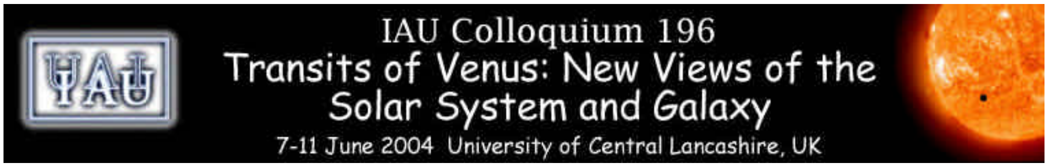

Announcements

Second Announcement

Dear Colleague,

We are very pleased to send you this Second Announcement for IAU Colloquium 196, "Transits of Venus: New Views of the Solar System and Galaxy", to be held in Preston, Lancashire, UK, 7-11 June, 2004.

We extend a warm invitation to you to come to Preston for this meeting in the week of the 2004 Transit of Venus. The meeting provides an opportunity to observe this rare astronomical phenomenon in its prime historical venue, while having discussion of its historical and current context and relation to modern astrophysics. The scientific and social programme is detailed in this announcement, which also includes information about registration, accommodation, contributed papers, and IAU Grants.

For those who have not seen our First Announcement, please find this and further information on our conference website:

http://www.transit-of-venus.org.uk/conference

In this second announcement, we give detailed information under the following section headings, with three pro-formas appended:

1. Conference Programme including social programme
2. Registration and payment methods
3. Accommodation and travel details
4. Contributed talks and posters
5. Important deadlines

Appendix A: Registration form
Appendix B: IAU grant application form
Appendix C: LaTeX template for abstract submission

We hope that the information in this announcement will enable you fully to plan your participation in this IAU Colloquium. However, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Local Organising Committee (LOC) using the following addresses:

E-mail: tov@uclan.ac.uk

Telephone or fax:

Local Organising Committee,
Transit of Venus,
Conference and Events Management,
University of Central Lancashire,
Preston PR1 2HE, UK
tel: +44 (0) 1772 892654
fax: +44 (0) 1772 892977

OR to the LOC chair:

Prof. Gordon Bromage
Centre for Astrophysics
University of Central Lancashire
Preston PR1 2HE, UK
tel: +44 (0) 1772 893568
fax: +44 (0) 1772 892996

This announcement and other information is available on our conference website:

http://www.transit-of-venus.org.uk/conference

We look forward to meeting you in Preston in June.

With kind regards,

Don Kurtz and Gordon Bromage
Co-chairs of the SOC

On behalf of the Scientific Organising Committee:

Gordon Bromage (UK),
Nicole Capitaine (France),
Dale Cruikshank (USA),
Suzanne Debarbat (France),
Steven Dick (USA),
Mike Feast (South Africa),
Julieta Fierro (Mexico),
Naoteru Gouda (Japan),
Don Kurtz (UK),
Anne Lemaitre (Belgium),
Mikhail Marov (Russia),
Wayne Orchiston (Australia),
Jay Pasachoff (USA),
Luisa Pigatto (Italy).

First Announcement

Transits of Venus: New Views of the Solar System and Galaxy

We are very pleased to announce IAU Colloquium 196, "Transits of Venus: New Views of the Solar System and Galaxy", to be held in Preston, Lancashire, UK, 7-11 June 2004.

On 24 November 1639 (Julian Calendar) in the tiny Lancashire village of Much Hoole, Jeremiah Horrocks made the first observations of a Transit of Venus. He was one of the first Englishmen to appreciate the astronomical revolution going on in Europe following the works of Tycho, Galileo and Kepler. It was Horrocks who first proved that the orbit of the moon is an ellipse, and Newton made good use of Horrocks' discovery. Horrocks, who died at age 22, can be considered to be the father of British astrophysics for the remarkable depth of his accomplishments. His legacy reverberates today.

This meeting will have history running through it, linking modern research topics on: high precision determination of the solar parallax; distances in the Solar System and in the Galaxy; precise determination of the motions of planets, realisation of a dynamical time scale and fluctuations in Earth's rotation. It will examine critically the remaining uncertainties in currently available parallaxes, how they can be further reduced, and the implications for stellar physics and Galactic structure studies. This will include the galactic distance scale, and will look at the future of astrometry from the ground and especially from space, including Gaia and Jasmine.

This meeting provides an opportunity to observe an extremely rare astronomical event in its prime historical venue while having discussion of its current context and relation to modern science. This will allow experts to present the most recent and future developments in the scientific topics linked to this astronomical phenomenon and exchange ideas on the most important issues for the future.

The morning of Tuesday, 8 June (the 2nd day of the meeting) will be devoted to observing the Transit of Venus beginning just after 05:19 UT (06:19 BST) and lasting for nearly 6 hours. Live observations will be conducted through the telescopes of the University of Central Lancashire's Alston Observatory near Preston, and live video links to other observing sites will be displayed. There will also be visits in small groups throughout the transit to Carr House (built 1613) in Much Hoole where Horrocks made his seminal 1639 observations. After an afternoon's rest, the day will finish with a conference banquet at the beautiful Hoghton Tower, a 16th-century manor house overlooking the rolling green hills of Lancashire where it is claimed Shakespeare worked for 3 years and where in 1622 James I was served a loin of beef that he so liked, he knighted it on the spot, Sir Loin. Our top table for the banquet will be the very table where the deed was done!

The meeting will have multi-disciplinary threads of science and history running throughout the sessions. An ancillary historical meeting for students will be held with some participation by this colloquium's invited speakers.

Following the first relatively precise determination of the a.u. from the opposition of Mars in 1672 by Richer and Cassini, the great scientifically competitive expeditions to observe the

Transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769 were the first examples of modern "big science"; those expeditions have given us some of the most colourful stories in all astronomy. With the length of the astronomical unit known, and with the discovery of stellar parallax in the 1830s, our view of the universe was fundamentally changed. It is fair to say that modern astrophysics blossomed from these determinations.

Transits of Venus were observed again in 1874 and 1882 for refinement of the value of the a.u. No living person has ever seen this rare event. Many astronomers from around the globe will want to experience seeing this historic event, and Carr House in Much Hoole, Lancashire, is the prime historic site. We are sure they will appreciate the historical connections planned in the sessions and during the transit itself.

Carr House, Much Hoole, Preston, Lancashire

Scientific topics are:

- Transits of Venus: their history and science
- Transits of Mercury
- Observations of transits of extra-solar planets
- Modern and historical determinations of the a.u.
- Precision measurement of time and rotation of the Earth
- New discoveries in the solar system
- Astrophysics from high precision parallaxes from space and from the ground
- Hipparcos parallaxes and the Galactic distance scale
- The scientific promise of future astrometric space missions: Gaia and Jasmine

The meeting has wide IAU support from Divisions I (fundamental astronomy), Division III (solar system) and Commission 41 (History) and is supported by the Royal Astronomical Society.

Presentations will include invited reviews, contributed talks and poster papers. The second announcement and the call for scientific papers will be sent out in November 2003.

The conference will be hosted by the Centre for Astrophysics and be held on the campus of the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, Lancashire, UK. The University of Central Lancashire, in its various forms as a teaching and research institution, is 175 years old in this year. It currently has 35,000 students and has strong astronomy research in its Centre for Astrophysics. Preston is a small city (awarded city status by the Queen in 2002) of 135,000 with large green spaces within the city. The university in integrated with the city and is within easy walking distance of central Preston. It is easily reached by direct train from Manchester airport, the UK's third largest airport serving many international airlines, and by direct train service from London.

Preston is ideally situated for day trips to the English Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, the Peak District, North Wales and the Forest of Bowland with the most beautiful scenery in England: National Parks, 900-year-old Cistercian monasteries, stone circles >3500 yr in age, lakes, rivers, mountains, forests (including the one where Tolkien walked as he imagined the Lord of the Rings), stately homes, lovely old stone villages, canals and canal-boats, traditional English Pubs, puffins, and unlimited historical sites.

The weather in Preston in early June is temperate. Daytime temperatures are likely to be in the range 15-25 C with overnight minima of 5-15 C. The total rainfall is about 1 m per year spread throughout the year with an average of 75 mm in June, so light rain is always possible. There will be a live video link at the Alston observatory to other observing sites, in case of cloud on the day of the transit. Of course, in 1639 Horrocks had to contend with this, too, and he successfully observed the transit. Let history be your guide!

For more information on the University of Central Lancashire see: www.uclan.ac.uk

and for Preston City see: About Preston

At this time you are invited to send expressions of interest by using the form provided here.

We also ask you to pass on this message to any of your colleagues who may be interested in attending the meeting.

We look forward to seeing you in Preston next year!

Don Kurtz and Gordon Bromage (Co-chairs, SOC)

...on behalf of the Scientific Organizing Committee:

- co-chair: Don Kurtz - UK
- co-chair: Gordon Bromage - UK
- Nicole Capitaine, France
- Mikhail Marov, Russia
- Steven Dick, US
- Mike Feast, South Africa
- Wayne Orchiston, Australia
- Jay Pasachoff, US
- Dale Cruikshank, US

- Naoteru Gouda, Japan

...and the Local Organising Committee:

- Gordon Bromage, chair
- Barbara Hassall
- Peter Hingley, RAS librarian
- Don Kurtz
- Paul Marston
- Gillian Saunders
- Robert Walsh

For more information about the conference, please email here: tov@uclan.ac.uk. If you wish to express interest in attending the conference please fill out the form provided here.

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE