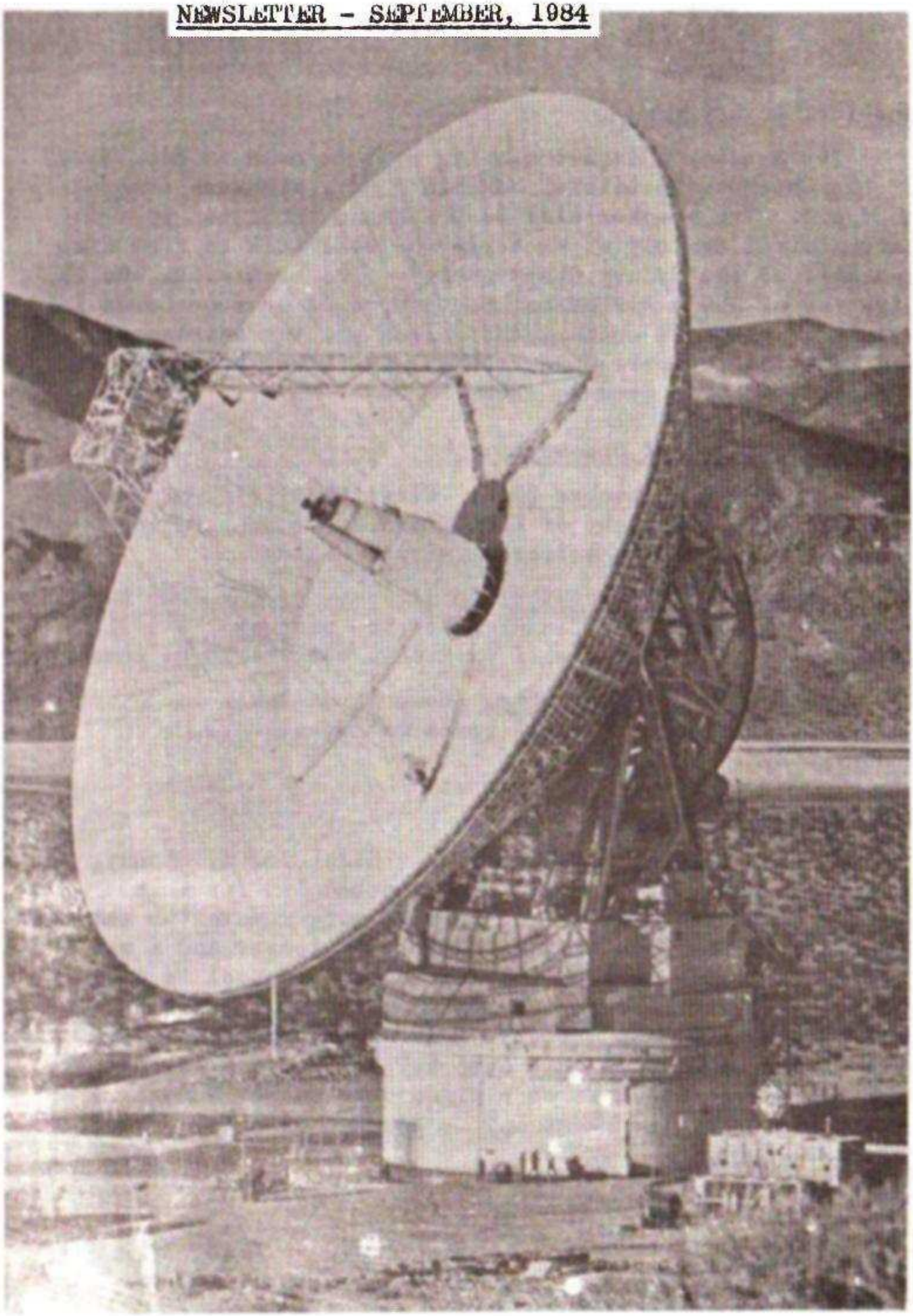
Astronomical Society of Frankston Inc

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER, 1984



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Meeting, September 26th

The September meeting will be held in Room B1.37 of the Chisholm Institute of Technology, McMahon's Rd., Frankston, commencing at 8 p.m.

Clive Chatfield, who is Astronomical Society of Victoria's Instrument Making Section Director, will talk on telescope making for amateurs with special reference to astronomical mirror making. Members currently engaged in, or contemplating the making of an astronomical telescope, should find this meeting especially interesting.

Meeting, October 24th

Bill James, of A.S.V., will talk on the optics for the 150" Anglo-Australian telescope, and testing problems therewith.

Society Observing Night

An observing night for members is planned for Saturday, September 29th at the Society Observatory site, Peninsula School, Mt. Eliza, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Should the Saturday night be cloudy the observing night will be postponed to the following night, Sunday, September 30th. A map showing the route to the observing site is to be found in the centre pages of the June Newsletter.

The Moon will be a few days old for this observing night and the planets Jupiter, Mars and Venus will be suitably placed for observation.

A long sequence of observing nights have now been cancelled due to bad weather; perhaps the night of September 30th will finally allow us to sample the night sky from where the B. J. Smith telescope will stand in the future.

Working Bee at Observatory site, Saturday September 22nd.

A successful working bee was held on Saturday, September 8th and the dismantled Observatory building was moved by boat trailer from the Chisholm Institute to the Peninsula School site. A further working bee is now planned for Saturday, September 22nd, when the work of re-erection of the Observatory will be commenced. The time for the start of operations is 9.30 a.m. at the Peninsula School site.

Society News

Dr. Wayne Orchiston, an astronomer who served on the staff of the Sydney Observatory prior to its closure as a functioning Observatory in 1982, provided the talk at the Society's August meeting, his subject being the "Rise and fall of the Sydney Observatory", a history of that institution from its earliest days to the present.

The varying functions of this, the oldest established Observatory in Australia, were described, not all of these functions being of an astronomical nature, but including meteorological, magnetic and tidal observations. However, an important astrographic project was undertaken in the early 20th century and a Director of the Observatory, by the name of Russell, was responsible for a telescope mounting design subsequently used for the 200 inch Mt. Palomar telescope.

The Observatory buildings are now being renovated and converted to a Museum of Australian astronomy, their function as an Observatory no longer remaining possible at their location adjacent to the Harbour Bridge and the surrounding bright lights of the Sydney metropolitan area.

SPIRAL GALAXY M51 IN CANES VENATICI
Situated at 35 million light years distance from Earth

SKY NOTES

Constellations. The evening skies of late September and October see the bright Milky Way constellations of Scorpius and Sagittarius setting in the west, whilst to the south the Southern Cross dips low towards the horizon.

The sky towards the zenith displays the fainter constellations of Grus, the Crane and Pavo, the Peacock, with the bright star Achernar and the constellation of Phoenix, the mythological bird rising from the flames, somewhat towards the east. In these regions we are looking outwards away from our own galaxy into inter-galactic space, and many external galaxies can be located in these constellations with amateur telescopes. To the north at this time of the year can be seen the conspicuous "Great Square of Pegasus" with Aries, the Ram, and Cetus, the whale, rising in the east.

Planets. As the Spring months advance this year, the bright planet Venus becomes steadily more conspicuous in the western sky after sunset, and at the end of October Venus is setting some 3 hours after sunset. Through the telescope the phase, or percentage illuminated, of Venus steadily descreases during this period, but as Venus is at the same time coming closer to Earth its brightness remains approximately the same.

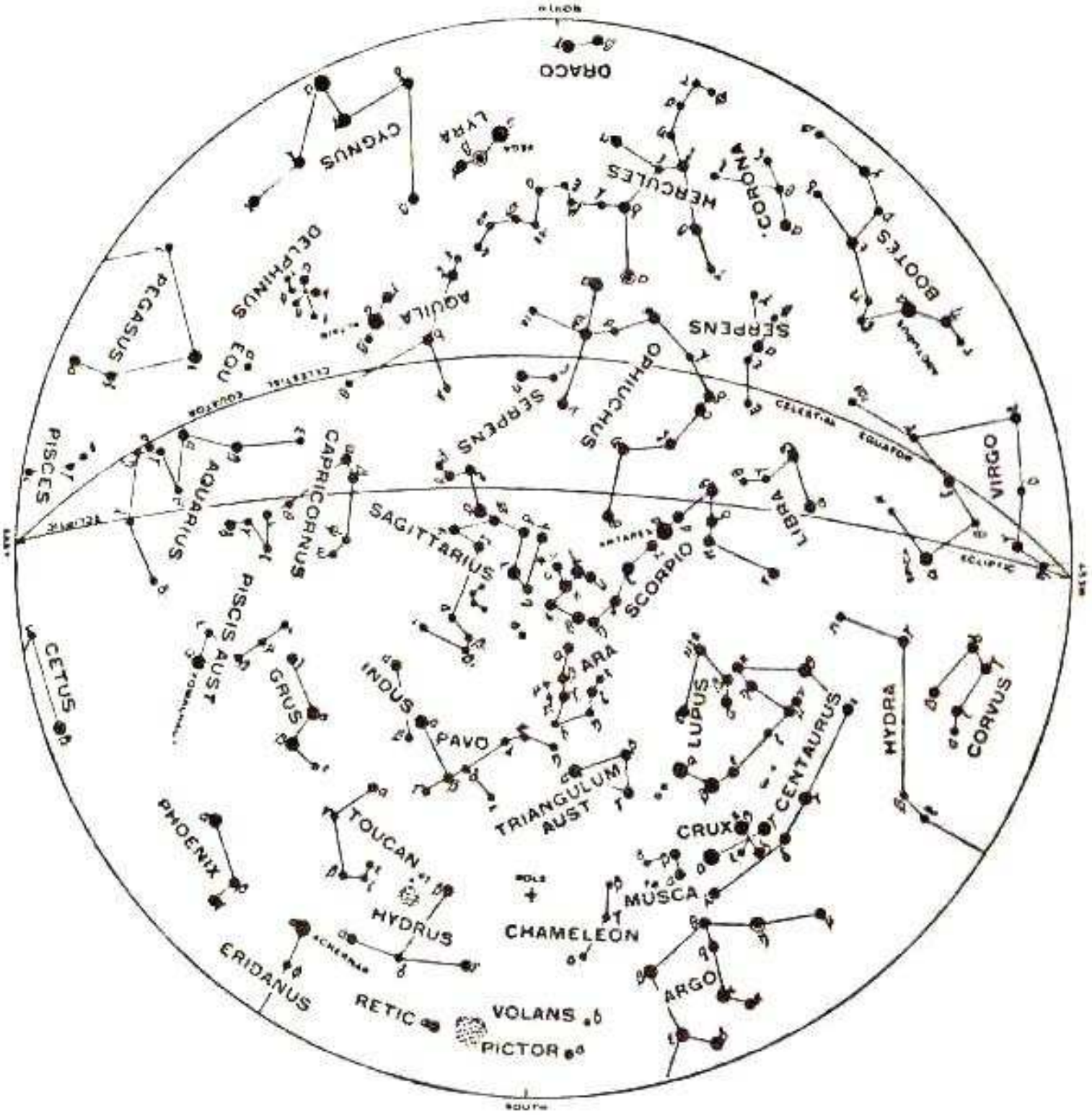
Higher in the sky, in Scorpius and Sagittarius, is the planet Mars, which during early September was in the vicinity of Antares in Scorpius, forming a notable red pair to the naked eye observer. The brilliant planet Jupiter remains well placed for observation high in the sky in Sagittarius during October, and through the telescope displays the constantly changing patterns of its satellites and the belts in its upper atmosphere.

The Moon

New Moon	Sept 25	Oct 24
First Quarter	Oct 2	Oct 31
Full Moon	Sept 10	Oct 10
Last Quarter	Sept 18	Oct 18

The drawing of M 42 (based on observations by G. P. Bond) contains all the details that can be registered visually. The brightest part of the nebula was named Regio Huygeniana by J. Herschel in 1826. Extending into this region is a dark bay — Sinus Magnus — at the end of which is a small striking polygon known as the Trapezium in Orion, composed of small 6th to 8th magnitude stars. Visually the angular diameter of M 42 is about 20′.

Star Groups for August and September



MAP 5

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

Aug.	1	9·22 p.m.	Sept.	10	6·44 p.m.
	11	8·42		20	6·04
	21	8·03			
	31	7·23			