

LUNAR OCCULTATIONS SECTION

LUNAR OCCULTATION DISPLAY - 1967 General Assembly

If members of your Centre have been active in the lunar occultation field, please see that material that could be used for a lunar occultation display at the General Assembly in Montreal in May is reported to the President of your Centre. Photographs of observers and observing sites would be appropriate.

SOME TRICKS OF THE TRADE

1. Select a magnification so that as much of the bright limb of the moon as possible is beyond the field of your telescope ocular. This is especially desirable if sky haze is present scattering the light of the moon. Too high a magnification makes tracking of the star and the moon more difficult.
2. Make sure your telescope has been allowed to reach the outside air temperature, otherwise heat tremors from the instrument will provide spurious occultations prior to the event.
3. Your observing site must have an unobstructed view of the moon.
4. In very cold weather, it is easy to fog the eyepiece or eyeglasses - hold your breath!
5. Above all, do not give up. The most frustrating observational field is lunar occultations for, in that brief fraction of a second when the star disappears behind the moon's limb, misfortunes can befall the observer. I remember the morning when at the precise moment a star was to disappear, a large moving van passed within a block of my observing site and produced such vibrations at the telescope the occultation was missed. Cries of a disgruntled observer were added to the normally tranquil morning air!

HERE AND THERE IN THE FIELD

Montreal - This active Centre has an appropriate Centennial project - that of 100 successful timings of occultations during 1967. Despite the clouds in January and a frozen stopwatch, the group made two successful timings. With better weather to come, we are certain they will reach their objective.

Edmonton - Four Edmonton observers are making local citizens uneasy! With reports of UFO's and all, cannon-like machines in members' backyards are most disturbing. The "cannons", alias telescopes, are trained at the moon to observe the disappearance of a star behind it. During December, nine separate timings were made, including three on Christmas Eve. This is devotion above and beyond the call of duty! In January the clouds took over.

On February 2, the grazing occultation of Iota Librae was on their agenda,

scheduled to be observed at a location some eight miles from the city. In attempting to record the multiple occultations expected, as the star passed behind a number of lunar peaks, the Edmonton observers took along a portable tape recorder, shortwave radio and two telescopes. In addition, Dr. E.G. Cumming of the University of Alberta brought the Physics Department's strip recorder to permit simultaneous recording of time signals and occultation events. Needless to say, clear skies lasted all evening until 5:00 a.m., just minutes prior to the graze! A little weary - and dejected - these observers are waiting with enthusiasm for the next graze to pass by Edmonton.

Franklin C. Loehde,
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