

POLARIS



Royal Astronomical Society of Canada London Centre Newsletter June 2011

My Big 10 Inch Newtonian Patrick Whelan

The Behemoth. The Cannon. The Missile. The Rocket. I thought of all those names and settled on My Big 10 Inch.

Of course I am talking about the latest addition to my telescope family. It is a 10 inch diameter f8 Dobsonian telescope. The mirror was installed in a 12 inch Sonotube and then fiberglass was wrapped around that. It is roughly 13 inches in diameter and 82 inches long. It is only 40 pounds, but a very awkward 40 pounds at that.

I first heard about the telescope at one of our meetings last year. Our President Dave McCarter told us that a Windsor member was letting go of his long focal length 10 inch telescope. It was an f8 so that is a long tube. I was intrigued and asked Dave how much the fellow wanted. I was very surprised to find out he was going to give the telescope away for free! That's my kind of price! After talking to Dave for a bit he let the fellow know I was interested. He was still working on his Finest NGC's so needed the telescope for bit longer. His name is Tim Bennett as I found out when I went to pick up the big bruiser of a telescope just this month.

I had measured inside my station wagon and I really thought I had room to spare. Good thing I hadn't brought my daughter on the trip! It just barely fit with the back seat folded down and the front passenger seat all the way forward. I told Tim I would have to build some sort of Dobsonian mount for it and he promptly told me he had one to get rid of as well. And as hard to believe as it was, it all fit in the car.

Tim has an observatory at his house and this telescope was mounted permanently in it on a nice home made equatorial mount. He had used a cook book CCD camera with the telescope for years. He had a real nice setup in there.

I asked him about the price. Tim told me he had acquired the telescope for free and had promised to charge that same amount for it when he got rid of it. Lucky for me Tim created an entire telescope around that mirror!

I took the telescope out last week on a clear night. I had to have my daughter help to get outside with it. As a friend said: This ain't no 'grab 'n' go scope, it is a grab and grunt scope!

It had no finder on it so I was expecting frustration in pointing at objects. The almost full moon was up, so pointing at that was very easy. With a 10" f8 there is a lot of magnification with the eyepieces. My other 10" is an f4 so the f8 has double the power with every eyepiece. Craters were crisp and I spent some time looking up and down the terminator. I was very pleased with the optics. I knew that Saturn was up but it was in the trees. I used my green laser pointer laying on the top of the tube to point at Saturn. Using my 34mm SWA eyepiece it was fairly easy to center the planet and then increase the magnification. I was only able to observe Saturn for a short time while it went between two trees. Four moons were visible and the rings were very distinct. It was difficult to track at high power. The altitude bearings are very easy to move but the azimuth bearings are a little sticky.

Observing from my backyard is a bit frustrating. The sky is usually a grey colour and only on a handful of nights does it get really dark. I aimed the scope at a star cluster in Scorpius but it was low in the sky and didn't have much contrast. I can't wait to get this telescope under dark skies.

I need to get a finder for the telescope. It has a Telrad base so maybe it is time for me to get my first Telrad. I have a lot of red dot finders for my telescopes but not a Telrad. I think I will also mount a 7x50 finder too. It's not like I am going to make it too heavy!

Tim informed me he is retiring and he and his wife are selling the house and travelling by big camper. Winters in Florida at a spot Tim tells me has very dark skies. They have full cut off lighting and what a delight that must be. In the summers they will be coming back up to Canada.

Happy days Tim! And thanks for the telescope!

Moon Phases



June 9 2011



June 15 2011



June 23 2011



July 1 2011

Editor's Note

John Kulczycki has contributed his articles on the Pocket Sky Atlas for two years now. Wow! Time sure does fly.

I hope people got some real use out of their Pocket Sky Atlases because of John's articles. I may (with John's permission) gather all 24 articles together and make one newsletter out of them. It will be an online newsletter only. I will let you know when/if I get it made.

Thanks again John!

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LONDON RASC MONTHLY MEETINGS

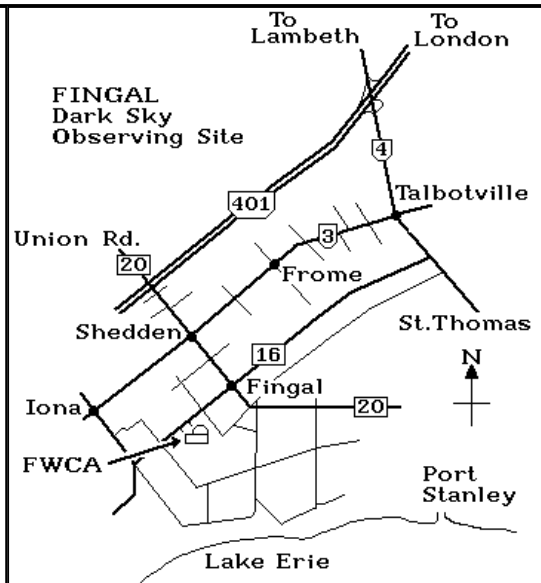
The London RASC group meets at Fanshawe College in London Ontario, September through July on the third Friday of the month at 19:00. We meet in room B1073.

Everyone interested in astronomy is invited to attend and enjoy our guest speaker, member activity and observing reports, announcements of new discoveries and upcoming events, telescopes and telescope accessories show and tell, and other fun activities. Have a look at our future and past activities on our website to see what we are doing.

Parking is free on Friday evenings, and there is plenty of room in the east parking lot off Oxford St. and parking spaces on the south side of B building. Enter the college by B building doors near Oxford Street, just west of the bus stop. College signs at key hallway locations will help you find us.

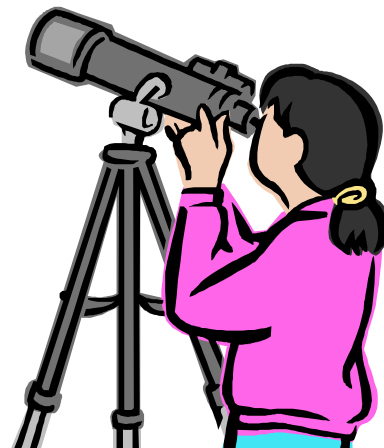
The London RASC webpage can be found at: www.rasc.ca/London

Our dark sky observing site is at the **Fingal Wildlife Management Area**.



Sky Events for late June and early July 2011

June 19 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 June 21 Solstice
 June 22 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 June 26 Double shadow transit on Jupiter
 June 28 Moon 2.0 S of Pleiades
 June 28 Mars 1.7 S of Moon
 July 1 Partial solar eclipse
 July 6 Mercury 0.3 S of Beehive (M44)
 July 12 Happy Birthday Neptune



Mercury is in superior conjunction on the 13th
Venus is in the eastern morning sky
Mars is low in the eastern dawn sky
Jupiter in low in the morning sky
Saturn is well placed in the western late-evening sky
Uranus is in the eastern morning sky in Pisces
Neptune is in the eastern morning sky in Aquarius

R.A.S.C. London Centre Library Books of the Month June 2011 By Robert Duff

As always, these “Books of the Month” are available for loan to members, to be returned at the following monthly meeting. The books for June 2011 are as follows:

Burnham's Celestial Handbook: an Observer's Guide to the Universe Beyond the Solar System, by Robert Burnham. Revised and Enlarged Edition. c1978.
 Volume One, Andromeda—Cetus.

NightWatch: a Practical Guide to Viewing the Universe, by Terence Dickinson. 3rd Edition, Revised and Expanded for Use Through 2010. 1998 (2003 printing).

Pale Blue Dot: a Vision of the Human Future in Space, by Carl Sagan. c1994.

For a complete listing of our library collection please see our RASC London Centre Library Web page at: http://www.astro.uwo.ca/~rasc/newrasc_library.html

If there is a particular book or video you wish to borrow, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (519) 439-7504 or by e-mail at rduff@sympatico.ca



Star Nights & Other Events

By Robert Duff

**Cronyn Observatory, Mother Theresa School,
 Walkerton, May 17th, 2011**

Graduate students Emily McCullough and Robin Wing hosted 51 visitors, including 42 students (ages 12—14) and 9 adults, from Mother Theresa School in Walkerton, Tuesday, May 17th. Robin began with his digital slide presentation, “Mars,” including an overview of the planet and recent ex-

plorations. Since it was raining the dome remained closed and the visitors were given a tour of the 25.4cm refractor. However, Emily and Robin opened the door to the deck and positioned the RASC London Centre’s 25.4cm Dobsonian beside the clocks, well back from the door, to view trees and the tower. Emily remained in the dome answering questions while Robin showed part of the group more slide images downstairs in the lecture room. Emily reported that it was a successful evening, lasting 7:30—9:15 p.m. There were no RASC London Centre members present and Emily McCullough reported on this event.

June 2011

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Slide Presentation, Medway High School, May 16th, 2011

On Monday, May 16th, Dave McCarter made his digital slide presentation, "Asteroids!" to two grade-9 classes, totaling 50 students, at Medway High School. He also showed them and passed around several meteorites and a few meteor-wrongs as well!

Longwoods Road Conservation Area Star Night, June 11th, 2011

Clouds and some clear sky greeted members of the RASC London Centre at Longwoods Road Conservation Area, Saturday, June 11th, 2011. Dave McCarter was expecting a 30+ Scouts troop to attend his digital slide presentation but did not show up, probably due to cloud cover. He had an appreciative audience of 4 to whom he gave a Starfinder planisphere and a star map of the Scorpius Sagittarius region to guide their summer observing. The Moon, visible for brief periods between clouds, greeted them outside.

RASC London Centre members available with telescopes included Rick Saunders with his equatorially mounted 80mm Stellarview refractor; Harold Tutt, with his alt-azimuth mounted 80mm Stellarview refractor; Peter and Cheri Raine, with their 25.4cm Sky-Watcher Dobsonian; Paul and Charlene Kerans, with their 56cm (22-inch) Obsession Truss-Tube Dobsonian and Bob Duff, with his 20.3cm Dobsonian. Charlie Moher brought the London Centre's 20.3cm Odyssey 8 Dobsonian but did not set it up because of the unpromising sky. Everybody left around 10:20 p.m. Many thanks go to everybody who turned out and, hopefully we will have clear skies for future events.

Cronyn Observatory Saturday Evening Summer Open House, May 21st—June 11th, 2011

By Robert Duff

Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, May 21st, 2011

Dave McCarter reported that he arrived at the Cronyn Observatory around 9:00 p.m. just as graduate student Alexander DeSouza was finishing his digital slide presentation, "Exploring the Stars," Saturday, May 21st. There was also another graduate student, Konstantin Fedotov. Dave located Saturn in the RASC London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian, using the 17mm Nagler eyepiece (67X). There were 12 visitors, including 10-year-old girl who returned to the eyepiece countless times, enthralled with Saturn. They were unable to locate Saturn with the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome and settled for Arcturus. Hazy skies gave way to thick clouds putting an end to observing by 10:00 p.m. Dave gave pamphlets to the girl and a man who had a Meade 70mm ETX and a 6-inch Dobsonian. He might come to a meeting.

Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, May 28th, 2011

Clouds and light rain ruled out observing for the Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, May 28th. Graduate student Sarah Malek made her digital slide presentation, "The Future of Our Sun," to 4 visitors, beginning around 8:40 p.m. RASC London Centre member Richard Gibbens was there and Bob Duff set up the London Centre's photo display board. They were later joined by Peter Jedicke. An

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June 2011 Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges

Well this is the 24th edition of the Pocket Sky Atlas Challenges; it will also be my final edition. It has been great fun coming up with this list every month. If someone else feels like taking up the mantle, please do. Have a great summer of astronomy!

Naked Eye:

Kornephoros, Page 54. Unukalhai, Izar, Page 55

Small Scopes and binoculars:

M5 Page 55, M10, M12 Page 54

Larger Scopes:

NGC 6309, Page 56, NGC 5548, Page 57

Bonus objects:

NGC 6118, page 56 and NGC 5897, Page 57

Happy hunting!

John Kulczycki



interesting discussion followed Sarah's presentation. Graduate student Teznie Pugh gave 3 of the visitors a tour of the 25.4cm refractor in the dome. Another visiting astronomy graduate student was also there. The evening ended with all visitors gone by 9:40 p.m.

CASCA Conference, Cronyn Open House, Wednesday, June 1st, 2011

Clear skies greeted some 36 visitors from CASCA 2011 Conference to the Cronyn Observatory Open House, Wednesday, June 1st. Dr. Sarah Gallagher coordinated the event and was later joined by Dr. Shantanu Basu. Paul Kerans, Peter Jedicke and Bob Duff represented the RASC London Centre. The visitors viewed Saturn through the big 25.4cm refractor in the dome and the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian, set up on the Observatory's roof patio. Paul Kerans showed them Saturn and the galaxies M81 and M82 through his 30.5cm Meade Lightbridge Truss-Tube Dobsonian. The Observatory was closed by 10:50 p.m. after a very enjoyable event and much appreciated by the visitors.

Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 4th, 2011

Mostly cloudy skies greeted 9 visitors (7 adults, 1 youth and 1 small child) to the Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 4th. Dr. Shantanu Basu made his digital slide presentation, "Galaxies," before a small group of early arrivals, including 5 adults and one small

child. RASC London Centre members Charlie Moher, Richard Gibbens and Peter Jedicke were there as well as Bob Duff, who set up the London Centre's photo display board.

Graduate student Emily McCullough brought everybody into the dome and Peter directed the 25.4cm refractor (with the 52mm Erfle eyepiece, 84X) towards the 3-day-old-crescent Moon, visible through hazy clouds in the western sky. Bob showed visitors Saturn briefly through the London Centre's 25.4cm Dobsonian (17mm Nagler eyepiece, 67X), before it was clouded out, and later, Arcturus. People asked questions about astronomy and it was an enjoyable evening despite the clouds.

Cronyn Observatory Open House, Saturday, June 11th, 2011

Peter Jedicke reported that there were about 40 visitors at the Cronyn Observatory Open House on Saturday, June 11th. Faculty members Peter Brown and Aaron Sigut were on hand and there was a digital slide presentation before twilight. Conditions went from overcast to scattered clouds. The Moon and Saturn were viewed through both the 25.4cm refractor in the dome and the 25.4cm Dobsonian, set up on the Observatory's roof patio. The first ISS pass predicted by the Heavens Above Web site was not seen due to clouds and the Observatory was closed before the second.