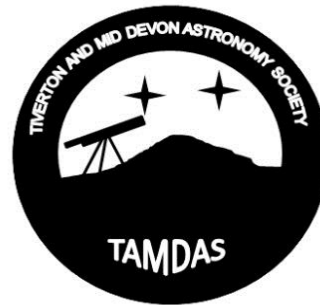
Lets all hope for some clear skies to accompany them and I look forward to receiving any reports that you make on any of them for inclusion into the Newsletter.

Thoughts From The Chair

Hi Everyone

I hope you have been able to take advantage of some of the beautiful clear nights we have had lately. On several occasions I have braved the cold, and the very cold, to admire the stars and Moon but haven't found Comet Lovejoy as it is not quite dark enough in my garden. I will keep looking and hope I get to see it before it disappears for the next 8000 years.

Congratulations once again go to our Member **Keston Brill** who won the "Design a TAMDAS Logo" competition. At the January meeting his effort was rewarded with a £20 Maplin voucher. His winning design can be seen on the right and will be used on future TAMDAS programmes and correspondence.



Congratulations also go to our Member **Neil Purves** who won the "Name the Newsletter" competition. At the January meeting he received a Sky Watcher red torch for his effort. Watch out for his design, shown on the left, on future Newsletters.

Many thanks to everyone who completed and returned their questionnaires. I will be collating the results over the next few weeks and when the Committee have had time to look at them I will feed them back as soon as possible.

In the meantime I wish you all clear skies and look forward to seeing you at the Society meetings on Friday 6th February with Chris Starr and Friday 6th March with Paul Money.

Angela

Members Section:

John's Corner:

The Night Sky For February

Moon phases: full moon 3rd, last half 12th, new moon 18th, first half 25th

The Planets :

Mercury is in the morning sky in the constellation Capricornus, but will be hard to see, due to how low it is.

Venus is visible in the western evening sky, as the sun sets and at -4 magnitude is very bright.

Mars is also in the western sky, telescopically its not good visually.

Jupiter is high in the night sky, and is so bright you cant miss it, it is near by the constellation of cancer, telescopically a fantastic planet to observe and to image.

Saturn is very low in the morning sky, so telescopically not very good.

As most of us know, comet C/2014 Q2 Lovejoy is in our night sky, at the time of writing this article it was near the constellation of Andromeda, the person whom discovered this and many other comets is Terry Lovejoy, Terry was born on 20th November 1966, in Thornlands, Queensland, Australia, Terry (48 years old) whom works as an 'Information Technologist', has discovered five comets, he is also widely know for modifying digital SLR cameras for astro photograph, the five comet Comets Terry has discovered so far are C/2007 E2, C/2007 K5, C/2011 W3, C/2013 R1, and C/2014 Q2, and I think there will be plenty more to come, it appears that comet C/2014 Q2 is a long period comet, so it may be a long time in coming back.

John Parratt.

Object of the moment - Comet Lovejoy C/2014 Q2



COMET C/2014 Q2 LOVEJOY, TAKEN 18.01.2015, SOMERSET UK.
WILLIAM OPTICS ZS80 APO, QSI683 CAMERA.

PETE RICHARDSON.

Comet Lovejoy C/2014 Q2-20150118-
William Optics ZS80-QSI683WSG
Taken by: Pete Richardson

Its not all about Imaging.

It is fair to say, that the ease at which even the complete novice can capture acceptable results of the night sky, using modern digital imaging equipment, such as digital cameras and Web Cams, it would seem logical to assume that this is the only way to record what you have seen. It most definitely is not. Arguably, recording your observations in the time honoured way, by means of notes and sketches in a Logbook is better, as it teaches you to actually see more. Sketching what you see encourages you to look in much more detail than just a casual glance or a brief look at the pretty picture you may have taken.

One of the best, (and cheapest), ways to record your observations is to produce a sketch what you see. Sketching is not everybody's forte, but with practise and patients, in time, as your technique and skill increase they will improve.

Sketching can be as simple as recording the positions of Jupiter's moons, with a circle to represent the Planet and dots to represent the Moons.



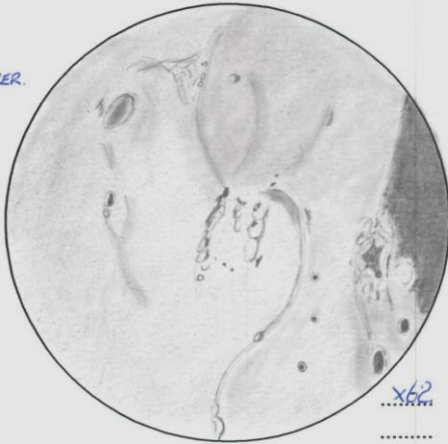
This technique was employed by Galileo when he first turned his Telescope onto Jupiter and by comparing his crude sketches of what he saw night after night, enabled him to conclude that the moving dots where in fact Moons that circled the Planet and thus was evidence for the Copernican Solar System model. The rest, as they say, is history.

I first started my own observation log in just this very way, using just a pair of 7x50 Binoculars as these and my own eyes were the only optical instruments available to me. Soon I progressed onto drawing the Moon and occasionally the Sun. My first Lunar sketches weren't much to look at but over the years I think I have got better, as my instrumentation has improved and Tracking Mounts have enabled me to maintain the view while I sketch.

One of my first Lunar sketches made with 7x50 Binoculars, The Lunar Terminator. (1979-04-02)



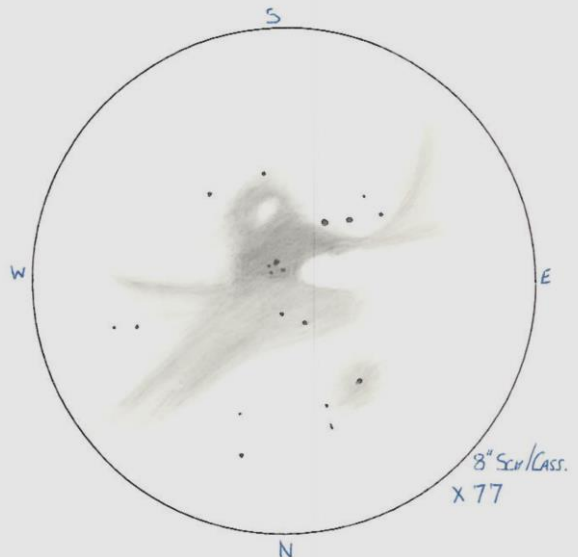
TRIESNECKER.
26 Km.



The Lunar complex
Triesnecker made using a
90mm Refractor. (2009/01/03)

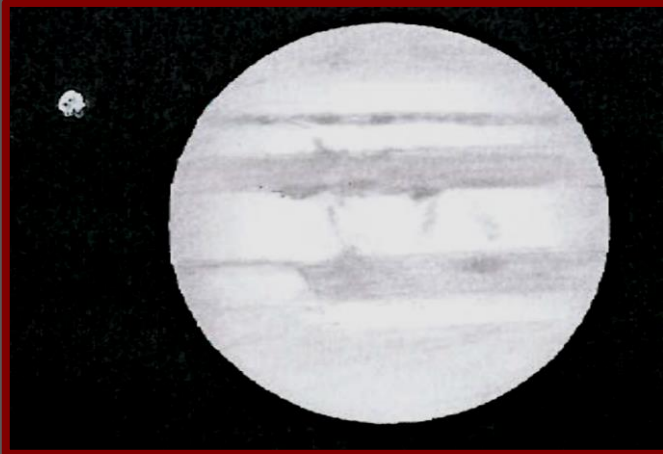
Some of the simplest observations to record are Star Clusters. My own technique is to pre-draw a blank with the field of view represented on it. Then I imagine the view through the telescope has a clock face superimposed on it. It's just a case of marking onto my blank, using the same position as my imaginary clock face, the Star locations. Bigger dots for brighter Stars, simple. It goes without saying that a suitable bright Star should be placed at the centre of "your Clock" and all others referenced from there.

Cometary, Nebula and Galaxy Drawings are just an extension to this with just a smudge, (aren't they all), in the correct shape and relative size to represent them.



The Orion Nebula through
and 8" SCT. (1992/10/10)

The hardest things to record with sketches, (in my opinion), are the Planets. Not only are you required to draw what you see in a relatively short time to avoid things changing too much due to rotation, but the seeing conditions become more obvious, making detail come and go before your mind's eye has chance to capture it. Again I have found that pre-drawing the outside shape on a blank can make the sketch easier and marking details relative to each other is the key.



Jupiter through an
8" SCT.
(2013/01/30)

Mars through an 8"
SCT. (1997/03/18)



After a while your sketching will improve with more detail slowly appearing on them as you train your eyes to "see" what is just glimpsed in moments of better seeing.

By recording your observations with notes and sketches, your Logbook will in time become a treasured record of what you have been observing over the years and it is always good to occasionally refer back to and compare and note changes, particularly in Planetary detail.

Monthly Meetings and Forthcoming Events:

- 6th February 2015
Space Exploration - Chris Starr of Wells and Mendip Astronomers will take you on an exciting adventure through the Universe
- 6th March 2015
Images of the Universe - Paul Money will show 10 images and explain how they inspired him to become a very popular and renowned astronomer.
- March 2015 - Stargazing Live. Exact dates to be advised.

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Submissions for the next newsletter to be received by 31st March 2015 to either of the editors email address.

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