

## The Observation of the Transit of Mercury - 09.05.2016

### Equipment Used:

Standard Solarscope; 40mm Aperture; Projected image on screen 80mm diameter.

### Notes:

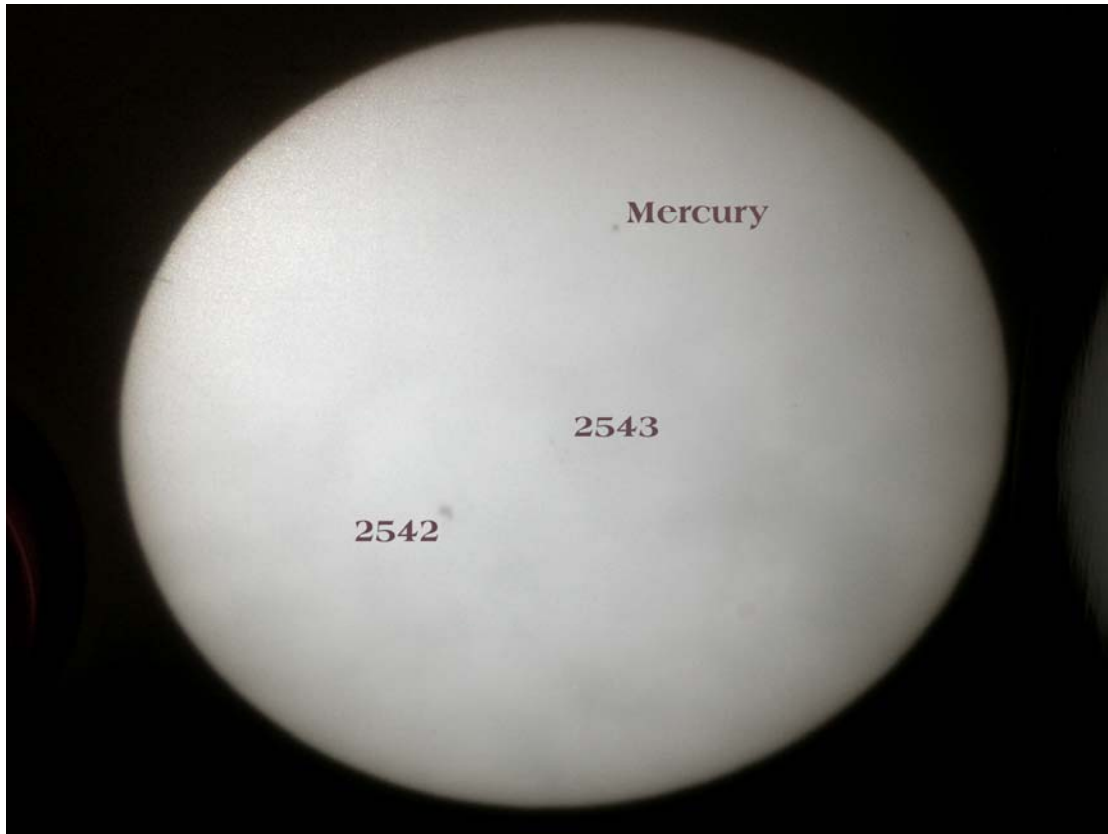
The event was due to take place from 11:12 UT (12:12 BST) to around 18:40 UT (19:40 BST) with the complete transit visible from the UK. But the weather had other ideas...

All morning total cloud cover made solar viewing impossible and the start of the transit (ingress) was not observed. However, at around 15:10 (BST), the Sun began to find gaps in the cloud and there were periods of hazy sunshine. My Solarscope was ready to go and just had to be aimed at the Sun so within a few moments I was observing.



There was a fair amount of haze and wispy cloud which hampered focusing but I was able to observe for the next couple of hours (with breaks when cloud blocked my view).

The first noticeable feature was not Mercury but a decent sized sunspot (2542). Mercury was the, much smaller, dot to the right and above sunspot 2542 in my projection unit. During a few moments of reduced haze I was able to observe what looked like a hair on the scope but after cleaning and blowing to remove it I still had this small curved 'crease' or 'wrinkle' between the sunspot and Mercury.



Later with cloud blocking the view I popped indoors to go online to SOHO Sunspots in order to check the number of the sunspot I was observing. I'm afraid that I'm unable to write what I said when I saw the same 'wrinkle'. It wasn't a hair or a piece of dust it was a small sunspot region (2543). There was a tiny third sunspot (2541) but with the haze it was too small for me to resolve with my equipment.

Over the couple of hours of observation Mercury slowly drifted away from sunspot 2542 towards the edge of the Sun's disk.

At around 17:45 (BST) thicker cloud began to roll in so I packed away everything. My last observation was made at 17:47 (BST). The end of the transit (egress) was not observed.

The clearest/sharpest observations were made between 16:15 and 16:45 (BST) when the haze was thinner. Not quite the observation I was hoping for but there's not much one can do about the weather and I'm happy that I was able to watch, at least, some of the transit.

Clear Skies,

Chris Ashman