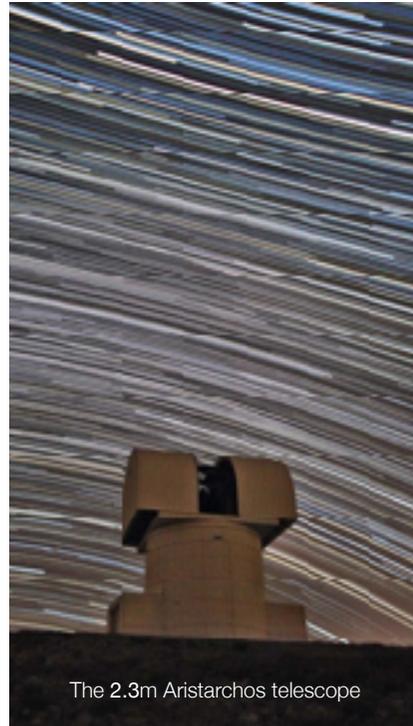


# NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF ATHENS

## ACTIVITIES

- **Morning tours:** Monday-Friday, at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Special programs for elementary, middle and high school students or other groups (in greek and english) are available. Previous arrangement is required.
- **Regular night tours:** four times a month, on Fridays and Sundays, at 8 p.m., for guests of ages 8 years or older. Night observations of the sky using the Newall telescope, weather permitting. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Check the schedule on our website.
- **Private night tours** for groups over 40 people, at 8 p.m. Previous arrangement is required. Night observations of the sky using the Newall telescope, weather permitting.
- **Observations of rare astronomical phenomena,** such as eclipses of the Sun or the Moon, comets, etc.
- **Seminars** at schools, societies, and cultural centers. Public outreach and presentation of subjects related to astronomy and space in the media.

*Parking available. Canteen on site.*



The 2.3m Aristarchos telescope

VISITOR CENTER  
PENTELE



NEWALL TELESCOPE  
DOME

## THE NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF ATHENS

The National Observatory of Athens (NOA) was founded in 1842 as the first research center in Greece. Its headquarters are still in the original historic location at Thissio, across from the Acropolis, in the center of Athens. The Institute for Astronomy, Astrophysics, Space Applications and Remote Sensing (IAASARS), which is one of the three Institutes of NOA, operates the Visitor Center in Penteli. The Visitor Center aims to inform and educate the public on the topics of Astronomy, Astrophysics, and Space Physics via day and evening tours, which offer the unique experience of night observing with the Newall telescope. The total number of visitors since its inauguration in 1995 exceeds 200,000 people, including students from over 6,000 schools.

## THE NEWALL TELESCOPE AND ITS DOME

The Visitor Center is located in the Newall telescope building (see cover), which was constructed from marble from Penteli mountain in 1958, the same material used in many of the classic sculptures and monuments of ancient Athens. The dome has a diameter of 14 meters and is built on the "Koufos" hill, at 508 meters altitude, 15 km from the center of Athens.

The Newall telescope was the largest telescope in the world from 1869 until 1873. It is a refractive telescope with a lens diameter of 62.5 cm, length of 9 meters and a total weight of 16 tons. The telescope was named after the wealthy British amateur astronomer and engineer Robert Stirling Newall, who commissioned Thomas Cook to build it for his private observatory.



Its construction took 7 years prior to its installation in a dome in the city of Gateshead, England in 1869. From 1890 until 1957, the telescope was hosted by Cambridge University, contributing to a number of scientific discoveries. It was donated to NOA in 1957 and placed in its current location in Penteli in 1959, remaining the largest telescope in Greece until 1975. The telescope continued its scientific operations until the mid-1980s, serving the greek astronomical community. It is now used solely for educational purposes and public outreach events. In 2005, a modern reflective telescope with a mirror diameter of 35 cm was installed next to the large dome of the Newall telescope and is also used for night observations. In 2013, the dome, its vertically moving wooden floor, and the telescope were fully restored, bringing the whole structure to its original glory.

Discover the Universe with us!

Photography: T. Matsopoulos

## THE ARISTARCHOS TELESCOPE

IAASARS also operates the Aristarchos telescope, which is the largest telescope in Greece, with a mirror diameter of 2.3 meters. Aristarchos is located at Helmos Observatory, at an altitude of 2340 meters, near the city of Kalavryta.