

# Ayrshire Astronomical Society

## Newsletter May 2015



Please send articles to [newsletter@ayrastro.com](mailto:newsletter@ayrastro.com)

### Meeting and Topic

This month's meeting is on Monday May 18<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting will consist of the following :

Photo competition.

The exoplanet naming competition. (I will send the voting forms as a separate doc)

. Voting for the exoplanet name can also be done via e-mail.

The Society AGM ( Please attend if you can )

### June Skies:

The summer solstice will take place on June 21st when, just before mid-day the Sun stops its northerly motion in Gemini. This is the longest day of the year and is the start of summer in the northern hemisphere.

**MERCURY** Right at the end of the month there is a rather poor apparition of mercury.

It is not very favourable for observers and is mentioned only for general interest.

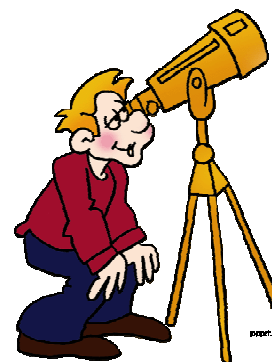
**VENUS** On the June 13<sup>th</sup> Venus lies a degree away from the open star cluster M44 in Cancer. From around June 20th onwards watch **Jupiter** approach from above left to a close conjunction.

**MARS** Is in conjunction with the Sun and will remain unfavourable for some time.

As mentioned above **JUPITER** is forming a close relationship with Venus in the evening sky. The pairing will be very noticeable especially on June 20th when the crescent Moon can be found below and to the left and on June 21st with the Moon further over to the left.

**SATURN** Is only slightly past its best and will be favourably placed for a few months yet. On June 29th Saturn is 1° south of the Moon.

**URANUS** Is slowly starting to become more favourable.



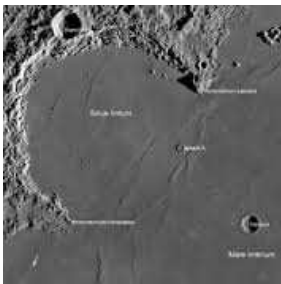
## Alex's Space

### Our Neglected Moon ?

It is almost 46 years since American astronauts first landed on the moon, with global coverage and all the publicity NASA could muster. It was indeed a huge achievement then and spurred science to new heights, literally! But public interest soon waned and with it went the budgets for follow up activities such as building manned human bases.

Since then the moon has almost been forgotten, while NASA changed its focus towards Mars, but other countries have shown they are now serious players in the space exploration game.

China has shown the lead by landing a robotic probe on the moon's surface. This probe called CHANG'E 3 --- it is named after a goddess of the moon, landed in an area known as Sinus Iridum -- - Sounds like a medical condition, but it is actually the "Bay of Rainbows".



(Photo image from wiki-pedia).

Two days after landing the probe deployed a lunar lander known as the JADE RABBIT – named after the pet of the lunar goddess. This lander is equipped with a 150 mm telescope that will be used to observe the lunar sky in the near ultra-violet wavelengths which are blocked by the Earth's atmosphere.

This is a clear step toward China's goal to put a Chinese astronaut on the moon's surface in the very near future. Landing CHANG'E 3 on the moon's surface demonstrates that China is at the top of the tree in technological activity and is also prepared to invest in technologies such as this for potential economic and scientific gain.

So, it seems the space race between two so called Super powers of old is being replaced, or at least added to by emerging superpowers of the East.

Who knows, perhaps NICOLA STURGEON may see this and include in her Independence manifesto a plan for Scotland's own space exploration programme ? ----- but perhaps that is a dream too far.

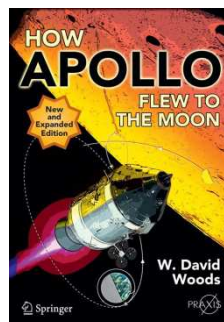
*Alex Baillie.*

Article 1 of the AAS News Letter for May 2015 (Juan Renau).

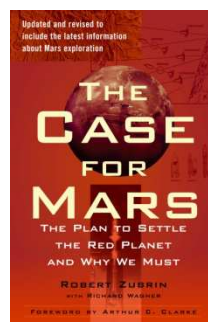
Dear Friends:

I would like to help with the news letter, may be you already know what I am going to tell you, but for the one's, that don't know, may be this can be of interest for some one, I hope you like it, cheers!

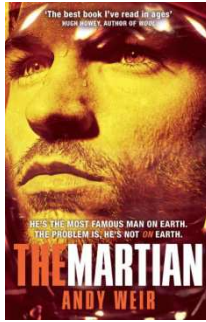
Being interested in Space since I was very young and following the Apollo missions from NASA in my own country Spain, I try to read books regarding exploration and space missions. Thanks to joining the AAS, I met W. David Woods and I was very impress with his work and the book "How Apollo Flew to the Moon" I need to buy it, is the book I am reading right now, so far very interesting.



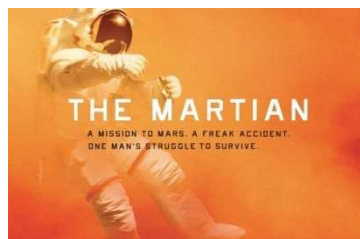
I always was fascinating on the planet Mars, (The Red Planet), then watching Stargazer on BBC and hearing Dr. Buzz Aldrin regarding his Mars Exploration Campaign, I when to the internet and check out for more info regarding Mars; I came across Dr. Robert Zubrin, the creator of Mars Direct, a programme that explains how we can go to Mars with the technology we have now and we have all the research needed to make the mission safe and with a low price tag. It is a book from Dr. Robert Zubrin call "The Case for Mars" that I read already and explains in detail how this mission can be done, very good book.



After reading Dr. Robert Zubrin's book, I needed more input, so I went back to the internet for more books about Mars, sure there was lots of books, but the book I am going to tell you about caught my eye, not only for the title, but because I found out is going to be made into a movie and will be released in November 2015. The book is called "The Martian" by Andy Weir, so I thought I must get it, well my friends I can't stop reading it, from start to finish is was incredible, this book will make you to want to know more every time you finish a chapter or a SOL, that is a Day is in Mars.



Based on all the technology we have now and how we can explore Mars today, this book describes the reality of how problems on Mars can happen to one man, alone in the Red Planet, without the possibility to be rescued for three years and with short supplies of food, water, heat and oxygen, the challenge is beyond anyone can imagine, because anything that can go wrong will go wrong. If you like some Sci-fi novels, I promise you this one is real, may be in my taste, but I think you should try it and let me know after how you feel about the book. If the movie is good as the book, we are going for a treat!



Well friends, I hope that my contribution to this news letter has been interesting and that you have enjoyed, thank you for reading through it, and one more thing, I got the Dr. Buzz Aldrin T-shirt "Get your Ass to Mars" to help with the campaign and to help Buzz Aldrin's ShareSpace Foundation, take care, Juan



Juan Renau

## Cars on Campus 2015



Formerly Dean Castle Classic Car Show, the event moved to St Josephs School in 2014 when Dean Castle was unavailable due to rain. The new location was such a success that the show reinvented itself by booking St Josephs School again in 2015 and expanding the exhibits. Always a favourite with the AAS Members in the Kilmarnock area, we had our display there as usual.

Arriving early, we got a good outside location right at the school entrance (thanks John for getting up early) and set up the gazebo. Based on last years experiences of wind and rain, we left the gazebo sides out. The weather wasn't great, and there were quite a few visitors to the show although visits to the AAS display were slower than usual. The upside of that was that it allowed us time to break off and see the rest of the exhibits. In particular, there was an indoors display area showing, model aircraft, large scale model boats, model railways, meccano models, and real miniature Sterling Engine powered "steam" models. These displays were amazing, and added a superb extra dimension to the show. I also hear that John and Alex spotted a fashion parade taking place at one point.

Great excitement occurred about 2pm on the AAS stand when the wind suddenly picked up and made off with the gazebo! Fortunately alert Members grabbed the frame before it took off and did any damage to the nearby classic cars. After a brief struggle we managed to remove the fabric cover and lift the frame clear of the telescopes. I little brute force with a hammer and we managed to fold up the frame and stash it away. Unfortunately the damage to the frame looks fatal! However the show went on and we had a few visitors before it began to get cold and threaten the usual rain so. In the meantime however we had a go at collimating Juans scope and running through the EQ5 setup procedure, not to mention lots of chat. A good day out for all. Thanks to Alex, John Bobby and Juan for running the show.

