STRONOMY:
arrival of HALLEY's comet

COMBINED REPORT & INFORMATION FROM Edward Harris, Editor, York Astronomical Society, and Gene Duplantier, Canada.

TRATING AND EXCITING, is the arrival of Hallo's
t. Frustrating for those, like the editor here,
has no decent astronomical instruments to take
os of it, save an attempt yo use a video camera
he night sky. Exciting because it is such a rare
it.

far as my memory goes into it, Halley's comet
first recorded on the Bayeux Tapestry in 1066
the Battle of Hastings was in full swing. This
a very long lenth of cloth which depicts the
et, embroidered into the pictures.

E RETURN OF HALLEY'S COMET reproduced from NOVA ALGOL
olication of the York Astronomical Society. spring 1985.
Olav Wilde.

Lley's comet is on its way back. It should become vis-
le to the naked eye in December. It will be a chance for
nbers to observe the comet, if they have not already
ne so. Unfortuneately observers in the Northern Hemis-
ere (like us) won't be able to get a brilliant view of
e comet due to unfavourable approach, which places the
n between us and the comet at Perihelion.
However it will be visible to the naked eye low down in
e South by early 1986,

According to our expert behind our telescopes, Trevor
od, we should be able to see down to magnitude +13,
us or minus magnitude depending on sky conditions,
erefore it will be around mid August that we may get our
rst glance at the comet through one of our main teles-
pes. Then over the next few months its position can be
otted among the stars and notes made of its gradual

brightness.

It's funny that after all these thousands(?) of years that Halley's Comet has come and gone, retaining all its mysteries, that it should be on this return that we are going to confront it head on, literally, as Giotto, ESA's Halley probe will actually dive straight into the comet on a Kamikazi mission). Four or five spacecraft will try and discover the secrets of our regular visitor. (It would be interesting to see what technology, if any, can come up with next time the comet comes round. Who knows, maybe Man will be advanced enough in centuries to come, to actually be able to CAPTURE the comet, perhaps by using magnetic stabilising fields. Then not only will we KNOW how it is formed, but Man will have a cheap source of electrical power. For this comet, it does appear to be a kind of Atomic fusion, which scientists can only dream about producing on Earth-I speak from a Sciense fiction-cum-fact standpoint-EDITOR). PS. It might even give a clue as to its propulsion in space.)

The York Astronomical Society may even go outside the city of York, to observe the comet from dark, unobserved areas to get a clear horizon because you won't see much (anything!) sat in the middle of a city. (seeing the comet on TV is nothing like seeing it in real life, what was it that President Kennedy said?).

If you have a camera drive it will be an ideal chance to use it (or build one) so that you can take shots of the comet over the months of its apparition. Even a short undriven exposure will show the comet.

The comet is strange in that it links us with our ancient ancestors and just for a while all those years between us will disappear. In this sense, Halley's Comet is Timeless. But one thing is for sure, if you don't make an effort to observe it this time round it will probably be the last chance you ever get.

H A L L E Y ' S C O M E T D A T A

FROM MARCH TO 15 MAY HALLEY'S COMET MOVES FROM NORTHERN ORION INTO TAURUS, just to the left of Hyades

More detailed co-ordinates and magnitudes:

March 1st R.A. 4 92 hrs. Dec. 13.6°
April 1st - R.A. 4 86hrs Dec. 14.6°
May 1st. R.A. 4. 97hrs DEC. 16.73°

Magnitudes are 16.2, 16.0 and 15.7 respectively.

It would be interesting to plot these positions on a star map over the next year or so to see the movement of the comet. Anyone wanting to help, contact: INTERNATIONAL HALLEY WATCH, Jet Propulsion Lab. Mailstop T-1166, 4800 Oak Grove, Pasadena, USA. California 91109.