



Editor: Mrs Hazel McGee

Papers Secretary: Nick James

The *Journal* is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October & December.

Library subscription (UK and surface mail overseas): £37.35. To purchase single copies or individual articles please contact the office.

The Association is not responsible for individual opinions expressed in articles, letters, reviews or reports of any kind. Material published in the *Journal* does not necessarily express the views of the Council.

Contributions

Papers should be sent by e-mail (preferred) or by post (**three** copies) to the Papers Secretary at the address shown inside the back cover of this issue. They will be refereed, and, if approved by Council, published as soon as reasonably possible. Those wishing to speak at a meeting should contact the Meetings Secretary.

All other contributions should be sent to the Editor. As well as *Letters to the Editor*, she will be pleased to receive contributions to *Observers' Forum*, particularly interesting astronomical photographs and images. Colour as well as black and white photos are welcomed. Photos and media will be returned only if a suitable stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

Advertisements

Small advertisements should be sent to the Office, accompanied by the appropriate remittance. (See conditions printed on page 104).

Display advertisements and loose inserts: For a rate card and further information, contact Sheridan Williams, Tel. 01525 237370. Fax 08700 522352. E-mail: baa@clock-tower.com

Deadline

All material, including short letters and notes, must be received by the Editor by the following dates:

Issue	Date
June 2006	April 20
August 2006	June 20

Later dates apply, by arrangement, to electronic advertising copy for which space has been reserved.

Membership of the BAA

The annual subscription for ordinary membership of the Association for the 2005–2006 Session is £37.00. For details of concessionary rates, and other membership information, see page 75 of this issue. Subscriptions are due on 1st August each year. Members who pay income tax are encouraged to complete a Gift Aid certificate in order to benefit the Association, which is a registered educational charity. The annual subscription to BAA *Circulars* is £4.

Published by:

**The British Astronomical Association,
Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0DU
Tel: 020-7734 4145 Fax: 020-7439 4629**

World Wide Web home pages:

BAA: <http://www.britastro.org/>

Journal: <http://www.britastro.org/journal/>

Journal © British Astronomical Association 2006. Individual articles, illustrations etc. remain the copyright of the author or photographer, whose permission must be obtained before reproduction.

ISSN 0007-0297



Contents

Refereed papers

The Sky at Night goes south	<i>Damian Peach</i>	66
A discussion on the duration of central transits as seen from Earth	<i>Darren Beard</i>	72
The discovery of the correct birth date for selenographer Thomas Gwyn Empe Elger	<i>Robert A. Garfinkle</i>	76
High-precision radial-velocity measurement with a small telescope: Detection of the tau Boötis exoplanet	<i>Thomas G. Kaye et al.</i>	78
A home-made Newtonian filter holder for planetary imaging	<i>M. P. Mobberley</i>	93

Notes and News

From the President: enjoy your astronomy	<i>Richard Miles</i>	59
Ground-based support for the <i>Venus Express</i> mission	<i>Richard McKim</i>	
Comet 73P/Schwassman–Wachmann 3 this May	<i>Nick James</i>	
Meteor outbursts	<i>Neil Bone</i>	
Aurora Section	<i>R. J. Livesey</i>	
Solar Section	<i>Mike Beales</i>	

Letters

Gamma Virginis this spring and summer	<i>Christopher Taylor</i>	64
Bright lunar features	<i>J. C. Vetterlein</i>	
The Hay Steavenson telescope	<i>Robert Paterson</i>	
Robert Burns and the aurora	<i>John Farquharson</i>	
Pluto finder chart in the 2006 <i>Handbook</i>	<i>Nick James</i>	

Meetings

Ordinary Meeting, 2005 April 23	<i>Dominic Ford</i>	84
Ordinary Meeting, 2005 May 25	<i>Dominic Ford</i>	

Observers' Forum

From the deep sky: the Leo Triplet	<i>Stewart S. Moore</i>	95
Observations of GRB 060124 from Golden Hill Observatory	<i>Richard Miles</i>	

Reviews

The Moon and how to observe it (<i>Grego</i>)	<i>Nick James</i>	97
The Martian climate revisited: atmosphere and environment of a desert planet (<i>Read & Lewis</i>)	<i>Richard McKim</i>	
Revolutionaries of the cosmos – the astrophysicists (<i>Glass</i>)	<i>Sheridan Williams</i>	
David Levy's Guide to Variable Stars (<i>Levy</i>)	<i>Janet Simpson</i>	

BAA Update

Meeting of the Radio Astronomy group, 2005 October 8	<i>Karen Holland</i>	99
Asteroids & Remote Planets Section	<i>Roger Dymock</i>	

Sky notes for April & May

Membership information	<i>Neil Bone</i>	102
New members		75
Notice board		100
Small advertisements		104
Officers and Council		104
		106

On the cover

Photos taken at the Cerro Paranal Observatory, Chile, by Damian Peach. (See also page 66).

Lower left: The Very Large Telescopes at Cerro Paranal are among the world's premier astronomical facilities. This view shows the stars setting over Paranal Mountain, with the telescopes in action.

Top: The Milky Way in the Carina/Crux region of the sky, rising from Paranal. The dark patch of the coalsack is readily apparent, as is the Eta Carinae nebula. *3 mins guided, Fuji S2 Pro DSLR, 28mm lens.*

Lower right: The huge silver dome of UT1 (Antu) lit by the setting Sun.

