

## **Dumfries Astronomy Society. Newsletter 12<sup>th</sup> April 2004**

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**DAS meet on the third Tuesday of every month, except June and July. We meet at the Rutherford McGowan Building, Crichton University, Dumfries. All events commence at 7.15pm unless otherwise stated**

### **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April**

Mark Toner will be giving a talk about the discovery of SEDNA – the new planet, or planetoid, named after the Inuit goddess of the Ocean.

### **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May**

The evening will commence with the AGM. This will be followed by the postponed Annual Quiz which should make an enjoyable finale to our yearly events.

### **The Transit of Venus on Tuesday June 8<sup>th</sup>**

This will be the first transit of Venus across the Sun's globe to be observed since 1882. The planet will be seen as a dark circular silhouette crossing in front of the Sun from about 6.20am to 12.24pm. Projecting the Sun through a small refracting telescope is probably the best and certainly the safest method of observation. Venus will have an angular diameter roughly 1/30 that of the Sun and should appear darker than any sunspot. Towards the end of the month Venus may be glimpsed as a magnitude - 4, "Morning Star," low in the north east among the stars of Taurus, about an hour before sunrise.



I couldn't resist the mural you see above. This was produced for the new Manchester Town Hall in the heyday of the Empire. It depicts William Crabtree, Manchester's first mathematician, as an intense, emaciated puritan, observing the 1639 transit of Venus with an elaborate equatorial telescope apparatus. It must be said that much of the mural is pure speculation on the part of the artist, as it is obviously historically inaccurate. However, the real Crabtree did predict, with the help of his friend, the astronomer Jeremiah Horrox, the actual date of the above event, although very little else of importance.