



IN BRIEF

Less light pollution in lockdown

Light pollution in the UK lessened under national lockdown, according to the results of the CPRE Star Count 2021, held in association with the BAA Commission for Dark Skies.

The annual count, which tasks participants with reporting the number of stars visible in the area bounded by the 'corner' stars of Orion, found that 51% could see no more than 10, compared to 61% in 2020. It took place in mid-February of this year, when many light-polluting buildings were closed due to the pandemic.

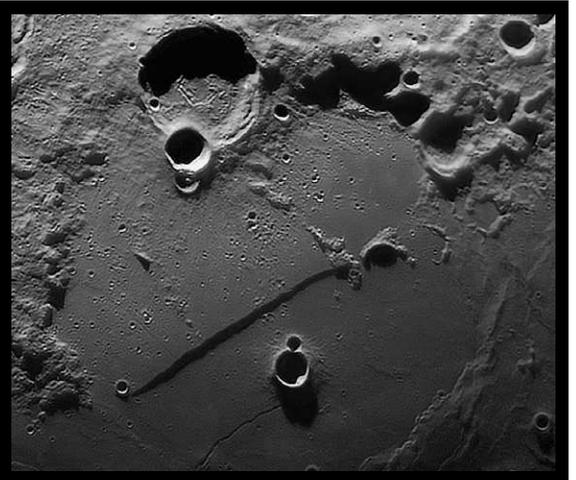
A record 7,000 volunteers were involved: over 4,000 more than the previous year. For an interactive map, see bit.ly/2RvwvyT.

Plan to map exoplanet surfaces

NASA's Innovative Advanced Concepts scheme has awarded funding to an investigation into the use of gravitational lensing to image the surface of an exoplanet.

The Straight Wall at high resolution

This image of Rupes Recta (the 'Straight Wall') was obtained by Lunar Section contributor Leo Aerts, using a Celestron C14 telescope. He photographed the 110km escarpment on 2020 Apr 1, and recently used the HDR tool in *Photoshop* to increase the effective resolution. This is a crop of the full image, which is described by Section Director Prof Bill Leatherbarrow as 'among the finest ground-based lunar images I have seen'.



The proposed telescope would be situated at the strong interference region of the Sun's gravitational lens, 548au away. Using this lens to image an Earth-sized exoplanet at 30pc, it is estimated that six months of integration could achieve a resolution of 25km per pixel.

See *Infinite Worlds*, the BAA Exoplanet Division newsletter: britastro.org/node/15597.

Happy Birthday to the BDAA

The British Deaf Astronomical Association is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. It has supported and hosted trips for astronomers in the deaf community since June of 2001. 🇬🇧

Philip Jennings, Editor

Graham Salmon (1932–2021)

The BAA lost a skilled observer and an absolute gentleman with the death of variable star and meteor observer Graham Salmon on 2021 January 11.

Graham attended Caterham School, and graduated from Imperial College, London, with a degree in Electronic Engineering. He developed an interest in astronomy at a young age, making an $f/8$ telescope whilst he was at college, having ground the 6-inch object glass himself, his progress being monitored by the optics expert and past BAA President F. J. Hargreaves.

After his national service he joined Ferranti in 1956, working on early computers. Then in 1962, with his wife, Brenda, he founded the Old



Rectory in Fittleworth, West Sussex, which they developed as an adult education centre. Retirement beckoned in 1994 and they moved to Veryan, Cornwall where he set up a 10-inch $f/10$ telescope at the top of the house, creating a slide-away roof and developing an automatic system for clear-sky detection. There he began systematic observation of variable stars, contributing 6,256 observations to the BAA Variable Star Section database between 1995 and 2006. In time he progressed from visual work to CCD observation, using a four-colour filter for which he built a computer-controlled drive.

A later house move and health issues were to curtail these interests, but the passion for

astronomy was still there and meteor videography was an area in which he felt he could still make valuable observational contributions. From 2014 he supplied meteor data to the NEMETODE group from two camera systems installed at his home in Blockley, Gloucestershire, monitoring a region of the country sparsely covered by the network.

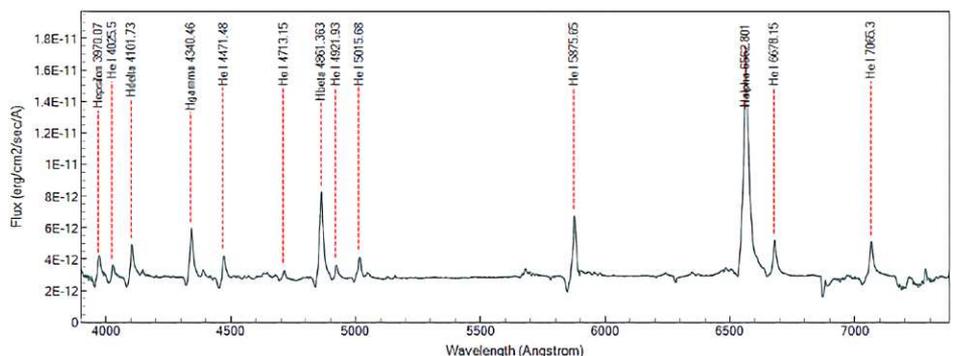
A regret felt by many of us is the fact that Graham passed away shortly before the fall of the Winchcombe meteorite. If his health had held out, he may well have captured the ablation phase (almost head-on) using his west-facing camera, and he would have been fascinated to learn that the meteorite landed within 10 miles of his home.

Graham is much missed by the BAA, the NEMETODE team and the wider astronomical community. We send our condolences to Brenda and family. 🇬🇧

William Stewart, Richard Miles & Alex Pratt

► eruption. In addition to V1405 Cas, two other northerly novae are still being followed. Nova Per 2020 (V1112 Per) was discovered on 2020 Nov 25 and at the time of writing is at around magnitude 14. Nova Cas 2020 (V1391 Cas) was discovered on 2020 Jul 27 and is around magnitude 16–17; it brightened a little during March, having faded to below magnitude 20 during February. Both novae are in need of more observations; further details are in the 2021 February edition of the *Journal*. 🇬🇧

To receive news of transient events requiring urgent observation, sign up to the BAA Alerts email service at: britastro.org/baa-alerts



Spectrum of V1405 Cas on 2021 Mar 19. David Boyd