



# SCORPIUS

The Journal of the  
Astronomical Society of Frankston Inc.  
P.O. Box 596, Frankston, Victoria 3199  
Volume V No. 2 1996 ( Mar - Apr )

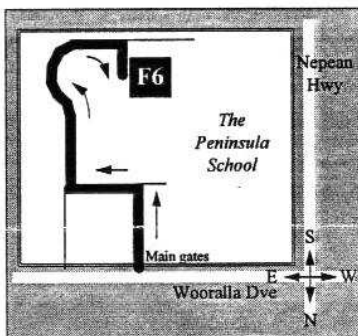
The Astronomical Society of Frankston was founded in 1969 with the aim of fostering the study of Astronomy by amateurs and promoting the hobby of amateur Astronomy to the general public. The Society holds a General Meeting each month for the exchange of ideas and information. Regular observing nights, both private and public are arranged to observe currently available celestial objects. In addition, the Society provides the services of its members for educational presentations or observing nights for schools and local community groups.

#### Meeting Venue:

The Peninsula School  
Wooralla Drive, Mt Eliza  
(Melways Map 105, F5)

Room F6 at 8pm on the 3rd  
Wednesday of each month  
except December.

Visitors always welcome



#### Annual Membership Fees

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Full Member       | \$30 |
| Pensioner         | \$25 |
| Student           | \$20 |
| Family            | \$40 |
| Family Pensioners | \$35 |
| Newsletter Only   | \$10 |

Membership fees are due  
1st of January each year

President & Editor  
Peter Skilton (03) 9776 5898

#### Vice President

David Girling (059) 76 2806

#### Treasurer

Peter Brown (03) 9789 5679

#### Secretary

Don Leggett (059) 85 4927

#### Committee

Ken Bryant, Bob Heale,  
Peter Lowe, Ros Skilton,  
Ken Stratton

Phone before 8:30pm please.

## FUTURE EVENTS

### General Meetings:

#### Wed 20th March '96

Session 1: Talk on *From the Smallest to the Biggest* by Peter Skilton.

Session 2: David Girling & Bob Heale on *Observing and Photographing a Comet from your Backyard*.

#### Wed 17th April '96

Session 1: Feedback and photos from those who attended *NACAA 1996 astro conference*

at Brisbane, backed by a video on the *Formation of the Solar System*.

Session 2: David Girling & Bob Heale lift the fog on *Using Different Eyepieces*.

#### Wed 15th May '96

Session 1: Video of the recent stunning *On Jupiter* special, missed by some members, and requested.

Session 2: David Girling & Bob Heale on *Types of Telescope and Choosing One for You*.

### Viewing Nights:

#### Members Only:

Sat 16th & 23rd Mar, 13th & 20th Apr, 11th & 18th May all at *The Briars*, Nepean Hwy, Mt. Martha (Melways 145, E12).

If weather forecast for the Saturday looks bad, the Friday before may be used instead. Always confirm with David Girling on (059) 76-2806 before attending. Meet at *the Briars* Visitor Centre at 8 pm sharp (Daylight Savings), or 7 pm after it finishes.



Public/School/Community  
Groups Viewing nights or slide  
nights:

If you can assist, please contact the Secretary.

- Mornington Environment Week at The Briars will be held end March. As usual our Society will have a presence. Volunteers are needed to man the displays and telescopes.
- St.Louis de Montfort school in Aspendale has requested a slide/viewing night for their grade 3 and 4 pupils on Wed 27th Mar at 8pm. About 100 expected. They were impressed at our night at Braeside Park. Details to be confirmed.
- Mentone Girls Secondary College was also impressed by this night, and have asked us for a night on Wed 24th April at 7:30 pm (the day before Anzac Day holiday), and another on Mon 21st October at 7:30 pm. About 100 expected each night. Details also to be confirmed
- Seaford Rotary Club wish us to give a slide show after their monthly dinner on Tue 30th April at the Ambassador Hotel, Nepean Hwy, Frankston, followed by a viewing session in the car park if weather is fine. About 50 expected.
- Roger "King Canute" Giller has kindly offered to dazzle the Peninsula Field Naturalists at *The Briars* with a talk and, tongue in cheek, "practical demo" of the Tides on Wed 12th Jun at 8 pm. Should prove interesting. This will be followed on Sat 15th Jun by a viewing night at The Briars at 7 pm coinciding with a Members' Night. Assistance

at both of these nights is requested.

- Not to be outdone, the Mt.Martha Field Naturalists have asked for a 45 min slide night only at their monthly meeting at *The Briars* Visitor Centre on Thur 4th April. They, too, are fellow attendees of *The Briars*.

## Social Events:

- The Society's quadrennial Leap Year dinner will be held at The Dava hotel, Esplanade, Mornington on, you guessed it, Thursday 29th Feb. We are likely to have a room to ourselves (say no more). Starts around 6:30pm and you can order what your budget can afford. Single men beware!
- The Astronomical Society of Victoria will have a talk at their March general meeting by world-renowned comet hunter Bill Bradfield from Adelaide. This will be on Mar 13 at 8 pm at the Herbarium, Birdwood Ave, Melbourne (opposite the Shrine of Remembrance). No bookings are necessary and it is free.
- The St.Patrick's Day Car Rally (formerly the Guy Fawkes' Car Rally which was rained out) will go ahead on Sunday 17th Mar. It will commence at Mt.Martha Park at 4 pm, followed by a

barbeque. Cost will be \$5 a head (food included, but BYO drinks), Melways 150, H7.

## Phenomenal Events:

- Pack up your kit bag and book your annual leave from work now, for Sun/Mon 18/19th November this year. We will hold our inaugural "Leonids All-nighter" at *The Briars* where members, using their own eyes, will be able to watch this famous meteor shower as we approach storm levels. About 30 years ago during the last predicted storm peak, there were incredibly 40 meteors seen every second! Don't miss out on this once in 33 year special event.
- Comet Hyakutake is predicted to make a big and bright impression in the next 2 months, and should be easily visible for late stayers at Members' Nights at *The Briars*. Unfortunately, it rises a bit too late for a public viewing night. Maybe Comet





Hale-Bopp will prove more suitable later in the year. Members are encouraged to try and photograph both if possible.

- Once every 6 years or so, the 4th Galilean moon of Jupiter, Callisto, undergoes a small number of eclipses that can be viewed in even the smallest of telescopes. There are predicted to be 13 this time, with 2 occurring on the night of Sat/Sun 9/10th March. Callisto will disappear into Jupiter's shadow at 2:57 am (but could be up to 28 minutes late), and will reappear from darkness at 3:52 am (but could be up to 28 minutes early). Contact Peter Skilton if you are interested in timing these for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.
- It is likely there will be a combined ASF, ASV and LVAS Graze expedition on Wed 13th March, when a magnitude 8.4 star grazes the South 51% lit lunar limb at 1:20 am. The event occurs along a thin line from Geelong-to-Rosebud-to-Merricks-to-Inverloch. Further details will be available from Peter Skilton closer to the date.

## YOUR SOCIETY

### NEW MEMBERS

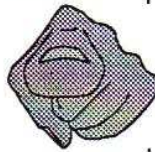
Welcome to the following new Society members:

Ed Barber  
Alison Gurney  
Owen Davies - newsletter only

Total membership is 77, (though fluctuates at this time of year) keeping us the 2nd largest Society in Victoria. Please feel free to say hello at general

meetings, where your name tag will be made available. Society badges showing the logo, Planispheres and Astronomy books & posters are also available at monthly meetings. A limited supply of Society windcheaters is available for \$35 in M/L/XL from the Secretary.

### SOCIETY AIDED BY GENEROUS DONATIONS



Hastings member Bill Newton has responded admirably to our plea in an earlier edition for a slide projector for meetings and school viewing nights. Clearly an aficionado of garage sales, Bill secured and kindly donated to the Society a manually focused projector and screen in excellent working order and compatible with our existing cartridges and lamps.

Meredith Falconer, who is not yet a member, has arranged for the kind donation to the Society of 8 boxes of Astronomy books and magazines from a most generous relative who has had more than a passing connection with matters Astronomical. In fact I believe this even includes the amazing privilege of having experienced the Murchison Meteorite fall first hand. I am sure there are tales to tell there. You will no doubt see new additions to the library soon.

Thanks are also in order for June, Steve and Peter Malone for donating to the library a superb copy they won of Hartung's *Astronomical Objects for Southern Telescopes*. This was won from radio station 3RRR which broadcasts from RMIT and has a very interesting program every Sunday morning between 11am and noon, called *Einstein-a-go-go*. In the FM radio band at 102.7 MHz, the

program has been running for 5 years now and includes interesting topics on all matters scientific, including Astronomy. It is run by some of the founders of the CSIRO's Double Helix Club. Do give it a listen.

### HELP NEEDED

The Society badly needs an Overhead Projector of its own. For many years now, Bob Heale has kindly arranged for a local high school to lend us theirs on meeting nights if it is available and in working order. However, this is proving more problematic these days, and one of our own is really needed. All members are asked to keep an eye out for such a beast. Clearly garage sales are a great idea.

Everyone is encouraged to bring any observing instruments they own (particularly binoculars) along to the monthly general meetings. If skies are clear we may be able to view, amongst other things, comets that might be in the sky at the time. For beginners, a tour of the sky with a planisphere is also readily available upon request at a meeting.

Remember to bring \$1 to each monthly meeting for the door raffle. February's raffle has been (will be?) drunk by Ron Barnes. Prizes will not necessarily be astronomical, but might be gastronomic.

Diary wanted for one member who turned up to last year's Annual General Meeting one week too late ... truly.

The Society is hunting for its collection of *planispheres*.

There are about 50 or so housed in a plain brown cardboard box



of dimensions about 30cm x 30cm x 30cm, and having a lift-off lid of the same colour. Because it is not labelled as such on the outside it would be extremely easy to place it in a cupboard or garage shelf and not realise what it was. Would all current and former Committee members and those others who may have possibly come into contact with them at public or school viewing nights, please carefully inspect your nooks and crannies at home. We need these for upcoming viewing nights.

Articles of interest, book reviews or notifications of events of special interest in the sciences or Astronomy in particular are always sought. While a simple TEXT file format on a 3.5 inch floppy diskette is preferred, the editor is willing to keyboard handwritten or typed material if it is legible.

#### SECRETARY'S JOTTINGS

Our Society will host the 1997 VASTROC (Victorian Astronomical Conference), and letters to this effect are now being distributed to the Secretaries of all Victorian Astronomical Societies. The theme will be "**Back to Basics**". It is envisaged that attendees will arrange their own accommodation independently, relieving us of this financial risk. The exact weekend is yet to be decided.

Our progress at getting approval to have our strategic Observatory concrete slab poured has been hampered by the National Trust now seeking to review our plans and develop an overall policy for the property. It is encouraging that the Mornington Peninsula shire, which owns *The Briars*,

continues to stand behind us in this endeavour.

The Geelong Society club rooms suffered severe water damage and loss during the recent floods. We are presently considering whether some gesture of assistance is appropriate.

We have applied, and received, a grant for slide projection gear for meetings and viewing nights. This has been used to purchase a new automatic focus machine, stand, lamps and slide sets. This will now ensure that we always have gear available to cover dual presentations.

The Society received generous discounts on this gear from **TED'S CAMERA STORE** in Wells St, Frankston. They are celebrating their 25th anniversary this year. Do seriously consider them if you are looking for photographic gear of any description, as they handle both new and used material.

Society member Kathy Stabb has kindly offered her expertise and time to act as our new librarian. The inherent risks of this position have been pointed out to her (no former librarian is surviving today), but this did not dampen her enthusiasm. Please say hello to her at meetings when planning to borrow something. Your current name tag may be required as proof of financial membership, so remember it.

The Easter fundraising campaign has been abandoned due to insufficient general support from the attendees at February's meeting. Other means of raising funds will be explored to achieve our strategic aim of developing *The Briars* Observatory.

The Society is seeking to acquire its own preferably 4-head VCR for use at meetings and at public nights, and a reasonably good audio cassette player to be used in conjunction with slide shows.

Don Leggett

#### RECENT MEETINGS

The first meeting in January for this leap year was attended by 40 members, including a few new faces. After Peter Skilton presented the initial information, society and phenomena details, Bob Heale presented his Sky for the Month, and Bruce Tregaskis provided details of a new comet in the sky ... one of many.

After coffee, the group split into two sessions, with Peter Lowe talking on Asteroids and other vermin of the skies, while David and Bob talked next door about Double Stars and how to observe the current best comets. During all this, an elf was noticed cobbling away at the back of the room cleaning out the library. The meeting closed at 10:30pm.

February's meeting was run by David Girling, and saw about 50 in attendance. After providing initial information of general and special interest, the experimental format change began. The session aimed to give very brief 5 minute rundowns on topics of interest to beginners, as had been suggested by some attendees last year. Thanks are extended to Ken Bryant, Roger Giller, Bob Heale, Steve Malone and Bruce Tregaskis for their participation.

Discussions over the following coffee break suggested that even these topics could be better dealt with in the second parallel session we have been running for



some time now, as this provides a longer time for questions and answers.

The raffle was then drawn, followed by David Girling hosting the *Deep Sky* slide show, utilising our new projector and one slide set. Everyone enjoyed the show, closing at 10:30pm.

Ros Skilton

## RECENT VIEWING NIGHTS

The annual January series of public Friday viewing nights at *The Briars* proved a great success, with many new enquiring minds coming along to view the night skies. The initial session had severe cloud interference until later in the evening when all visitors who remained were able to view selected objects. This included one family who had come down from Sydney to see us - now that's dedication - and who declined our offer to attend the next week's viewing night for free if the current one was clouded. I believe we also had a visitor from Darwin on this same night.

## GRAZE EXPEDITION WAS A BUZZ

In the wee small hours of Monday morning 15th January, just before the working week began, two intrepid adventurers (Jim Blanksby and Peter Skilton) met at a lonely spot in Ringwood in anticipation of seeing a magnitude 6.9 star graze along the valleys and mountains of our Moon. All proceeded well until, of course, a quarter of an hour beforehand, when the clear sky rapidly became totally and utterly overcast with rain clouds. No events were seen, however, I

was set up directly beneath high tension wires which were buzzing quite frantically at the time, though this did not seem to interfere with VNG radio propagation, as the many dogs in the neighbourhood would attest to (and their owners woken at 5am). Not wishing to become a lightning conductor for either sky-borne or manmade electrons I hastily packed up. Who said Astronomy can be mundane.

## JUST FOR STARTERS

### TIME ZONES

For those who have ever travelled overseas and experienced jetlag from crossing time zones, you might appreciate that it is now over a century ago that the world was carved up into time zones, with each 15 degrees of longitude corresponding to 1 hour of time. Thus when it is midnight in Greenwich, England, here in Melbourne the time is 10 am since we correspond to the time zone situated at 150 degrees longitude East of Greenwich ( $150 = 15 \times 10$ ).

The introduction of time zones was the brainchild on Sir Sanford Fleming, a Canadian who became somewhat obsessed with making a better time reference throughout the entire world - he thought big!

Fleming migrated from his home in Scotland to Canada in 1845, where he began work with the Railways as a surveyor. Six years later, he designed Canada's first ever postage stamp and, not to be outdone, then went on and planned the entire city of Toronto. He progressed to become chief engineer of the InterColonial Railways company in 1863, whilst simultaneously

also being chief engineer of Canadian Pacific Railways. Fleming soon came to realise that both were in different time zones, and hence ran to their own local time, something which was very inconvenient from a planning point of view. At that time in the continental United States alone, there were over 100 time areas in use, with the correct time at any point in a journey being a matter for some debate. The situation across the entire world was considerably worse.

In 1876 Fleming proposed a time system whereby the entire globe was partitioned into 24 hourly time zones. Since the globe is 360 degrees in circumference (as is any circle), this equated to 1 hour of time advanced for each 15 degrees you moved East around the Earth ( $15 \times 24 = 360$ ).

Eight years later, after much lobbying, Fleming convinced twenty five nations to meet in Washington so as to adopt his idea of Standard time zones. Of these countries, only 22 agreed, 2 abstained and one (the French) voted 'no'. The sticking point was a matter of national pride since Greenwich was chosen as the place where all other time was to be measured relative (called the Prime Meridian). Paris was obviously a better choice to the French. Common sense prevailed in the end because about two thirds of all shipping charts in existence at the time were based on the Greenwich Meridian, this being the zero point for longitude measurement, so it was a natural extension to include the honour of time to be measured relative to there as well.



In this way, every clock in the world showed exactly the same minute and second, with the only difference being the hour shown. Since then, time zones have been split in some cases, for example Adelaide is half an hour behind Melbourne. However, the second hand at least is synchronised worldwide today.

## IN THE NEWS

After 22 years exploring the dark void of space and returning remarkable views of the planet Jupiter in 1974 and Saturn in 1979, NASA's *Pioneer 11* spacecraft is slowly fading away due to draining battery power reserves and propellant levels used for aiming of its transmitter dish towards Earth.

Until September 30 last year, daily communication was maintained with this craft, however, now it has insufficient power to both transmit and use its onboard science instruments. Communication will be possible for the next couple of months only, and then maybe once every few weeks at best.

It is destined to continue its journey unheard, actually in the same direction that our Sun orbits our Galaxy, carrying an engraved gold plaque telling any future civilisation that encounters the craft exactly where its makers were located in the Milky Way. Its sister craft *Pioneer 10* is still functioning, and is heading in the exact opposite direction.

Basking in the glow of Hollywood publicity, Apollo 13 commander James Lovell has received the Congressional Space Medal of Honour (only 9 of which have ever been awarded). It is the highest honour awarded for

accomplishment in space flight. Bill Clinton presented the medal to Lovell for his involvement in the "successful failure" of the mission.

A recent Space Shuttle mission captured and returned to Earth a 4 tonne Japanese satellite that had been conducting experiments on, amongst other things, red-bellied newt eggs. The fertilised eggs had been flown in space to study them as a possible protein source for future human long space flights, such as to Mars. Pass the caviar anyone.

The renowned Black Birch observatory in the South island of New Zealand is being closed. Aside from its use to the Astronomy community, its primary purpose was for the Pentagon to help aim sea-launched nuclear missiles. This was because it was used to produce ultra-accurate star maps of the Southern skies, which US naval vessels used to determine their position accurately while in the Southern hemisphere - a somewhat surprising archaic method of navigation I would have thought these days. However, the Navstar global positioning system will now be used, which can record positions even under total cloud cover to extreme accuracy, rendering star-based navigation, and Black Birch, totally obsolete.

## FEATURE

### GETTING YOUR OBSERVING PROGRAMME READY

Have you started thinking about your observing programme yet? Amateur astronomy is a fun hobby, but to get the most out of it you must

be prepared. In setting up an observing programme you need to take account of your own personal circumstance (interests, instruments available, charts, observing sites, experience and of course degree of stubbornness).

Are you a casual observer interested in familiarising yourself with the skies or are you an observing fanatic hunting down as much astronomical prey as possible? Whatever your level of interest, it is important you understand the limits of your instrumentation and plan to get the most out of it.

### The Plan

First decide what level of observing you would like to do. Know the area of sky visible from your observing site; go over the charts and establish those regions that will become available to you during the next few months. From your charts, select interesting objects and set them onto a list. Some people like to concentrate on particular object types such as globular clusters, galaxies or star clusters etc. while others will just list off all they can find in a particular region of sky. I like to mix and match, sometimes concentrating on one object type, sometimes just finding objects at random. Whichever method you use I recommend you then attack the text books and explore the objects in your list. Find out what they are, how far away, what's happening out there. For me, this "pre-exploration" is an essential part of an observing programme. When you finally look into the eyepiece and see a faint outline it will have some level of familiarity and you will be able to enjoy it that much more.



Remember the sky is a highly variable place and you will not be able to see everything, every night. To see faint galaxies you need good seeing and dark skies, whereas the Moon can be observed most nights. Thus, having set out your plan, choose what you are going to observe on the night, taking advantage of the varying sky conditions rather than cursing the poor seeing and going indoors.

### Instruments

Consider the type of instruments you have at your disposal. Binoculars are great for sighting objects covering a few degrees down to a few minutes of arc. Remember the Moon covers about 30 minutes of arc with lunar craters a few arc-minutes diameter. Long focal length refractors are great for the brighter objects at high magnifications. Thus the Moon and planets, double stars and bright nebulae come within the range of the refractor. The Newtonian reflector telescope's advantage is light collecting ability. Your dark adapted eye collects starlight through an iris of about 6mm diameter or about 30 square mm. A 200mm Newtonian mirror collects light over 31,450 square mm and concentrates this light into your 6mm eye iris. Thus a 200mm Newtonian delivers about 1000 times more light to your eye than can be collected by the naked eye alone. This allows you to see objects too faint to be seen using other instruments. On the down side, the Newtonian has a small field of view which limits the types of objects you can view.

Remember there is no such thing as the ideal instrument. You must match your observing programme to the instruments available. If you want to observe

something beyond your own instruments why not ask other members if you can use their instruments at the next viewing night.

### Charts

For simple binocular viewing, the SKY ATLAS 2000 is an excellent starting chart, however, for detailed programmes you may need to consult more sophisticated atlases such as ASTROATLAS or URANOMETRIA.

Whichever chart you choose to use, familiarise yourself with their use and learn to translate quickly from chart to sky and back again. This means practice. I would recommend several binocular sessions where you pick an object from the chart and find the real thing in the sky or vice versa, find an object in the sky and identify it on the chart.

Charts for the Moon and planets are handled the same way.

### Observing Conditions

Unfortunately light pollution seems a fact of life these days so you have to temper your observing plans against the sky conditions. Keep an eye on the weather map. A nice stable high pressure weather cell over your area at about new moon should get your blood boiling for those faint, deep sky objects and you might consider travelling out to those dark sky sites away from the city. When the moon phases are bright why not concentrate on the brighter objects.

### Always record your observations.

I use a hard bound book and an unstructured observation style

recording details of the observations, impressions and emotions. Like any diary this makes for enjoyable reading in the future and can bring back fond memories. Any precision observations such as variable star estimates are also recorded.

Some people prefer a more structured observation book using special forms or pre-designed record sheets. Whichever style suits you, the important thing is record what you see. Always record your observations as you make them. It's amazing what you can forget in a few minutes, let alone hours or days.

### Summary.

Most things in astronomy change slowly and to get the most out of the hobby requires persistence, patience and of course a plan.

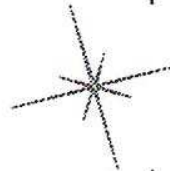
Peter Lowe

### **DO YOU WEAR EYEGLASSES?**

If so, the September 1995 issue of *Sky and Telescope* points out that you have a 50% chance of having astigmatism. Thus you would be in the unfortunate position of never getting a sharp image in your eyepiece at lowish powers. Your only hope is if you have an eyepiece with very long eye relief so that you could wear your eyeglasses. As such, wide angle eyepieces are therefore generally out of the question.

After reading their solution to the problem, namely the Star Point lens, I decided to see if there wasn't a cheaper local solution ... and there was!

I had my eyes checked and a new prescription made up at zero cost





thanks to bulk billing. I asked the optical shop staff at Merrington's Keysborough to make me up a round 35mm diameter lens that corrected for my right eye, with the top of the lens marked with a notch.

I took the lens home, and on the next clear night stuck it to my 26mm Plossl and 20mm Erfle using BluTack. The result was a much sharper image of the Moon and stars than I'd ever had before, all for the total cost of \$36.

I then had 30mm lenses made up for both eyes (with one notch on the right lens, and two notches on the left). Using BluTack, I stuck them into my binoculars. For obvious reasons, it was a bit trickier getting both images simultaneously sharp. But, I felt the results were worth it.

At \$36 a lens, I thought it was money well spent, but the final bonus came when I claimed the costs back on my private health insurance. After all, what I really bought were glasses without frames.

Renato Alessio

## SOUTH PACIFIC STAR PARTY

The 1996 South Pacific Star Party will be held on 17th-20th May at the ASNSW's site, 230 km West of Sydney. Interested campers can contact Peter Lowe for further details as he has first hand experience of the experience. Have you ever seen the Milky Way cast a shadow? Registration closes 30th March and is \$35 per person, or \$65 per family.

## FOR SALE

Sonoco cardboard concrete-former tube, 150cm/60inch long, and 25cm/10in diameter. Suitable for a

20cm/8inch telescope. Focal lengths up to f/7. Excellent condition - \$20. Call John Cleverdon on (059)-87-1535.

Parks off-axis guider body for Celestron or Meade SCT, but does not work with f6.3 focal reducer/corrector - \$65. If interested, phone Renato Alessio on (03)-9798-8926.

## WANTED TO BUY, SWAP etc.

Micrometer eyepiece for use in double star work. Graduated eyepiece for use in lunar occultations. 6 inch Newtonian telescope. If you have any of these please contact the editor.

## BACK ISSUES

Back copies of past journal editions are available for \$3 from the editor.

## FROM AROUND THE NATION

Astronomical Societies in Australia, as a rule, exchange each other's newsletters to assist in sharing items of interest. This column grabs some of the highlights of recent receipts. You can find out more in the library.

*Astron. Soc. of Alice Springs (NT)* - 1996 marks their 10th anniversary as a Society, specifically on 27th January. Congratulations are extended from Frankston. As some members now have access to the Internet, up-to-date details were provided of the Galileo mission, Voyager 1 and 2 progress, and the Hubble Space Telescope via NASA press releases. Articles are also provided on the constellation of Orion and the make up of the Sun.

*Astron. Soc. of Victoria (VIC)* - annual reports from some of their section leaders are presented, and a report on an all-day seminar on the Moon that was held last year with 38 people in attendance. The society's Star-

be-cue in December proved quite successful and attracted 150 members, friends and family. It is planned to have another at their 40 acre Heathcote site on the weekend of March 16-17.

## FINAL PRONOUNCEMENT - URANUS

The seventh major planet out from the Sun is *Uranus*. In fact if you could gather all the reflected light from it that we have received on Earth since its discovery by the Englishman William Herschel on 13th March 1781, it would barely compare with that emitted by a torch globe in one second. Herschel

also went on to discover two of the 15 known moons of Uranus (one discovered by the *Voyager* spacecraft is called Rosalind).

Originally, Herschel wanted to call the object he had found *George's Star*, after his monetary patron George III of England, however, this was never internationally recognised and was agreed upon as *Uranus*, from Greek mythology. All the other planets are named after either Greek or Roman gods e.g. Mars was the son of Jupiter, Jupiter was the son of Saturn, and Saturn was the son of Uranus. Its name is correctly pronounced "*You-Rain-us*", despite the popular pronunciation in the USA of "*U-Rinn-us*", or by some of Greek extraction "*Oo-Ran-oo*".

If you have any Astronomical query that has been niggling you for years, drop it in the question box at a General Meeting and let us look into it for you.

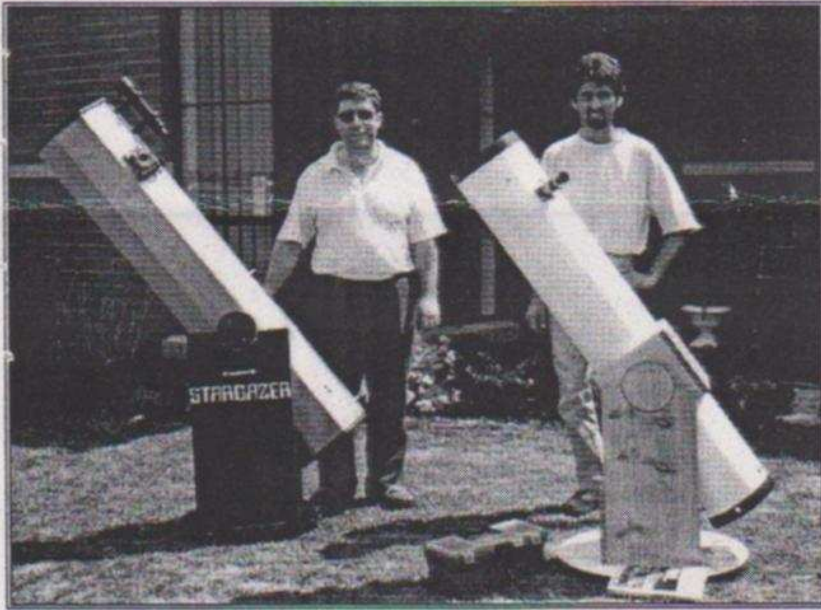
## NEXT ISSUE

*The Peninsula's Weather.*





# ASF MEMBERS OUT & ABOUT



David Girling and Peter Elias show off their 8" Newtonian's on Dobsonian mounts. Both telescopes use Parks mirrors.



Peter Skilton with his 6" telescope at a recent Braeside Park viewing night.



Ken Bryant and friends at Braeside Park. Ken's scope is a 8" Newtonian all home built. "Is that really the moon Mr Bryant."

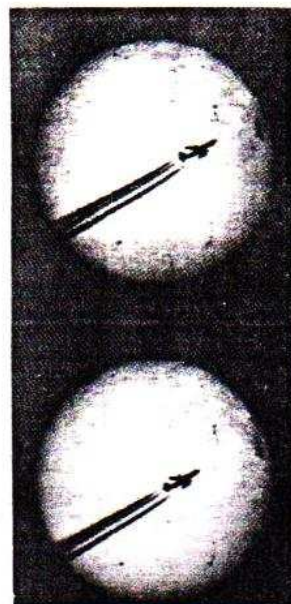


Tony Hales stands next to his 12" Newtonian while John Cleverdon looks on.



## UNUSUAL TRANSIT

It is quite normal, though very infrequent, that the planets Mercury and Venus may transit (or in other words pass across) the face of the Sun. While browsing through an old ASV newsletter from 1977, this remarkable photo was shown of a Boeing high flying aircraft transiting the Sun. Can anybody pick the exact model? It was taken on 27th Dec 1972, and crossed the Solar disk in around 1 second. The vapour trail from the jet engines is clearly visible also.




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If **undelivered**, return to

Astronomical Society of Frankston Inc.,  
GPO Box 596, Frankston, Victoria 3199.



Note: If this box is ticked then membership needs renewing and this may be your last edition of the newsletter. Please contact the Treasurer in this case. Members who joined late last year will have this time taken fairly into account, and should remind the Treasurer of this.

### ODD ONE OUT

This one was passed on by a radio listener. Which one of these five words is the odd one out: *mystery, jester, sign, emu, vikings*. Answer is provided in next edition.