

## RASC: Prince George Centre Monthly Meetings:

The PG Centre normally meets once a month from August to November and January to May. The meetings are informal and **VISITORS ARE WELCOME**. The Centre occasionally finds it necessary to change its meeting date, location or time. To verify the time and place of next meeting, check 'Upcoming Events' at the bottom of this page. If no meeting is shown, there will be none that month.

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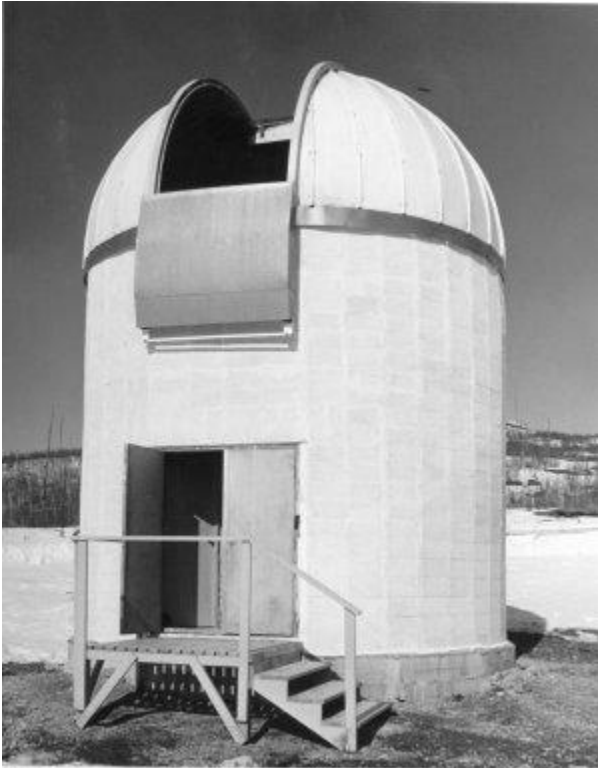
## RASC: Prince George Centre Activities



**Above: Solar viewing at Fort George Park  
with the Celestron and H-Alpha Filter on Canada  
Day 1993**

The interests of our members define the club's astronomical activities. They include such things as: Evening Observing, Astronomy Workshops, CCD Astrophotography, 35mm Astrophotography, Observatory Tours, Solar Viewing, Supernovae Search, Public Presentations, Astronomy Education, Near Earth Asteroid Observations, Astronomy Videos, Slide Shows, Image Processing, Messier Object and Lunar Viewing Marathons, Variable Star Photometry, Meteor Detection Using Cameras, Fund Raising, and Maintaining the Observatory.

## The First Prince George Astronomical Observatory



**Above is the Tabor Mountain Observatory as it appeared in 1984**

In 1979 the Prince George Astronomical Society (PGAS) was founded and the construction of the Tabor Mountain observatory was begun.

The task took 5 years to [complete](#) by a team composed almost entirely of volunteers led by Bob Nelson. The Tabor Mountain Observatory [opened](#) to the public on September 22, 1984.

The lenses and mirrors for the telescope were purchased while the telescope's body and machinery were built by Ed Lourke at the College of New Caledonia.

The dome was constructed from an old farm silo roof. A slot was cut into it and a sliding door was fashioned to allow the telescope to see the heavens. CP air donated old aircraft bearings for turning the dome.

If the Tabor Mountain Observatory was built by professionals it would have cost more than \$200,000. Instead with the help from volunteers and donations of materials by local businesses and individuals it only cost \$20,000.

Most of the money was obtained with two grants one from B.C. Lotteries and the other from the Vancouver Foundation. The club operated from Tabor Mountain for four years, providing an exceptional view of the sky to school groups, the [general public](#), and club members. In 1988, the observatory was closed due to [vandalism, thieves](#), and poor winter access

## The new Prince George Astronomical Observatory

In the summer of 1992, construction of a new observatory near [West Lake began](#). During the spring of 1993, the PGAS received funds from the Science Council of British Columbia to help with the completion of the Observatory. On August 6, 1993 the Prince George Astronomical Observatory (PGAO) was opened to the public



Above: Construction of the new Observatory on July 1992



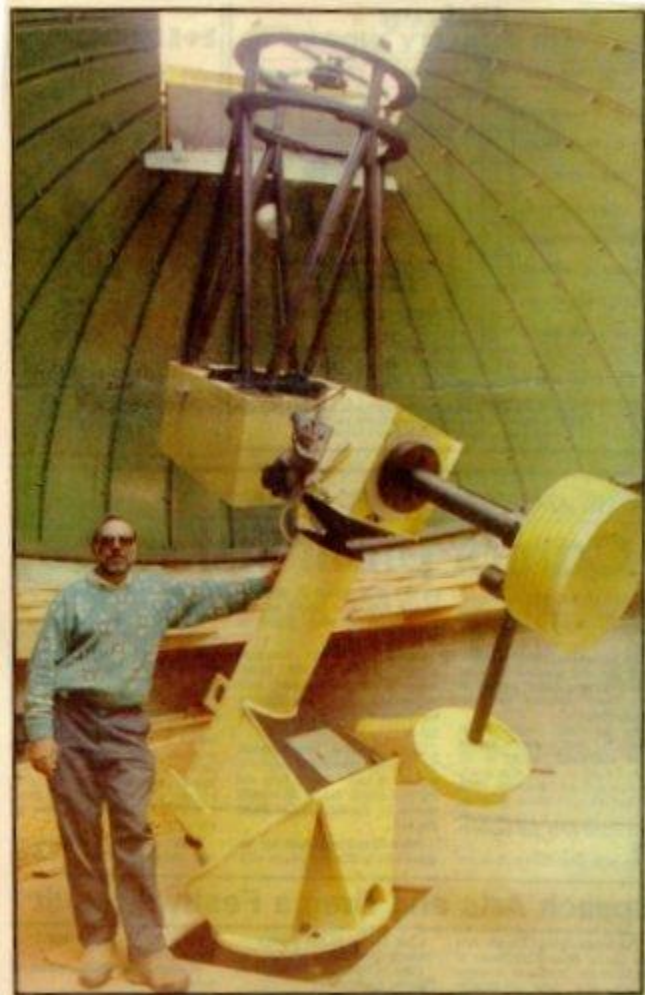
Above: Construction of the Classroom on May 1993

Since the opening of the PGAO, a grant from the former Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology has enabled the society to promote science education within the Prince George community through school visits, public viewing sessions and participation in special events such as Science and Technology Week and the Central Interior Science Exhibition. The PG Centre now provides regular observatory access to the [general public](#) and special interest groups such as Cubs, [Brownies](#) and schools. We invite you to help with our continuing efforts and growth.



Above is a photo of the new Prince George Astronomical Observatory on April 2004

## Main Telescope and other Equipment



Looking glass

Green photo by Tracy Brewer  
College of New Caledonia astronomy instructor Bob Nelson shows off a labor of love, the 24-inch telescope now being assembled at the new observatory being completed on Tedford Road, about 30 minutes from downtown Prince George. Story, page 3.

The Observatory houses a [0.61 meter Cassegrain](#) telescope, one of the largest amateur telescopes in Canada. In addition, the observatory equipment includes several smaller telescopes, a modern CCD camera for astrophotography, several computers and lots of astronomy software, digital setting circles, an H-alpha filter and projection system for viewing the sun, laser pointer for pointing out constellations and interesting items in the sky, and a variety of eyepieces and filters to help visitors obtain the best possible view of the night sky. The observatory classroom can hold up to 45 visitors. Astronomical slides, video presentations, and demonstrations are part of our classroom activities.

**Left: College of New Caledonia astronomy instructor Bob Nelson shows off his 2 ton labor of love.**