This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Society for Popular Astronomy. The SPA was founded as the Junior Astronomical Society in 1953, and in 2003 it became Britain’s largest amateur astronomical society, with nearly 3000 members.

Tradition has it that the JAS was born ‘on the steps of Burlington House’, where the BAA has its offices and used to hold its meetings. A group of BAA members were concerned that the BAA was not doing anything for beginners to astronomy, and particularly youngsters. Newcomers to astronomy found the BAA’s high standards hard to reach at first, and many dropped by the wayside.

It may be hard today to appreciate the nature of the problem. There are now many sources of information, such as books, magazines, TV programmes and the Internet. But in the 50s, astronomy books were few and far between, there were no astronomy magazines readily available in the UK, and in the papers astronomy was generally represented only by monthly night sky columns.

Telescopes, too, were a rarity. There were one or two British manufacturers, making basic 3-inch refractors or 6-inch reflectors at what would be considered high prices. WW2 surplus was the main source of optical equipment, and an 8-inch telescope, usually home-made, was regarded as a large amateur instrument. Many beginners had little chance of looking through a telescope larger than about 50 mm aperture.

The society’s founder was a London amateur called Eric Turner, whose idea was to present practical and theoretical astronomy in an uncomplicated way, free of jargon. He enlisted the support of Ernest Noon, an experienced astronomical educator, and others, including an enthusiast called Patrick Moore, then in his mid 20s, in his pre-Sky at Night days. According to Turner, the society’s secret to success was giving beginners what they really needed, with a personal
A nucleus of like-minded enthusiasts gathered – their ages ranging between 5 and 92 – and the society was officially launched as the Junior Astronomical Society on the spring equinox, 21 March 1953. The choice of the society’s first name may seem odd to us today, but the intention was to indicate that the society catered for those junior in knowledge, rather than junior in terms of age alone.

The society asked well-known Chester amateur Richard Baum to be its first editor. Early issues of *The Junior Astronomer* were produced bi-monthly on a stencil duplicator, a method of printing which will probably be unfamiliar to anybody under the age of 30. The first issue contained articles on ‘Observing with a Giant Telescope’ by Patrick Moore -- about his experiences using the 33-inch refractor at Meudon -- and ‘Astronomical Myths and Hoaxes’ by Richard Baum. One would not be surprised to see similar articles in any issue of the modern *Popular Astronomy*. Within months, word got round and the society rapidly attracted a predominantly young membership, mostly in Britain but with some members in other countries.

An advertisement sheet was included with the first issue from a company called HQ and General Supplies of London. This item -- a name that many older amateurs will recall as a source of war surplus equipment. They offered ‘War Office Model’ binoculars for £3 10s (£3.50) as well as a wide variety of clothing, including RAF flying helmets and ‘Heavy Gauge WAAF knickers, Air Force Blue’.

After a new issue, the magazine was professionally printed. The cover, showing a young man observing with a reflector larger than himself, and surrounded by moons, comets and other astronomical objects, was skilfully executed by a young member with an artistic talent named David A Hardy. Fittingly, this now world-famous astro-artist has produced the covers for the society’s 25th and 50th anniversary magazines.

The JAS observing sections starting in 1960 with the Occultation Section, followed a year later by both the Variable Star Section and Lunar Section. There followed an Astrophotography Section, Planetary Section, Meteor Section, Solar Section, Comet Section, Deep Sky Section and Aurora Section. The sections have actively promoted observational astronomy and have helped thousands of people become better watchers of the sky by offering one-to-one advice.

Also in 1960 the magazine changed its name to Hermes and began to include increasing numbers of illustrations. I remember being very impressed by the first issue I received when I joined in October 1962. The editorial pages had headings in Latin, such as *Pro Bono Publico* and *Optimus Astrologorum Iuniorum Amicus*. I never did find out what the latter meant. I just assumed that this was the way real amateur astronomers did things. Actually, that was the magazine’s only ever venture into Latin headings, which is probably a good thing.

The same issue advertised the Charles Frank 4-inch reflector for £32 and the Wildey 6-inch ‘Galaxy’ reflector, at an unattainable (for me) 65 guineas (£68.25). The society’s annual subscription at this time was just 10 shillings (50p), plus 1s entrance fee -- just as at the society’s foundation.

The magazine became increasingly professional in appearance, but by 1966 it became clear that the long lead times required by letterpress printing meant that we could not keep members informed of recent events and discoveries. So I volunteered to produce Circulars, available for an extra subscription. We expected maybe a couple of hundred members to subscribe, and had a spirit duplicator lined up to run off the issues, but they were a runaway success and issue 2 was printed on litho. The advent of instant print meant that we could respond quickly to events, and more than once we were first with the news of nova or comet discoveries. The News Circulars, now included with the subscription, continue the same mix of professional and amateur news, under the editorship of Peter Grego. They remain a unique source of recent information from observers as to what is happening in the skies.

(Continued on page 3)
In 1980 the magazine's name changed to *Popular Astronomy*, partly because Hermes was not particularly descriptive of the magazine's nature, partly because some people didn't know how to pronounce it, and also to encourage older beginners to join who might be put off by the society's junior image. Under the editorship of experienced journalists such as Paul Sutherland and Ian Ridpath, it set very high standards which are upheld today by Peter Grego.

By the 1990s, it became clear that young people were less happy than previously to be called 'junior', while many older beginners felt equally unhappy with the title. After much discussion, in 1994 the society changed its name to Society for Popular Astronomy, but the aims in its constitution remained unchanged -- to advance education in astronomy, and to help beginners, irrespective of their age, to learn about astronomy.

We felt that the new title would not put off younger members, but it is sadly true that we have fewer young members now than ever before, though the style and content of the society have a very broad appeal. What would have happened if we had kept the old name? I feel that the society would be in very poor shape, with only the present young members and considerably fewer older ones. The reasons for the lack of young people in astronomy have been discussed many times, so I won't go into them again, but I don't think our old name would really have encouraged the present generation of computer-literate and streetwise kids to join us.

Quarterly meetings have always been held in London. It seems strange but true that in the early days these meetings started at 6 pm on a Saturday evening, lasting till 9 pm. I felt no qualms as a 15-year-old returning home alone on the tube, though these days I would not be so unconcerned! It was under Michael Maunder's presidency in 1967 that we started meeting in the afternoon. In addition these days there are two special presentations at the London Planetarium, which are usually devoted to beginners' sessions on learning the constellations.

Today, 50 years on, the SPA is offering its members a real society, with meetings, advice, observing, a great magazine and also modern innovations such as e-circulars, sponsored by Springer. The annual subscription is now still only £12, low by today's standards. We look round the world and see members, or one-time members, in leading posts in observatories and science centres, and of course at home many of our members are leading lights in the amateur community. To find out more, visit our website: www.popastro.com.

Robin Scagell
SPA Vice President

**Free Popular Astronomy!**

To celebrate their Golden Jubilee the SPA are offering a free trial copy of the special anniversary issue of their magazine *Popular Astronomy* to non-members. To receive a copy, UK subscribers should simply send two First Class stamps plus your name and address to: The SPA Secretary, 36 Fairway, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5DU, England. Overseas subscribers will need to send two International Reply Coupons in place of the stamps. No stamps/coupons - no *Popular Astronomy*! Copies are limited to one per applicant and are available only while stocks last.

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**Book Review**

by Andy Salmon, Midlands Spaceflight Society

**The Continuing Story of the International Space Station**

By Peter Bond
Springer-Praxis (2002)
392 pp (hbk)

The International Space Station (ISS). Like ISS or loathe it, this is a good book to summarise the whole endeavour as of the end of 2001. Don't be fooled by the moniker “the continuing story” though I presume this alludes to the fact that there is another Springer-Praxis book about ISS. The book actually presents the highlights of early proposals, like Edward Hale's “Brick moon”; and early space stations, such as the Soviet Salyut and US Skylab. More than one chapter is taken up with the saga of the Mir space station and this neatly concludes the story in "The Mir space station" 1997 book by David Harland in the same series. Mir was deliberately burned up in 2001.

The book is worth reading for the chapter “Metamorphosis” alone. This deftly summarises the tortuous history of ISS from even before President Reagan's announcement of plans to build a space station in his 1984 "state of the union" speech to the launch into Earth orbit of the first ISS element in 1998.

There are many web sites about facets of the ISS project but this book has the convenience of having all the pertinent background in just one volume. From launch sites and launch vehicles to power, communications, food and life support system details. When I needed life support information, to consider the issues of not having regular Space Shuttle visits, and didn’t have access to the Internet, the book was invaluable.

Details are provided of ISS construction and operations from the launch of the first module, Zarya, in November 1998 to the handover of the expedition 3 and 4 crews in December 2001. I recommend the newsstand magazine “Spaceflight” as a continuing source of onboard information to continue the story after 2001. The chapter “Value for money” gives some of the arguments pro and con concerning the utility of science on ISS. This omits use of ISS in preparation for human missions beyond low Earth orbit, but, to be fair, this was not spoken about until recently, for fear of politicians taking an unhealthy interest. Earlier chapters highlight the fact that, like Apollo, ISS is more a “political” than a “science” program but there is the potential to turn this around, as Apollo did.

The book ends with the chapter “Future uncertain”. This explains the cutbacks of 2001. The year that saw an extravagant orbital base in the film of the same name in reality saw dramatic reductions in both crewing and facilities for ISS. After the Columbia disaster the future is doubly uncertain but that tragedy may just knock some heads together to get a productive future for ISS thrashed out.
After very poor autumn weather, the clear night skies of spring gave us the opportunity to make some fantastic observations. We started in January with webcam observations of an asteroid which had been discovered and named back in 1965 by one of our current members, Dr David Andrews. It is asteroid 1727 Mette and is named after his wife. An animation was created to show its movement through part of Leo over a few hours. Using a more advanced webcam (a Philips 2UCam) and some excellent free software obtained from the Internet, we produced some fabulous pictures of Jupiter and Saturn. Many excellent pictures of a wide variety of deep sky objects taken during February culminated in a very successful Messier Marathon undertaken on 22/23 March, which resulted in 98 out of a maximum possible total of 100 visible objects being imaged with a colour CCD camera (Starlight Express MX5-C). We believe that this has never been achieved before anywhere in the UK and possibly Europe. All this, along with a membership nearing 100 and 3 exciting meetings a month (including a practical evening) and you can see that Astronomy remains an stimulating subject in South Yorkshire. Visit our website for the pictures and further information.

We meet at least twice a month at Mayfield Environmental Education Centre, David Lane, Fulwood, Sheffield.

CONTACTS:
web: www.sheffieldastro.org.uk
email: sheffieldastro@hotmail.com
phone: Darren on 0114-269-2291

The Hull & East Riding AS
Hull & East Riding AS completed its 50th year in April and is now looking forwards to the future after years in the doldrums, despite the hard work of its members. Many and varied lectures were presented during the year, by both Society members and guests, and were well-attended throughout. In previous years, membership had dwindled to alarming levels but an increase in the last year or two has brought it back to reasonable levels.

The 50th Anniversary meeting was led by Society president Tony Scaife and he presented a wide-ranging review of astronomical and space history, in conjunction with the Society events of the same time. Former members and guests were warmly welcomed and were able to add their own recollections to a fascinating evening.

At the AGM in April, Tony Scaife, the Society president, decided to stand down from the position and was warmly congratulated for the years of work, 7 in total, on the Society's behalf and there was a short presentation in recognition of this. His successor turned out to be Rob Overfield, elected to the position in the first contested vote for a number of years. The year ended with a celebratory cake-cutting and a bit of fun with a cryptic astro-quiz, which had the members puzzling for the answers!

Croxteth Park Star Party March 2003
Over the weekend of 8th & 9th March 2003, the Liverpool Astronomical Society held the latest in its now legendary ‘Public Star Parties’. As usual, the event was staged in and around Croxteth Hall and also as usual the weather played a big part in the weekends proceedings.
Saturday daytime was a damp affair and by 6.30pm we were ready for the first partygoers to arrive. The rain showed little sign of easing during the whole evening and not surprisingly only around 30 members of the public took time to attend.

Sunday promised to be a much better day. The afternoon was bright and sunny and hopes were high for a really good evening. But, the weather had other ideas and by teatime it was very dull with the threat of rain not far away.

The rains duly arrived by around 6.00pm but there were signs of clear skies on the horizon (literally). A gentle wind was pushing a clear patch of sky towards the hall and by 7-ish there could be heard the rattle of telescopes being set up in the grounds outside the hall.

At last! people could look through the telescopes. There were five scopes dotted around the car park. The Moon, Jupiter and Saturn were all viewed with some excitement by young and old alike. A few other bright objects, such as M45, and the double cluster in Perseus were also viewed.

The clouds were interrupting views throughout the evening, but on the whole the 100 or so members of the public attending went away very happy.

Astro-Camp
South West 2003
The event starts Thursday 28th August 2003 until Sunday 31st August 2003

At West Buckland School
West Buckland,
Nr Barnstaple,
North Devon.

(Hosted by the North Devon Astronomical Society, on behalf of the South West Astronomical Association)

The 3rd summertime gathering of amateur astronomers from the South West of England and beyond

Camping on the School grounds Available from Thursday 28th to Sunday 31st August 2003
(Or use local tourist accommodation. See www.staynorthdevon.co.uk)

Use of the new observatory
Plenty of space for your own equipment
Barbecue Saturday Evening
Rocket launching Saturday afternoon.
Plus, there are other attractions in the local North Devon area.

e-mail for camping booking form
(£3 pppn, under 16 free):
john@parratt8017.freeserve.co.uk

Visit www.halien.com/SWAA/ for reports of last year’s event
A Hard Act to Follow

If, like me you were fortunate enough to attend one of the talks that John Dobson gave around the UK last September I’m sure you’ll never forget the experience. I made the mistake of questioning one of his theories. Until that evening I hadn’t been treated like a naughty schoolgirl since I was one!

John was on his way to the Whirlpool Star Party in Ireland when he toured the UK. This year Shannonside Astronomy Club have invited David Levy over from Colorado to be their principal speaker. David is one of the most successful comet discoverers in history having discovered more than 20 comets. With Eugene and Carolyn Shoemaker at the Palomar Observatory in California he co-discovered Shoemaker Levy 9, the comet that collided so spectacularly with Jupiter in 1994.

How often have we had an Emmy award winner address our astronomical societies? David Levy won that accolade in 1998 as part of the writing team for the Discovery Channel documentary, “Three Minutes to Impact.” And on his way to Birr, he will be lecturing to the Bristol and West Yorkshire societies and to SAGAS.

Yes, John Dobson will be a hard act to follow but I can safely predict that this will be another memorable tour. The societies haven’t finalised their planning yet, but the dates for your diaries and contact details are shown below:

22 September – Bristol Astronomical Society 19:15 hrs Bristol Grammar School, University Road, Bristol. Contact Tricia Brown 0117 968 5023, email SecretaryBAS@aol.com for details or check our website at http://www.bristolastrosoc.freeserve.co.uk

Enquiries Ken.Willoughby@btinternet.com

24 September – SAGAS 20:00 hrs Chichester High School, Kingsham Road, Chichester. Tickets: £5 from the South Downs Planetarium, and at the SAGAS Summer meeting (Saturday 12th July 2003) at Christ’s Hospital in Horsham. By post from N J Quinn, 15 Newham Lane, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3LR, cheques payable to ‘Worthing Astronomical Society’, SAE required.
Website: http://www.nightlife.demon.co.uk/SAGAS.htm
Enquiries: Nick Quinn, 01903 814090 (evenings)

Tricia Brown
Secretary, Bristol Astronomical Society

Green Witch and the Arizona Sky Village

Jack Newton was one of the speakers at last year’s Whirlpool Star Party held in Birr, County Offaly, Ireland. Besides showing some of his impressive astrophotographs he described the Arizona Sky Village he is setting up on the edge of the Chiricahua Mountains in south-east Arizona. The idea is to create a community of astronomers who appreciate clear, dark skies and who want a home where light pollution is controlled. We liked the sound of this so visited Jack’s web site for more details, then reserved some plots of land. In February Lesley Vertue and I visited the Sky Village to see it for ourselves before making a final commitment.

It was everything we hoped it would be and more. The Chiricahua mountains and nearby Cave Creek Canyon are great for walking and bird-watching, and the skies are absolutely superb. With more than 300 clear nights a year and very dry air it must be one of the best sites available for an astronomers’ village. Arizona also has lots of other attractions for astronomers, including mountain-top observatories with visitor centres. It looks set to become a popular destination for astronomy holidays.

Our visit only lasted a week but it was long enough to convince us to go ahead, and hopefully we will be able to offer holiday accommodation in the Sky Village sometime next year. In the meantime you can read a full account of our visit on our web site at www.green-with.com and can get further details of the Arizona Sky Village at www.arizonaskyvillage.com Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Neil Parker

SHERWOOD OBSERVATORY

At Sherwood Observatory we have experienced a successful session during 2003 thus far.

We now have a personalised web address: http://sherwood-observatory.org.uk/ wherein visitors are kept up-to-date with our lecture program, observing sessions and public open evenings. We continue to run ‘Astronomy Explored’ evening classes for the University of Nottingham Dept of Continuing Education. Dates for most of these activities are now planned into 2004.

We shall be using our 61-cm reflector and 150-mm refractor to effect for National Astronomy Week and the opposition of Mars.

SHROPSHIRE AS

Have been awarded £4490 by the lottery “Awards for All”. The money will be used to purchase a digital projector for hosting Powerpoint and computer-based presentations and videos. Also it will be used to fund two extra meetings this year.
Both have now been scheduled for National Astronomy Week in August. In addition it is intended to spend some time reconstructing all our old display boards so that when shown we can be proud of the presentations – the existing boards are showing their age badly and in need of some TLC. So some money is assigned to printer cartridges, glossy paper, boards, velcro etc. A Meade 125 ETX is also on the shopping list, as well as a Starlight Express CCD Camera and Minitron low light video camera. Hooked up the projector real-time displays of the planets should be impressive.

LOUGHTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS THE 9th EQUINOX SKY CAMP (SPONSORED BY BROADHURST,CLARKSON&FULLER) FRI 26th SEP TILL SUN 5th OCT

AT THE DOWER HOUSE,TOURING PARK, THETFORD EAST HARLING,NORFOLK

COST PER PITCH £10.75 PER NIGHT PREBOOKED QUOTE REF SC9 MIN 2 NIGHTS BOOKINGS PHONE 01953 717314.
Hook ups extra MAIN EVENT DAY: SATURDAY 27th SEP GUEST LECTURES, ASTRO BOOT SALE TRADE STANDS EVENING BBQ AND PRIZE RAFFLE FOR FULL DETAILS SEND AS SAE TO MIKE COOK 2 SUNSET DRIVE HAVERING-ATTE-BOWER ESSEX RM4 1QL

ALL ENQUIRIES MUST REACH ME BY FRI 19th SEPTEMBER

Full details ready in the spring

VISIT www.dowerhouse.co.uk FOR DISCOUNTS
ORWELL AS
On Saturday and Sunday 8th/9th November 2002, the Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich) held its 30th Annual Observatory Open Weekend and supporting exhibition. The event attracted around 500 visitors and was widely reported on by regional Press, TV and Radio and generated a goodly sum for the society funds. As usual the society's telescopes, including their magnificent Tomline Refractor (a 10” O.G Troughton & Simms instrument of 1874 vintage) were available for the public to obtain some splendid views of Saturn and a first quarter moon. Not only was it Orwell's 30th Anniversary of opening to the public, but also just a couple of weeks short of the 30th anniversary of Apollo 17 – the last manned lunar mission. To mark this coincidence, the society had samples of lunar material, much of which was gathered on that mission, on display through the courtesy of PPARC which attracted considerable attention, along with meteorite samples. A wide variety society of displays, along with one by the Society for the History of Astronomy, and four trade stands made for a busy but highly enjoyable weekend.

On the first weekend of January 2003 the society held its AGM and Orwell's Chairman, David Payne, stood down after a remarkable 23 years in office. During David's term of office the society grew from around 30 members to in excess of 100 and became a Registered Charity. The Orwell Park Observatory was also extensively refurbished during that time. David's successor is the former society Treasurer, Kenneth J Goward FRAS. On taking the chair, Ken praised David's long and dedicated service to Orwell AS. The meeting had an optimistic tone, society funds and membership levels have increased year on year. The Secretary, Roy Gooding, announced a very full activity diary for 2003, including the society's first Presidential lecture from Dr Allan Chapman in March and the exciting possibility of the new Millennium Telescope achieving first light towards the end of the year.

Orwell AS can be contacted via their web site www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich

FAS SLIDE LIBRARY
Do you have a collection of your own astronomical slides?
Do you know of someone else who has such a collection?
If so the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS) would like to hear from you.

As you may know, the FAS has a slide library, from which people can select appropriate slides for use in talks, etc. The FAS would like to update its library and we are asking if anyone has slides they could offer us. We are not asking to buy your slides, it has to be a donation, so why should you bother? Well, you will be credited for the slide, so your work will be seen and acknowledged by the astronomical community - it seems a shame to go to all the trouble of taking the pictures and very few people seeing them. Additionally, the FAS receives requests from publishers for slides needed for books, etc.. If your slide is used, you will get a fee - the FAS will act as your agent in this case and deal with the paperwork and cheques.

What does the slide library need at the moment? Well, whole constellations, wider shots showing two or more constellations, phases of the Moon, solar slides, meteors, comets (particularly Hale-Bopp and Hyakutake, but any modern comet will do), aurora, deep sky objects, in fact, any good quality astronomical slide will be considered. Most of the library slides are very old so the whole collection needs updating.

So, if you think you have something suitable, in the first instance e-mail me at bobdryden@ntworld.com or telephone 01491 201620 so we can discuss what you have and what we need. We do not want to keep your slides permanently. We copy your original slide and then return it to you.

Please try and help - there could be money in it if a publisher sees them, plus your name will get known.

Bob Dryden (FAS Slide Librarian)

SOCIETY ROUND UP

ABINGDON AS
Meetings at 8.00 pm in the Methodist Church Hall, Dorchester Crescent, Abingdon. Bob Dryden, 01491 201620, or Sebastian Linfoot, 01865 725094 www.abingdonastro.org.uk

AS OF HARINGEY

ASSOCIATION OF FALKIRK ASTRONOMERS
Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month, in the Old Folks Welfare Hall in Laurieston, Falkirk, at 7.30 pm. Walter Scott (Secretary), 01324 716344 www.astronomy-falkirk.co.uk

ASTRONOMY SECTION OF LA SOCIETE
Meetings at the Observatory, Rue du Lorier, St. Peters, Guernsey. Every Tuesday evening and Friday if clear for observing. www.astronomy.org.gg

BIRMINGHAM AS
Wednesday Evenings at Aston Uni. Club Night; Library, telescope construction, & if it is clear observing at the Priory Observatory. www.birmingham-astronomy.co.uk

24-Jun The US Naval Observatory Martin Lunn
26-Aug Mars: The Red Planet SPA computer slide show + short talks
30-Sep Ramblin through the Autumn and Winter Skies Paul Money

BRADFORD AS
Meetings held at Ecclesfield Library, Bolton Road, Bradford at 7.30 pm Hilary on 01274 672570 or Mike on 01274 637374 www.bradford-astro.free.fr

12-Jun John Goodricke and Edward Piggot Martin Lunn MBE
16-Jun Practical Session Rod Hine
30-Jun Basking in the sunshine Dr Robert Walsh
14-Jul TBA
28-Jul Video Night
18-Aug Members Night
01-Sep Rambling through the autumn and winter skies Paul Money
15-Sep TBA
29-Sep Fire and Ice on Mars Prof Lionel Wilson, Univ. of Lancaster

BRISTOL AS
Meetings held on Friday evenings at 7.15pm at Bristol Grammar School, University Road, Bristol. John Pickard (Vice Chairman), tel. 01454 632692 or Tricia Brown (Secretary), tel. 0117 968 5023 www.bristolastsoc.freeserve.co.uk

CARDIFF AS
Meetingsalternate Thursdays, September to July, 7.30 pm at Dept of Physics and Astronomy, Univ. of Wales, 5 The Parade, Newport Road, Cardiff. David Powell (Secretary), 029 2055 1704. Email CAS@liddat.demon.co.uk. carinaasco.cf.ac.uk/cas/cas_home.html

12-Jun Exploration of the Moon Dr. Mike Leggett
26-Jun Three Short Talks Cardiff AS
10-Jul Mars Odyssey, A History of Mars Observations Andy Lound

CORNWALL AS
Meet twice every month from Jan to November on the second and fourth Thursdays at The Godolphin Club Wendron St, Helston. 01326 562386 e-mail jmh@eurobell.co.uk.

COTSWOLD AS
Meets second Saturday of every month at Shurdington Church Hall, Shurdington, Cheltenham, 7.45 pm. Duncan Willoughby (01452-123456) www.cotswoldas.org.uk

14-Jun Astro imaging John Fletcher, Cotswold AS
12-Jul Informal Evening
09-Aug The Green Flash Mike Frost, Coventry AS
13-Sep Starting out in Astronomy

EASTBOURNE AS
Meet on the first Saturday of the month from October to July, in the Willingdon Memorial Hall, Church Street, Willingdon. Meetings start at 7.30pm Peter Gill, tel. 01323 646853

FARNHAM AS
Meetings held at The United Reform Church, Farnham.
Barry Bellinger. Tel 07879 404603. www.farnhamas.plus.com

10-Jul Space Equipment Steve Aching, AGM
12-Jul Stonehenge visit
14-Aug Farnham members Exhibits Astronomy week
11-Sep Deep Sky Owen Brazell

HANNEY & DISTRICT AS
Meetings held at 8.00pm, British Legion Hall, Hanney
Sue Connell Secretary 01235 766688

HARROGATE AS
Meetings now at Harlow Community Centre (The Green Hut), Beechwood Avenue, Harrogate Maryln Smith (01937 531171) or Tony Bills (01423 501976)

HEBBEN BRIDGE AS
Meet at Hope Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, every 4th Wednesday from September to May, at 7-30pm.
John Singleton, 01282 616294, email: j_singleton@argonet.co.uk www.hbs.org.uk

HUDDERSFIELD ASTRO & PHIL. SOCIETY
Meetings at Observatory and Town Hall
www.huddersfieldastronomy.co.uk

ILKESTON & DISTRICT AS
Meetings take place after 7:30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of every month, in the function room, Erwood Museum, Anchor Row, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Mary McNulty, 01298 782834. http://members.aol.com/idasastro

10-Jun We Are Not Alone Neil Haggath
05-Jul Shipley Park Night Watch 21:30 to 00:15
08-Jul Long Ago and Far Away Dr. Patrick Sherry
12-Aug TBA
30-Aug National Astronomy Week Display of work + activities (all day).
09-Sep TBA

LEEDS AS
Centenary House, North Street, Leeds between 7:00 pm and 9.30 pm leedsastronomy.org.uk
11-Jun Black Holes – Fact or Fiction? Dr. Chris Done
09-Jul 35 Years of Pulsar Astronomy Prof. Anthony Hewish, 27-Aug Life on Mars & the Beagle 2 Mission Dr. Monica Grady, 10-Sep The Theory and Practice of the Astrolabe Harry Middleton, 12-Aug TBA

LIVERPOOL AS
Venue for monthly meetings is the Roman Catholic Cathedral's Crypt Concert Room, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. Meetings commence at 7pm until 9pm. Weekly commence at 7pm until 9pm. Weekly Meetings at the Society's Pex Hill Observatory every Weds 7-9pm (later if weather allows use of telescopes). Details from the Director of Obs 0151-292 7165 Secretary: Tel 0151-638 3270 or email: clarklunar@aol.com

LOUGHTON AS
Meeting every Thursday at 8.00 pm. in the Scout Hall, Loughton Lane, Theydon Bois, Essex. las-astro.org.uk

MILTON KEYNES AS
MKAS have received a grant of £3250 from Awards for All. This is for a data projector and accessories. This will help greatly in our outreach programme of bringing astronomical information (and images) to the wider population of Milton Keynes.
Meet at Rectory Cottages, Church Green Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes. 8pm on alternate Fridays www.mkas.org.uk
13-Jun Stellar Processes Kevin Birkett
27-Jun Astronmeet Dave Coveney
11-Jul TBA Alex Prior
25-Jul Astronmeet (Short Talks) Owen Brazell
08-Aug: Women in Space Angela Kushner
22-Aug Astronomers’ Questions Time Ken Willoughby on 01977 795535 or email: KKen.Willoughby@tesco.net
29-Aug Open Night for National Astronomy Week Short Talk about Mars - Mike Leggett
05-Sep Astronmeet
19-Sep Open Night

NEWBURY AS
Meets at United Reformed Church Hall, Cromwell Place, Newbury, starting at 7.30pm. Ann Davies, tel. 01635 30598 or David Boyd, tel. 012357 65985 Email: naas@btinternet.com www.naas.btinternet.co.uk

NORTH EAST LONDON AS
Meets normally on the third Sunday of each month (excluding August) between 3pm and 6pm, in the Park Room, Wanstead House, 21, The Green, Wanstead. Bernard Beeston, tel. 020 8363 5696
22-Aug Open Night for National Astronomy Week Short Talk about Mars - Mike Leggett
05-Sep Astronmeet
19-Sep Open Night

PAPWORTH ASTRONOMY CLUB
The Papworth Astronomy Club meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in Papworth Everard, near Huntingdon, either in the Bradbury Progression Centre or in Upper Pendrill Court. Our meetings are open to everyone.
Meetings 7.30pm at the Scout Hall, Loughton Lane, Theydon Bois, Essex. las-astro.org.uk
13-Jun Stellar Processes Kevin Birkett
27-Jun Astronmeet Dave Coveney
11-Jul TBA Alex Prior
25-Jul Astronmeet (Short Talks) Owen Brazell
08-Aug: Women in Space Angela Kushner
22-Aug Astronomers’ Questions Time Ken Willoughby on 01977 795535 or email: KKen.Willoughby@tesco.net
29-Aug Open Night for National Astronomy Week Short Talk about Mars - Mike Leggett
05-Sep Astronmeet
19-Sep Open Night

PAPWORTH ASTRONOMY CLUB
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SCARBOROUGH & DISTRICT AS
Public observing nights at The Astronomy Centre, Dalby Forest, Thornton Dale, near PICKERING, North Yorkshire, on the first Friday of every month ( except June and July ). 01723 500389. www.scarborough-as.org.uk

01-Aug 3 nights observing at Dalby Forest download a booking form (from the S&DAS website)

SHEFFIELD AS
meet at least twice a month at Mayfield Environmental Education Centre, David Lane, Fulwood, Sheffield S10. Darren on 0114-269-2291, sheffieldastro@hotmail.com www.sheffieldastro.org.uk
09-Jun One Small Step - The Apollo Missions Andy Green
23-Jun Informal Evening
14-Jul Genesis - The Birth of Stars Paul Money
28-Jul Informal Evening

SHERWOOD OBSERVATORY
Contact admin@sherwood-observatory.org.uk, sherwood-observatory.org.uk
24-Jun Our Galaxy, The Milky Way Paul Money
30-Jul BBQ

SHROPSHIRE AS
Speaker meetings are generally held on the first Friday of the month in Shrewsbury with a monthly observing meeting at Rodington Village Hall once a month. We also have a society BBQ and occasional visits to sites of astronomical interest. Phone 01952 826082 for details. www.astro.cf.ac.uk/sas/sasmain.htm

27-Aug The Planet Mars Paul Money
29-Aug Sir Isaac Remembers... Prof Mike Edmunds, Univ. of Wales

SOLENT AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS
Meetings are held in Room 8 Oaklands Centre, Fairisle Rd, Lordshill Southampton, 7:30 to 10pm on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Ken Medway 02380 582204 e mail kennedway@kennedway.demon.co.uk www.delscope.demon.co.uk
17-Jun Transits Robin Gorman
15-Jul Deep Sky Observing Owen Brazell
19-Aug Mars Global Surveyor Jerry Workman
16-Sep Building a Telescope Steve Harris

SOUTHAMPTON AS
Meetings are held in the Seminar Room, Floor 5, Physics and Astronomy Building 46, University of Southampton, at 7-30 pm, on the 2nd Thurs of the month.
John Thompson, 023 8084 2531, e-mail: John.G.Thompson@tesco.net www.southampton-astronomical-society.org.uk
12-Jun Impacts from Space Dr. Malcolm Coe
10-Jul Short Talks by Members
11-Sep AGM and “Astronomy Reminiscences” Jeff Higgins

STRATFORD UPON AVON AS
Meetings 7.30pm at the Home Guard Club, Tiddington, Nr Stratford upon Avon. Mike Whitecross 01789 731784. www.astro.org.uk
11-Jun Club night
24-Jun Understanding Nothing - the vacuum of space Dr. Nick Evans
14-Aug Barbecue
22-Jul Heavenly Weather Ross Reynolds
13-Aug Sundial Workshop
26-Aug Planet Mars Jerry Workman
10-Sep Favourite astronomy & dark sky holiday locations
23-Sep Imaging the Universe Robert Massey

SWANSEA AS
Meetings held at Theatre C Science Tower, Swansea University Mike Morales (01792-528497). www.swan.ac.uk/astro/starpage.htm

WEST DIDSBURY AS
Meets 7.00 - 9.00 pm on 2nd Monday of the month except for July (1st Monday) and August (no meeting), at City College Manchester, Fielden Campus, 141 Barlow Moor Rd, West Didsbury. Kate Graham on 957 1672 http://groups.msn.com/westdidsburyastronomicalsociety

WEST YORKSHIRE AS

WOLVESHAMPTON AS
Meets alternate Mondays, at 7:30pm, between September and April, with additional meetings in May and June, at Beckminster Methodist Church Hall, Birches Barn Road, Wolverhampton. Michael Bryce, 01562 742859, email editor@wolvas.org.uk www.wolvas.org.uk

WORTHING AS
All Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month unless otherwise stated, at Heene Church Rooms, Worthing at 7.30 p.m. Meetings include the latest astronomical work, reports and, photographs by members call 01903 521205, or Email: worshiping_astronomical_society@hotmail. com. www.was.org.uk

11-Jun The Planet Mars Jerry Workman
09-Jul White Dwarf Stars Konrad Maylin-Smith

YORK AS
Meetings are held in the Denham Room, The Priory Street Centre, York, Meetings start at 7.30 for 8pm. Members £1.00 Non-members £2. Children under 16 are free. Hazel on 07944 751277
06-Jun Results on Lunar & Solar eclipse Informal
20-Jun The Moon Ray Emery - Leeds AS
04-Jul Songs of distant Earth Peter Rea
18-Jul Members observations Informal Meeting - All welcome
01-Aug Observing Satellites Russell Eberst
15-Aug The Other Universe – what gamma rays tell us Dr Joachim Rose
05-Sep BAA Weekend and workshops
19-Sep The Active Sun - living with a star Dr Philippa Browning
Membership Fees for 2003/04
At the AGM in October, the Treasurer indicated that increasing printing, postage, convention and insurance costs meant that membership fees, and possibly PLI fees would need to rise for the 2003/2004 membership year. The precise amounts were to be determined by the Council.

The fees, payable from 1st September 2003, are as follows:

- Membership fee for societies with up to 30 members: £12.50
- Membership fee for societies with more than 30 members: £20.00
- PLI Insurance: £27.50

If you do not have PLI cover, now would be a good time to consider whether you need it. If you do not wish to renew existing PLI cover you should make arrangements for alternative cover for 2004.

If you want to check the details we hold for your society, email the Membership Secretary: membership@fedastro.org.uk

Free posters for NAW
The National Astronomy Week (NAW) 2003 committee have produced a fantastic eye-catching poster which is available free to all FAS societies. The poster can also double as an information leaflet.

On one side, the well designed poster has a NASA image of Mars with space for anyone to add their own information about their society or publicity for any event they have organised for NAW. On the reverse is a very visual summary of information about Mars, its close approach and NAW.

The poster is available from the NAW co-ordinator, the Observatory Science Centre, Herstmonceux. Posters can be ordered via the website: www.astronomyweek.co.uk and there will be a downloadable file of the poster from the site.

Don't forget to let the co-ordinator know about your society's event for it to be posted up on the website.

Make the most of NAW to promote your society.

Pam Spence, Chairman, NAW 2003

Deadline for submission for next newsletter, 17th August 2003
Please remember to send ALL items to the Editor, Callum Potter. Regrettably material can only be returned if supplied with a SAE.

Details of meetings mentioned in the Society Roundup should be confirmed before travelling. All programmes may be subject to change with no notice. The FAS can accept no responsibility for any inaccuracies.