

Reporting Visual Observations

Introduction - Please read the Introduction!

When visual observations are reported to the BAA these are incorporated into the BAAVSS visual database using dedicated software that manages the database. This software is quite tolerant but there are a number of data issues that can cause the software to reject one or many or even all observations or, worse still, incorrectly add the observations to the database and so contaminate it. To minimise the errors all observation processing is currently performed under close **manual** supervision. This protects the database but is a very labour intensive procedure. To try to reduce the number of errors a new Excel workbook, "Excel Spreadsheet (rev. 26/06/14)" has been generated that incorporates some simple checking of the observations and produces an output file that is correctly formatted for processing into the database. Unfortunately, errors have been found when opening the new Spreadsheet in "Open Office" and so we would suggest using instead the free package from Kingsoft available from <http://www.kingsoftstore.com/kingsoft-office-freeware.html>.

If you have a slow Internet connect and do not wish to download the spreadsheet, but would still like to use it, then send an email to Bob Dryden at visual.variables@britastro.org and he will send you a CD-ROM with the program and this help guide on it. (He will be obliged if you could include postage to the value of £1).

Very briefly, the new spreadsheet has a number of pages but you only need be concerned with the first to enter your personal details; the second to enter your observations and the third to submit your observations.

If you are familiar with worksheets then you probably need read no further but you may still find the notes useful at some time.

Submitting your observation with the new "Excel Spreadsheet"

You can then submit the observations recorded on the "Output Page" by saving it as a Text (Tab delimited) file and email to visual.variables@britastro.org as before.

Note for Apple Mac users:- When using Excel on an Apple Mac the option to choose when saving the text file is "Windows Formatted Text (.txt)" not the tab delimited option. This will save as tab separated text but will also have the line breaks required by the database.

And Finally

Please do not be put off from submitting observations by the new spreadsheet or text format.

If there are any queries then email them to visual.variables@britastro.org or the Director roger.pickard@sky.com.

If help is needed to get started then please send an email with your details and a few observations and a personalised version of the spreadsheet or text file will be sent to you with these observations added so that you can then see the format as it should be and then continue the style.

Roger Pickard, Director BAA VSS (Updated July 2014)