



# VollieNews

Newsletter of the POVG-The Perth Observatory Volunteers' Group Inc.

## A very busy month for the Perth Observatory

Last March was one of the busiest months ever undertaken at Perth Observatory, and could not have been managed without the help of many of the volunteer group. Some of the events we have covered are:

### Summer Lecture

10 volunteers rolled up to help out. Over 170 people attended what was one of the best lectures ever, given by Ray Norris of CSIRO. Afternoon rain dampened the lawns and raised Peter's blood pressure as we toyed with a change of venue. However, the Sun came out, and although it was quite cold, the whole event went off very well. As a new feature, we opened the telescopes afterwards, and this was well received by the masses, who were still lining up at 10:30pm.

### Planetarium Opening

8 vollies and 5 staff attended the initial screening at this terrific venue. The all new digital system can do wonderful things, and is quite breathtaking. The staff at Scitech - Jacqui Milner is now one of them!! - are still learning how to use it, and they will be using prerecorded programs as well. Peter & Janet from the Obs attended the official opening on April 5, with red carpet, various VIPs, as well as a smattering of politicians and their hangers on.

**Muscular Dystrophy Association Walk**  
Was held on a stinking hot afternoon and was very disappointing. The hottest day of

the year kept people away, and only around 300 turned up to walk the bridges with the kids in wheelchairs.

### The Byford Japanese night

Saw Perth Obs staff and 10 volunteers entertain 397 Japanese tourists with 10 telescopes in a paddock from 11pm until 2am on March 28/9. This was truly a Volunteer and staff effort, as the Observatory did not have sufficient resources to cover requirements. We hired a bus, used all the telescopes we could muster, and eventually got to bed pretty much at dawn. Several had to attend day jobs as well, although many took the day off.

Dave tried out his Internet Japanese lessons to good effect, Val coped well with the disaster of having her power lead pulled out mid stream, while the rest of us smiled and pointed a lot. The green pointers were terrific for this. Quite a lot of them laid on their backs in the dark just looking at the stars. The occasional meteor was met with many ohhaahhs.

### Astrofest

Finally, the Astrofest on April 3 was clouded out. Held at Trinity on a hot humid afternoon and evening, this was pretty much a flop, as cloud during the day meant people stayed away, and even though it cleared a little after dark, it was too little too late. Astrofest has been successful in past years, but the last 2 have been disasters.

### Observatory Visitors

As well as all these events, there were almost 800 night visitors on 22 tours in March as well as 400 day visitors on 15 day tours. Thank goodness we now have Rick Tonello on board - although he has been working on his own for much of the month doing astronomy field nights at places like Beacon.

### Praise for Pantagraph

Finally, Greg & Peter entertained a group of 12 frail and aged people in late March, using the pantagraph. Several were in wheelchairs, the rest probably should have been, and they were taken up to the telescopes by bus. One was 92, the only man in the group was 94, and the rest were all over 75. It was a really good evening, given the restrictions these folk have. The pantagraph is really a useful tool!!

### Thanks to Staff & Vollies

Thanks to all the volunteers who have assisted us over the summer.

I tell you, Easter never looked so good!!

Peter Birch. Acting Director.  
Astronomy is Looking up!!

### In this issue:

**POVG Meeting Minutes Phases of the Moon  
DATES AND TIMES: Vollie Training/Meeting Nights  
Astronomy news & events for April/May: Moon Eclipse at the Observatory**

## 2003-04 Chairperson's Report

THE YEAR IN REVIEW - 2003-04  
Chairman's report to the Perth Observatory  
Volunteer's Group

As the 2003-2004 Observing Season draws to a close, so the VOLLIES Group looks to its Annual General Meeting, and the coming quieter Winter period.

The year did not seem to be as active as the previous couple, and it could perhaps be regarded as one more of consolidation, with no major purchases and unveilings.

However, I believe we can be quite comfortable in that it has been successful as far as providing our support to the Observatory and helping to introduce many of the public into the wonders and awe of the night skies.

One highlight for the year was the close approach of Mars, and the great impetus that astronomy had. We felt it through the very early and strong start to the year, and this led to records, both in numbers of visitors and in our commitment to volunteering.

The major downturn was the loss of founding and extremely energetic Chairman Trevor, now in greener (literally) pastures in the Mother Country. Trevor was an eminently suitable inaugural Chairman, with the enthusiasm, drive and vision to put our Group on a firm path. I believe that the Group owes him a big debt of thanks for all he did. Another departure of note was that of Tom Smith, "worker" at the Observatory who was always a friendly face and a helper with ideas and supporter of the VOLLIES. To help with the volunteering, we had a number of most-welcome new vOLLIES; Trevor Beardsmore, Guiseppa (Joe) Coletti, Dave Emrich, Don Hartley, Erin Lalor, Elaine Walker, and Matt Zangerer. Hope

you all feel welcome and a part of our group.

Peter Birch, in the absence of Jamie Biggs, has already commented upon the statistics for the year at our March VOLLIES Meeting. It is worth re-iterating some of his numbers, preliminary though they are until the season is completed.

To the end of February, total number of visitors was 5235, bettering the previous best year (2001-02) of 3889, and indicating that the total number of visitors for this year could be over 1200 more than the previous best. The reason for this being largely through the season getting off to a huge start with 1500 or so attending in August to October to observe Mars, a period that in previous years has seen only a handful of people. (Note: figures not shown).

Figure 1 shows the progressive numbers for the past three years. How did that contribute to the vOLLIES efforts? Figure 2 shows that for the September quarter, the number of hours the vOLLIES gave were double that of the previous years, (sorry that I do not have figures beyond that quarter - we will have to await reduction of the data for the rest of the season, but it should be a good contribution to the operation of the Observatory.

One of the goals of the previous years was to achieve greater numbers of visitors with disabilities. We have seen a number this year.

VOLLIES have been seen helping to assist them in the wheelchairs. Using the panto-graph and helping them to manoeuvre to get a clear look at the stars. Thanks to John Morris for assisting in this.

One purchase we made was the buying of two more Jarrah benches for the viewing area. These have been well used on the nights.

The Observatory expressed its thanks to the VOLLIES in giving many of us a visit to New Norcia, to look through the European Space Agency's deep space tracking and communications facility, and to enjoy lunch in the historic hotel in the town. Thirty two vOLLIES and staff attended to experience "The Dish", and the feeling how the rain ran off the superstructure in very large drops!

A number of other events were attended, either as part of the audience or helping Observatory staff to present at events, such as the Summer Lecture, with:

- Ray Norris talking about The Void at the End of the Universe;

- Don Kurtz at his talk on the Music of the Spheres;

- Astrofest;

- helping over 300 Japanese to enjoy our views of the skies at Byford, using vOLLIES' own telescopes to cope with the numbers.

And on looking into the future, we have the forthcoming "off" season to regroup our ideas and work out where we are going. We have the promise of the trip by a small number to the Shoemaker Impact Structure and other impact sites in September. Questions I would like to pose to members are: What do we want?, Where are we going?, What can we do to help ourselves and to help the Observatory in providing improved experiences of the viewing of our night skies?

Even more fundamentally, "Is there a need for a grand plan?", or "Are we succeeding really well by continuing to just help the Observatory reveal to our fellow Perthites the marvels of our night skies.

Mike Freeman. Chairman. April 2004.

### **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:** **Join us to watch the total eclipse of the Moon through a telescope.** **Perth Observatory (May 5).**

On the MORNING of May 5, the Moon will pass through the Earth's shadow. It starts at 0151, middle at 0430, ends after sunrise. Details are all in the handbook on p 59. The Observatory will be open for all volunteers and their families etc to come along and watch through telescopes.

BYO everything. Please RSVP Peter or Greg that you are coming.



## POVG Meeting: Minutes

Perth Observatory Volunteer Group Inc  
Minutes of Meeting: March 15 2004.

Present B.Hollebon. R.Boelen. D.Emrich.  
J.Milner. T.Beardsmore. E.Walker. T.Beston.  
M.Haslam. L.Robinson. M.Freeman.  
J.Morris. P.Birch. G.Lowe. A.Williams

Apologies. A.McNaughton. L.Bell.  
S.Schediwy. G.Colletti. J.Bell. R.Tonello.  
F.Bilki. V.Smith. V.Semmler. E.Cowlshaw.  
J.Alcroft.

Confirmation of minutes. Agreed as a true  
and correct record. Moved T.Beardsmore  
Seconded T.Beston.

Business Arising from the Minutes. None

Treasurers Report.  
The Financial remains unchanged with  
\$210.33 in the account.

General Business. Chairman M.Freeman  
stated that he had 7 people confirmed for  
the Impact Craters trip. There 13 more seats  
available, deposits would be required to be  
paid early in June.

The Minutes showed that last year the A.G.M  
was held on March 31st and 28 days notice  
was required to be given to all members,  
Notice is hereby given that the A,G,M for  
this will be at the next meeting on April  
19th.

P.Birch reported the Japanese Star Viewing  
night would be on Sunday 28th March,

members attending should be at the  
Observatory by 8pm to travel by Bus to the  
site in Byford.

P.Birch stated that preparations were being  
made to have an Observatory Web site , it  
was Moved D.Emrich , seconded M.Haslam  
that the Camera's belonging to the  
Volunteer Group could be used ,if required.  
P.Birch thanked all members who assisted  
at the Lecture night, which despite the cold  
weather was very successful. He then showed  
members on the Screen details of the two  
Comets due in April, one of which should be  
at Magnitude 4. This was followed by some  
statistics on Tour attendances and the  
amount of time given by Volunteers in  
achieving those figures. The total hours for  
each

Volunteer are forwarded to C.A.L.M. for  
inclusion in their Annual Report and entitle  
those achieving a certain level a Free Pass  
into all National Parks.

A.Williams then showed a short film ,  
demonstrating the Launch of the Mars  
Landers and how they operated once they  
reached the surface of Mars.

There being no further General Business the  
meeting closed at 8.24pm.

Next Meeting April 19th  
7.00pm..A.G.M.

### PHASES OF THE MOON FOR 2004 (WA TIME)

New Moon	First Quarter	Full Moon	Last Quarter
		Jan 7 23:40	Jan 15 12:46
Jan 22 05:05	Jan 29 14:03	Feb 6 16:47	Feb 13 21:40
Feb 20 17:18	Feb 28 11:24	Mar 7 07:14	Mar 14 05:01
Mar 21 06:41	Mar 29 07:48	Apr 5 19:03	Apr 12 11:46
Apr 19 21:21	Apr 28 01:32	May 5 04:33	May 11 19:04
May 19 12:52	May 27 15:57	Jun 3 12:19	Jun 10 04:02
Jun 18 04:27	Jun 26 03:08	Jul 2 19:09	Jul 9 15:33
Jul 17 19:24	Jul 25 11:37	Aug 1 02:05	Aug 8 06:01
Aug 16 09:24	Aug 23 18:12	Aug 30 10:22	Sep 6 23:10
Sep 14 22:29	Sep 21 23:53	Sep 28 21:09	Oct 6 18:12
Oct 14 10:48	Oct 21 05:59	Oct 28 11:07	Nov 5 13:53
Nov 12 22:27	Nov 19 13:50	Nov 27 04:07	Dec 5 08:53
Dec 12 09:29	Dec 19 00:40	Dec 26 23:06	

<http://www.wa.gov.au/perthobs/hpc5mn03.htm>

# 2004 VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND MEETING NIGHTS

Training is important for our vol-  
unteers, they enjoy it and we need to  
support these staff members in return  
for the assistance they render.

Generally, these training nights  
are scheduled for 7pm the Monday  
after the week of Last Quarter.

This list is also displayed on the  
volunteer noticeboard.

Your cooperation is appreciated.  
Jamie Biggs. Govt Astronomer

May 17  
Jun 14  
Jul 12  
Aug 9

## Perth Observatory Volunteers Group Inc.

### Observatory's VOLUNTEER Active Member LIST

Jeff Alcroft  
Dick Alderson  
Jeanne Bell  
Trevor Beardsmore  
Lyll Bell  
Frank Bilki  
Tony Beston  
Ric Boelen  
Eve Cowlshaw  
Giuseppe Coletti  
David Emrich  
Keith Ford  
Marcel Fortsch  
Mike Freeman  
Lynda Frewer  
Bevan Harris  
Don Hartley  
Mark Haslam  
Bert Hollebon  
Karen Kotze  
Erin Lalor  
Vic Lewis  
Rob Loney  
Andrew MacNaughtan  
Len Martin  
Jacquie Milner  
John Morris  
Lloyd Robinson  
Sascha Schediwy  
Val Semmler  
Vera Smith  
Patricia Turner  
Elaine Walker  
Sandra Walker  
Matthew Zengerer

### Perth Observatory Staff

Dr Jamie Biggs	Director and Govt Astronomer
Peter Birch	Astronomer
Ralph Martin	Astronomer
Dr Andrew Williams	Astronomer
Rick Tanello	Astronomer Assistant
Greg Lowe	Astronomer Assistant
Janet Bell	Administration Officer
Di Johns	Clerical Officer
Arie Verveer	Technical manager
John Pearce	Mechanical technician
Marc Appelhof	Maintenance Person/Cleaner

### POVG Volunteers

Mike Freeman	Chairperson
Karen Koltze	Vice Chairperson
John Morris	Secretary
Bevan Harris	Treasurer and newsgroup moderator (contact: <a href="mailto:ngc2070@bigpond.com">ngc2070@bigpond.com</a> )
Jeff Alcroft	Editor (contact: <a href="mailto:callides@iinet.net.au">callides@iinet.net.au</a> ) or through newsgroup

### HAVE YOU JOINED THE VOLLIE NEWSGROUP YET?

If you've got any news, information or pic simply post them on the newsgroup for all (newsgroup members only) to enjoy or respond to. To join simply send your email address to Bevan Harris at:  
**[ngc2070@bigpond.com](mailto:ngc2070@bigpond.com)**

To unsubscribe send an email to:  
[perthobsvollies-unsubscribe@yahoo.com.au](mailto:perthobsvollies-unsubscribe@yahoo.com.au)

To modify your subscription, visit the group website at:  
**<http://au.groups.yahoo.com/mygroups>**



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# POVG

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