



# Astronomical Society of Southern Africa SYMPOSIUM 2002



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## Reminiscences of the 2001 Total Solar Eclipse

*Tim Cooper, Louis Barendse, Theo Pistorius and Neville Young*

### Discussion

The Total Solar Eclipse of 2001 June 21 was well observed by Pretoria Centre members. At our August 2001 monthly meeting we held a feedback session where 8 individuals reported back on their observations, both from the path of totality and the partial eclipse as seen from Pretoria. Based on this session, we decided to provide a short summary today as a scene set for the upcoming eclipse and as a reminder of some of the experiences from the last eclipse.

One of our members dubbed those who went to the path of totality as the 'Gin and Tonic' crew, presumably for the celebratory drinks that were supposed to have been consumed after the heady spectacle of totality. Several of our members went to Lusaka by plane as part of the flight organized by Brian Fraser. Mike Haslam reported that there was no gin and tonic on the first flight out to Lusaka, and traveling on a British passport, he had to pay 56 pounds sterling entry into Zambia. On the same flight of corona-philes was Louis Barendse (also presumably sans-G&T). He took some interesting photographs of the sky during totality including nearby Jupiter. Louis measured a 7 degree drop in temperature during the eclipse.

Neville Young videoed the event, capturing the growing atmosphere of thos nearby. Adie Viljoen is heard to comment that he saw six stars during totality. Theo Pistorius and Siegie Liebner also flew to Lusaka. They noted the polarization of shadows, shadow bands, sharp temperature drop and easy naked eye visibility of prominences. Theo took some video showing exquisite coronal streamers.

Michael Poll and Tim Cooper both traveled to Zimbabwe for the eclipse. During totality Michael noted Jupiter and Sirius but not much else, rather concentrating on viewing totality itself. He noted the chirping of crickets, but there were few other animals on hand to observe, apart from a few heaps of elephant dung, which reportedly did not move during the eclipse.

Tim Cooper stayed at the luxurious Hotel Pumpkin, for 110 USD/night, with no running hot water, doors that did not fit, no breakfast if you were unlucky enough not to beat the hundreds of Japanese visitors to it, and certainly no G&T. He took a series of photos with a 400mm lens at 10% intervals of partiality and during totality.

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During totality we noted easy visibility of Jupiter, Sirius and Canopus, but did not want to spend time searching out other stars while the limited duration of totality was in progress. Crieckets were heard, and as totality approached cockerels crowed. Cows were heard to moo, but goats continued to do what they do apparently unaware of anything different.

Based on these observations Tim Cooper and Louis Barendse will show a series of slides, and Neville Young and Theo Pistorius will show their video footage.

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