

Centenaries for 2012

by Barry Hetherington

- 1212 An eclipse of the Sun recorded from Utica, North Africa.
- 412 Proclus the Successor born; wrote on the astronomy of Hipparchus and Ptolemy.
- 712 A comet appeared in Leo in the summer.
- 812 An eclipse of the Sun seen from Constantinople.
- 912 Halley's comet appeared in the spring.
- Qusta ibn Luqa died; wrote on the spherical astrolabe.
- 1012 A nova appeared in Aries in May.
- 1112 There were three black spots (sunspots?) in the Sun in May.
- 1312 Jacob ben Machir ibn Tibbon (Prophatius) died; a French Jewish translator and astronomer; wrote a work on a quadrant which he had invented; wrote a book of astronomical tables giving positions of stars at Paris.
- 1512 Johann Angelus died; a physician and astronomer; corrected Purbach's planetary tables; wrote on astronomy.
- Amerigo Vespucci died; an explorer and navigator; made astronomical observations from the Americas.
- Gerard Mercator born; a Flemish geographer and instrument maker; made an astronomical ring, an astrolabe and celestial globes.
- Cornelius Valerius born; a writer on astronomy who stated that the earth does not move.
- 1612 Christopher Clavius died; a German mathematician; in 1581 was employed by Pope Gregory XIII to reform the calendar.
- Anton Deusing born; a writer on astronomy who maintained a stationary earth but with a rotation about its axis, and a moving Sun.

► Shears et al: continued

GR: 2007 Cedarment Dr., Franklin, TN 37067, USA [georgeroberts@comcast.net]
DFC: Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC 28815, USA [dcollins@warren-wilson.edu]
GM: 5 Inverness Way, Hillsborough, California 94010-7214, USA [gordonmyers@hotmail.com]
TC: 7021 Whispering Pine, Harrison, AR 72601, USA [jmontecamp@yahoo.com]

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Giovanni Domenico Cassini; died in 1712

- Gellio Sasceride died; a Danish physician and astronomer; assistant to Tycho Brahe.
- Andreas Tacquet born; a Belgian Jesuit scholar who wrote on astronomy.
- M31 re-discovered by Simon Marius on December 15.
- A nova in Andromeda observed by Simon Marius and Fabricius.
- In September Galileo perceived the importance of occultations of Jupiter's satellites for geographical determinations of longitude on land.
- Epistolae tres ad M. Velsorum de maculis solaribus* by Markus Welser, being three letters sent to Welser by Christopher Scheiner reporting his observations of sunspots.
- 1712 Giovanni Domenico Cassini died, aged 87; an Italian-born French astronomer; appointed the first French Astronomer Royal; discovered four satellites of Saturn and correctly explained the unusual variability of Iapetus; noticed a division in Saturn's rings, now known as Cassini's division.
- Uranus observed by John Flamsteed who catalogued it as a star.
- Jacques Cassini appointed director of the Paris Royal Observatory following his father's death.
- Historia Coelestis* by John Flamsteed, edited by Edmund Halley, published without Flamsteed's consent.
- 1812 John Mortimer Agardh born; a Swedish astronomer who wrote on astronomy.
- John Coventry died; an English telescope maker.
- Ercole Dembowski born; an Italian astronomer who established a private observatory at Naples which was later transferred to Milan; observed double stars and made tens of thousands of micrometric measurements.
- Johann Gottfried Galle born; a German astronomer; worked at the Berlin Observatory; discovered the planet Neptune from the position given by Leverrier; Director of the Breslau Observatory.
- Peter Horrebow died; a Danish astronomer and meteorologist; observed the 1761 transit of Venus.
- Robert Stirling Newall born; a British engineer and astronomer; made a series of drawings of the Sun.
- Abraham Pether died; an English landscape painter of moonlight scenes; constructed telescopes.
- Stepan Yakovlevich Rumovsky died; a Russian astronomer.
- Benjamin Franklin Sands born; superintendent of the Naval Observatory at Washington
- A six feet transit circle erected at Greenwich Observatory by Edward Troughton.
- A fall of meteorites at Stannern, Bohemia, on May 22.
- 1912 John Franklin Adams died; a British amateur astronomer; built a private observatory at Machrihanish in Argyllshire; made a photographic survey of the sky.
- Eva Ahnert-Rohlf's born; a German astronomer; worked at the



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Sonneberg Observatory; observed variable stars,

George Eric Deacon Alcock born; a British visual discoverer of comets and novae.

Heikki A. Alikoski born; a Finnish astronomer; worked as an assistant at Turku Observatory; discovered 13 asteroids; helped to establish the Turku Astronomical-Optical Institute.

Horace Welcome Babcock born; an American astronomer; invented and built astronomical instruments; proposed the idea of adaptive optics; studied spectroscopy and magnetic fields of stars.

Lewis Boss died; an American astronomer; appointed Director of the Dudley Observatory.

Wernher von Braun born; a German rocket scientist; director of the Marshall Space Flight Centre; helped to develop the Saturn V rocket.

George Howard Darwin died; a British astronomer and mathematician; studied the tidal forces involving the Sun, Moon and Earth.

Frank K. Edmondson born; an American astronomer; studied stellar kinematics, galactic structure and the history of astronomy.

Nikolaj Fyodorovich Florya born; worked at the Sternberg State Astronomical Institute; observed variable stars.

Hans Haffner born; a German astronomer; Director of the Astronomical Institute of Würzburg University; studied open clusters.

Joseph Hewitt born; a British physicist who conceived and designed a satellite tracking camera.

Fritz Hinderer born; a German astronomer at the Potsdam and Babelsberg Observatories; studied variable stars.

Arthur Ernest Hodgson died; worked at the Natal Observatory; in 1908 he took a series of lunar photographs for a determination of the physical libration of the moon.

Walter Scott Houston born; an American populariser of amateur astronomy; observed variable stars and studied meteors.

Masaaki Huruwata born; a Japanese astronomer; Director of the Tokyo Astronomical Observatory; did work on meteors, variable stars, photoelectric photometry of the zodiacal light and airglow.

Walter Jaschek born; director of the Kuffner Observatory, Vienna.

Shigemaro Kibe born; a Japanese amateur telescope maker; made the 0.6m reflector mirror for Kyoto University's Hida Observatory; observed the Sun, planets and variable stars.

Dmitri Kuzmich Kulikov born; a specialist in geodesy and fundamental astronomy.

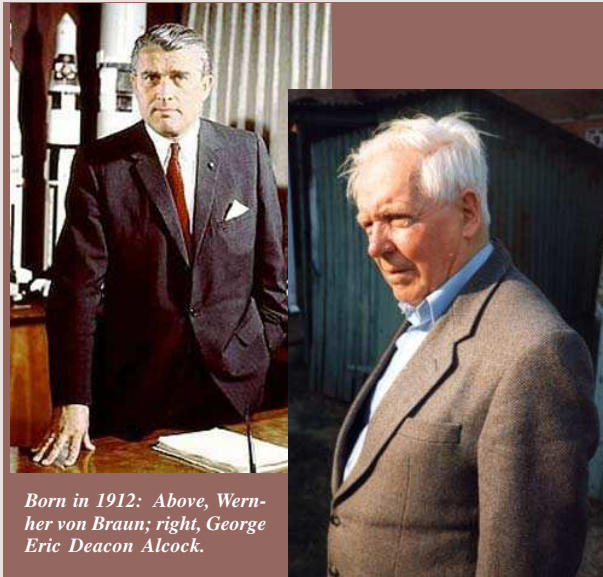
Boris Julevich Levin born; a Russian astronomer and geophysicist; researched the evolution of the solar system; worked on meteors and meteorites.

Borge Lunn born; a Danish civil engineer and metallurgist; encouraged the study of metallic and iron meteorites.

Oleg Aleksandrovich Melnikov born; a Soviet astrophysicist; worked at the Pulkovo Observatory; studied the Sun, the stars and interstellar matter by spectroscopic methods.

Shoji Ohsaki born; a Chinese amateur astronomer and historian; undertook historical research on the Chinese constellations, and on the astronomical histories of the far-eastern countries.

Jules Henri Poincaré died; a French celestial mechanician; studied the



Born in 1912: Above, Wernher von Braun; right, George Eric Deacon Alcock.

three body problem and Saturn's rings.

Edward Mills Purcell born; an American physicist; helped to develop radio astronomy; the first to detect the 21 cm hydrogen line.

Samuel A. Saunderson died; an English selenographer; catalogued the position of 3,000 points on the Moon;

Martin Schwarzschild born; a German American astronomer; worked in the fields of stellar structure, stellar evolution and galactic structure.

Jane M Smith died; an American patron of astronomy.

Max Waldmeier born; a Swiss astronomer and director of the Swiss Federal Observatory; studied the Sun.

Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker born; a German physicist; studied the nuclear processes in stars and the evolution of the solar system.

A partial eclipse of the Sun on April 17 photographed from Greenwich with the Thompson Photoheliograph when 15 exposures were made.

Vesto Melvin Slipher began observing spiral nebulae and obtained the first radial velocity of a galaxy, M31.

Henrietta Leavitt discovered the period-luminosity law for Cepheid type variable stars.

A fall of meteorites at Holbrook, Arizona, on July 19.

The observatory at Turin moved to a new site, at Pino Torinese, overlooking the city.

The observatory at Durban closed.

Takhtasinghji's Observatory, Pune, closed and dismantled – the instruments going to Kodaikanal Observatory.

Henry Crozier Plummer appointed Director of the Dunsink Observatory.

The Cape Astronomical Society founded on November 8.

The Astronomical Society of Southern Africa founded on December 12.

Moscow Society of Amateur Astronomers founded.

The Russian astronomical journal *Mirovedenye* founded.

Barry Hetherington, 22 George Street, Darlington DL1 5DW.

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For details write or visit www.williamherchel.org.uk
or email [fredsch@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:freds@tiscali.co.uk) or ring 01225 446865