

Edited by Robert Shanks

Welcome to the Blackburn Leisure Astronomical Society newsletter

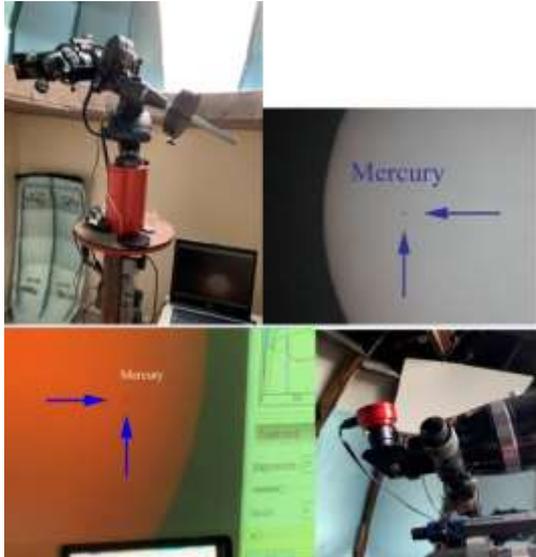
Remember this is your newsletter.

If you wish to contribute, please pass me your submissions at the monthly meeting or email in the week after...

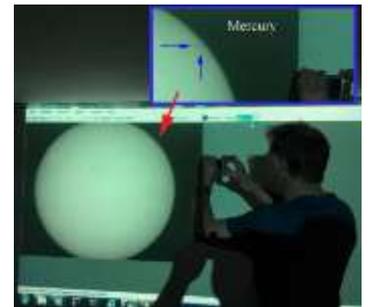
All contributions are welcome!



Hello Mercury!

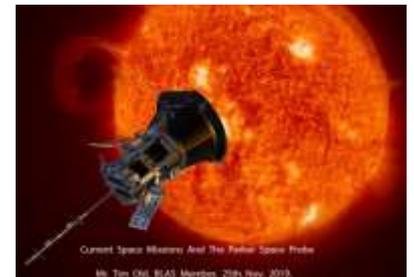


October the 11th saw another [Transit of Mercury](#). The second recorded in recent years. Despite Mercury being low on the horizon; eight members, (including Mrs Collett from York Astronomical Society, who happened to be visiting) caught the rare glimpse of Mercury passing our Sun. The last Mercury transit occurred in 2016 and was also observed by BLAS as shown right. Since then, another dome has been added to the BLAS observatory.



This time both domes were used to capture the sight. The club's 80mm telescope in dome 2 shown left, along with a donated HERAS telescope in dome 1 shown right, captured the images which were projected onto the club walls. Higher resolution images can be seen [here](#) on the BLAS website. Click [here](#) for images of the previous transit in 2016. Unfortunately if you missed Mercury's transit this time, you will have to wait until 2032 for the next one! I wonder what changes will see in the BLAS observatory by then?

Tim Old gave an update on current space programmes at last month's meeting. This included the [Parker Space probe](#) and its importance in our space weather, meanwhile Helen Marshall and Brian Davies paid a visit to Cleethorpes Astronomical society on 16th November and reported back at the November meeting. More reestablishment of friendships and outreach to local groups and Astronomical societies is planned for 2020!

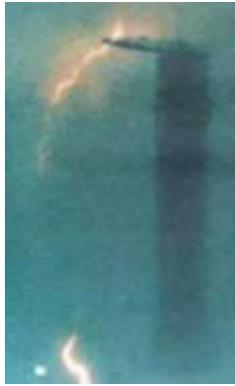


Please note that the December BLAS meeting will be held on Friday Dec 20th & meetings will return to the usual 4th Monday in the month in January 2020!

Lightning Strikes Twice!



50 Years ago this month saw the world hold its breath again as Alan Bean Dick Gordon & Pete Conrad launched in [Apollo 12](#) for the 2nd manned moon shot. This mission was nearly aborted 36 seconds after launch. Little did the crew know that that their flight to the Ocean of Storms would take them into a real storm. Lightning struck the rocket shortly after launch and propagated down into the escape tower. Thanks to the quick thinking of ECOM mission controller John Aaron, the mission was saved from disaster and 5Ft 6in tall astronaut, Pete Conrad became the 3rd man to set foot on the moon and relay the words 'Whoopie! Man, that may have been a small one for Neil, but that's a long one for me'. Click [here](#) to watch the launch.



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Strange but True!

Not only did Apollo 12 lose its primary power supplies after a lightning strike 50 years ago, but last month also saw a large power surge from the Blackburn Leisure club during a storm which took out our power supplies on the main room's projectors as well. Thankfully the telescope power supplies survived and thanks to our own ECOM Steve O'Dwyer, the club is up and running again!



An Astronomical 'Back to Basics' event will be hosted by HERAS in association with the British Astronomical Association (BAA) on March 7th 2020 in Cottingham village hall. Any help from BLAS would be gratefully appreciated. Contact Helen Marshall for more information.

BLAS Maintenance

Dome 2 repairs have now been completed and well tested over the torrential rain of the last month. The committee have also been hard at work completing essential sealing of dome 1.



The BLAS Christmas meal will take place at the Blackburn Leisure club in January 2020. Members & family are welcome, details below. Please send George King your dinner choices by Jan 1st.

Donations for the after dinner raffle welcome!



Finally the club membership would like to extend their sincere condolence to Chris Hannard and his family at this difficult time.