



JERSEY ASTRONOMY CLUB

SIR PATRICK MOORE ASTRONOMY CENTRE,
LES CREUX COUNTRY PARK,
ST. BRELADE

NEWSLETTER

APRIL

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Next Meetings – Visiting Speaker and Club Night

Monday, 11th April at 8.00 at the club house. In the month which has April Fool's Day, Tony will be giving a presentation of famous astronomy hoaxes.

If you have not posted your membership dues to Simon, please bring a cheque to the next meeting. Emails were sent out to members on the email lists.

For your Diary:

Monday 25th April, 8.00, at St Brelade's Church Hall, opposite St Brelade's Church.

Dr Roberto Trotta is coming to speak on "The Science of Star Trek" (see poster below).

Liberation Day, May 9th – Neil will be opening dome with solar filter if clear sky to view transit of Mercury across the sun – a once in a lifetime event.

June 13 – AGM (hopefully very short) followed by Dr Robin Catchpole over from the UK to give a presentation on "Are We Alone in the Universe?" Venue to be announced.

Dome News

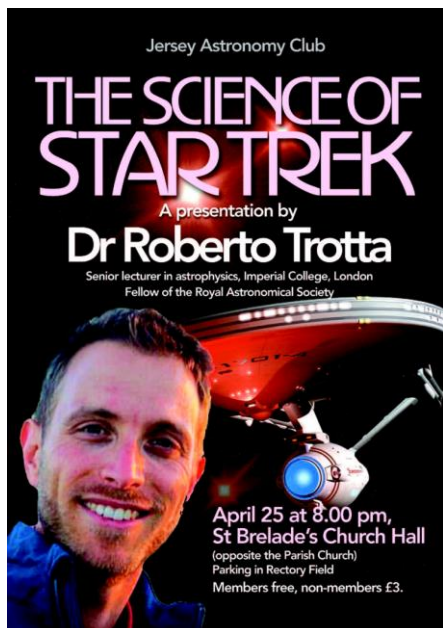
Neil will be having regular Monday night viewings if the night is clear. The platform is now in place, so no more going up a rickety old ladder to see the stars and planets!

Wi-Fi Available

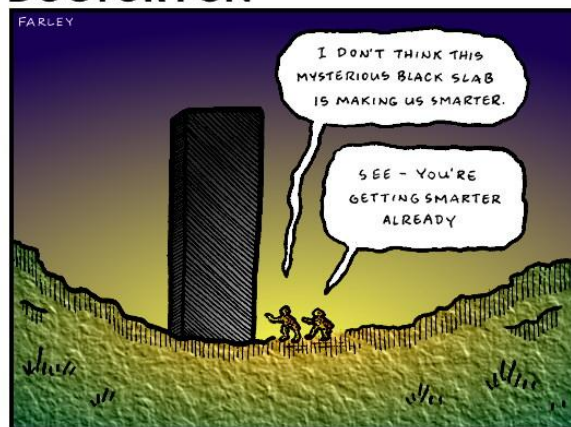
We now have a 4G Wi-Fi router so we can access online astronomy sites and remote telescope feeds when the sky is cloudy.

Jupiter

We've had some really good viewing of Jupiter and the craters on the moon. The new platform makes viewing much easier.



DOCTOR FUN



Another scene Stanley Kubrick deleted from "2001"

12 Oct 94

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Night Sky gazing in April

The king of planets – Jupiter – is the brightest starlike object in the April, 2016, night sky. It pops out first thing at dusk and lights up the nighttime until the wee hours of the morning.



We have had some really good viewing of Jupiter, even making out some of the colour in the banding.

Although Jupiter is almost impossible to miss, it might be possible to confuse it with Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky.

At nightfall and early evening, Jupiter lords over the eastern half of sky, while Sirius shines way to the west of Jupiter, dominating over the western half of sky.

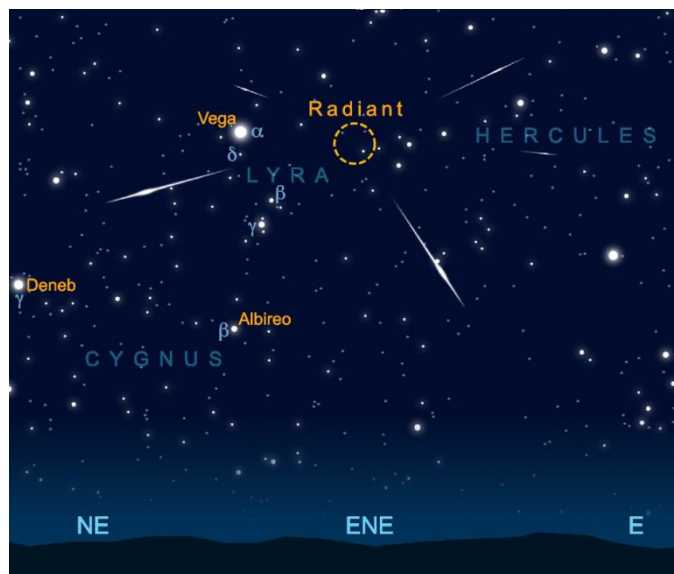
You can rely on the famous constellation Orion the Hunter to confirm that you're looking at Sirius, and not Jupiter, because Orion's Belt of three stars points right to this sparkling blue-white star.



Mars, late evening until dawn, gets much brighter! Mars is not as bright as Jupiter, April's most brilliant starlike object. However, Jupiter will dim slightly this month, while Mars will double in brilliance in April 2016 alone!

By the time Mars reaches its crest of brightness in late May 2016, it will have quadrupled in brilliance since the beginning of April. So watch Mars, which has greater swings in brilliance than any other solar system planet, except for Mercury.

Why is Mars getting so bright? For most of the past two years, Earth has been fleeing ahead of Mars in orbit. Mars orbits just one step outward from us, and we move slightly faster in orbit, and – about every two years – we catch up to Mars again and pass between it and the sun. That'll happen next in late May, 2016. Astronomers will say that Mars is in opposition to the sun around that time. Then, believe it or not, Mars will nearly match Jupiter in brightness!



April 22, 23 - Lyrids Meteor Shower. The Lyrids is an average shower, usually producing about 20 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher, which was discovered in 1861. The shower runs annually from April 16-25. It peaks this year on the night of the night of the 22nd and morning of the 23rd.

These meteors can sometimes produce bright dust trails that last for several seconds. Unfortunately this year the glare from the full moon will block out all but the brightest meteors. If you are patient, you should still be able to catch a few good ones. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Lyra, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

Chart and Times (BST)

- 7th 12h New moon
- 8th 12h Moon 5° S of Mercury
- 10th 23h Moon 0.4° N of Aldebaran
- 14th 05h First quarter
- 17th 02h Moon 2.5° S of Regulus; 03h Mars stationary
- 22nd 06h Full moon
- 25th 05h Moon 5° N of Mars; 20h Moon 3° N of Saturn
- 30th 04h Last quarter