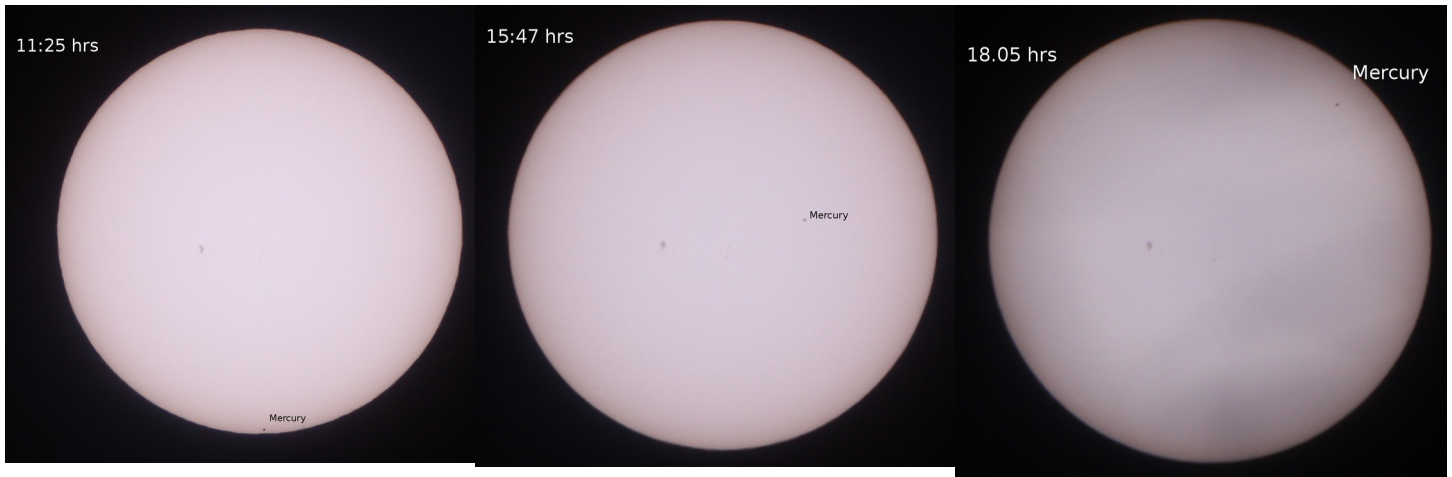


Newsletter #17, July 2016



Transit of Mercury: a matter of scale

Mercury crossed the face of the sun on **Monday 9th May**. We recorded the event using our solar telescopes, and a number of members and visitors turned up during the day and used our solar safety specs to view the event. Three of the images taken during the day are shown above and perhaps the most striking thing is that the sunspot, showing left of centre of the sun, appears to be a good bit bigger than the planet Mercury itself! Bearing in mind that Mercury is a little larger than our Moon at 4,879 km diameter, and in an orbit 58 million km from the sun, that sunspot could swallow Mercury whole and barely notice.



Perseid meteor shower, 12th – 13th August

We plan to meet on the 12th August to attempt to track the Perseid meteors overnight during the shower, weather permitting. Planning is at an early stage but we hope to be able to make a photographic record of meteor activity and it is possible that some the Forestry Commission rangers may join in with us. More details to follow of course, but meanwhile please save the date! Moonset on the 13th is at 01:13 am so observing conditions should be best after then.

Day of the Region, Glentrool, 3rd September

We hope to have a stand at the Glentrool Day of the Region event on Saturday 3rd September with a display of some of our past work and some of the society's equipment. The event will be based on the Glentrool Community Centre in Glentrool village. More details to follow as soon as we can.



Mobile Planetarium project: a new start

We now have a team of three members willing to take the mobile planetarium project forward, although more members would be very welcome. Penninghame Primary School, Newton Stewart, are willing to be our hosts in late September or early October for an initial familiarisation visit using the Dark Sky Observatory planetarium and we are currently preparing a funding bid for that. If you think you could give up three or four weekdays between August 2016 and June 2017 to join in this exciting new initiative, please email or write to let us know!

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