



**PRESIDENT Malcolm Jones**, The Willows, Hawkes Lane, Bracon Ash, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 8EW  
Tel: 01508 578392 (day) / 578783 (evening) E-mail 100257.1434@compuserve.com

**TREASURER Peter Cooke**, Haven Cottage, Frithville, Boston, Lincs, PE22 7DS  
Tel: 01205 750868 E-mail: treasurer@fedastro.org.uk

**SECRETARY Clive Down**, 10, Glan-y-Llyn, NORTH CORNELLY, Bridgend County Borough, CF33 4EF  
Tel: 01656 740754 E-mail secretary@fedastro.org.uk

**EDITOR Callum Potter**, The Cottage, Bredon's Hardwick, Tewkesbury, Glos., GL20 7EE  
Tel: 01684 773256 E-mail newsletter@fedastro.org.uk

# FEDERATION OF ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETIES

ISSUE 72

<http://www.fedastro.org.uk>

**FAS Annual Convention 2003**  
**Saturday, 20th September**  
**Institute of Astronomy**  
**Madingley Road**  
**Cambridge**

### Speakers

**Dr Robin Catchpole**

From the Solar System to the Edge  
of the Observable Universe

**Prof Gerry Gilmore**

Towards the Temperature of Cold Dark Matter

**Bob Mizon**

An A-Z of Astronomy

**Prof Andy Fabian**

The search for Massive Black Holes

**Dr Andrew Coates**

Looking for Life on Mars with Beagle2 and  
Mars Express

**Doors Open 8.30 am - Lectures start 9.00 am**

### Tour the Telescopes

Tours of some of the telescopes will be available during  
lunch break.

Numbers limited - tickets available on the day.

### + Trade Stands and Society Displays

**Note** there are no lunch facilities at the Institute of Astronomy. If you bring a packed lunch this can be eaten in the Institute or the grounds. There are also pubs / restaurants in the vicinity. Tea/coffee will be available during breaks.

### Tickets

£7.00 on the door, or £6.00 in advance from:

John Parratt, 73 Woolbarn Lawn,  
Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple,  
North Devon, EX32 8PQ.

Tel: 01271 372331

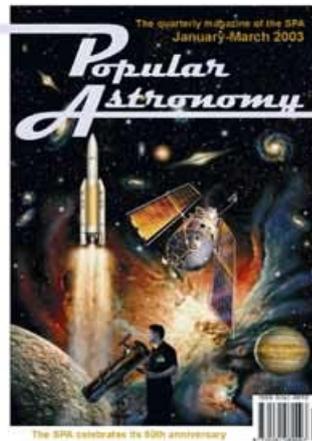
**Numbers limited by theatre capacity to 180**  
**BOOK EARLY to avoid disappointment.**

Directions available at:

<http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/IOA/IOAmap.html>

(programme to be finalised - speakers and arrangements  
may be subject to change.)

## 50 Years of the Society for Popular Astronomy



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 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

*(Continued on page 2)*

touch.

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 Headquarter and General Supplies of London SE5 -- 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 issues, 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 Juniorum 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)*

**Founded in 1823 and based in Bloomsbury,  
Birkbeck specialises in part-time  
University of London degrees by evening study.**



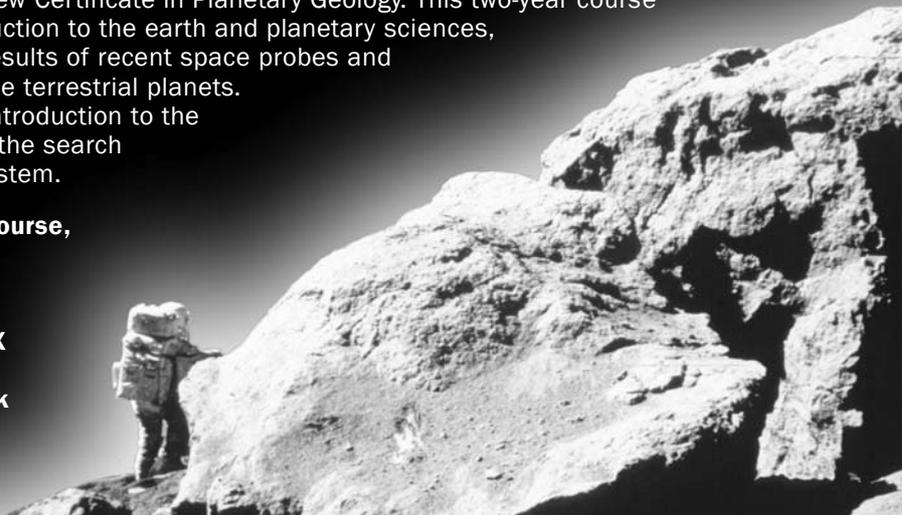
# Certificate in Planetary Geology

We are pleased to announce a new Certificate in Planetary Geology. This two-year course will give students a broad introduction to the earth and planetary sciences, with a strong emphasis on the results of recent space probes and the geological investigation of the terrestrial planets.

The course will also include an introduction to the new science of astrobiology and the search for life elsewhere in the Solar System.

**For further information on this course,  
please contact: Clare Sims,  
School of Earth Sciences  
Birkbeck, University of London  
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX  
tel: 020 7679 7333  
email: c.sims@geology.bbk.ac.uk**

[www.bbk.ac.uk/es](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/es)



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 young 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](http://www.popastro.com).



*SPA Occultation Director Jon Harper ran in this year's London Marathon celebrating their Golden Anniversary*

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.

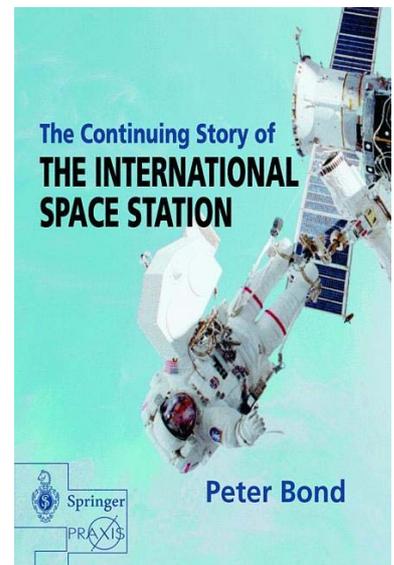
## Book Review

by Andy Salmon, Midlands Spaceflight Society

### The Continuing Story of the International Space Station

By Peter Bond  
Springer-Praxis (2002)  
ISBN 1-85233-567-X  
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 hand-over 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.

## SHEFFIELD AS



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](http://www.sheffieldastro.org.uk)

email : [sheffieldastro@hotmail.com](mailto: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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> summertime gathering of amateur astronomers from the South West of England and beyond

Camping on the School grounds Available from Thursday 28th to Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2003

(Or use local tourist accommodation.  
See [www.staynorthdevon.co.uk](http://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](mailto:john@parratt8017.freeserve.co.uk)

Visit [www.halien.com/SWAA/](http://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.bristolastrofreeserve.co.uk/>

**23 September – West Yorkshire Astronomical Society** 19:30 hrs Carleton Grange Club, Carleton Road, Pontefract, West Yorkshire. (next to observatory.) Admission: Adults £2-50. Concessions £1-25. 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](http://www.green-with.com) and can get further details of the Arizona Sky Village at [www.arizonaskyvillage.com](http://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 computerbased 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 26<sup>th</sup> SEP TILL SUN 5<sup>th</sup> 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 A5 SAE TO  
MIKE COOK 2 SUNSET DRIVE  
HAVERING-ATTE-BOWER  
ESSEX RM4 1QL

ALL ENQUIRIES MUST REACH ME BY  
FRI 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER

Full details ready in the spring

VISIT [www.dowerhouse.co.uk](http://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" OG Troughton & Sims 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 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](http://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 Hyakutaki, 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@ntlworld.com](mailto:bobdryden@ntlworld.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](http://www.abingdonastro.org.uk)

### AS OF HARINGEY

Meetings in 2003 at Ashmole School, Southgate, London N14, at 7.30 pm [www.ashastro.org.uk](http://www.ashastro.org.uk).

18-Jun A Sun-Related Topic Tim Horbury

16-Jul The Cluster Mission Roger O'Brien

17-Sep The Mizon Planetarium Show Bob Mizon

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 Eccleshill Library, Bolton Road, Bradford at 7.30 pm Hilary on 01274 672570 or Mike on 01274 637374

[www.bradford-astro.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.bradford-astro.freeserve.co.uk)

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.bristolastrosc.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.bristolastrosc.freeserve.co.uk)

### CARDIFF AS

Meetings alternate 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@ilddat.demon.co.uk](mailto:CAS@ilddat.demon.co.uk). [carina.astro.cf.ac.uk/cas/cas\\_home.html](http://carina.astro.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

Meets 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](mailto: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](http://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 Bellingier. Tel 07879 400463. [www.farnhamas.plus.com](http://www.farnhamas.plus.com)

10-Jul Space Equipment Steve Ashing, 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), Beckwith Avenue, Harrogate Maryln Smith (01937 531171) or Tony Bills (01423 501976)

### HEBDEN BRIDGE AS

Meets at Hope Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, every 4th Wednesday from September to May, at 7-30pm.

John Singleton, 01282 616294, email: [j.hbas@argonet.co.uk](mailto:j.hbas@argonet.co.uk)

[www.hbas.org.uk](http://www.hbas.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, Erewash Museum, Anchor Row, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Mary McNulty, 01298 78234. <http://members.aol.com/idasaastro>

- 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](http://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,

#### **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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.mkas.org.uk)

- 13-Jun Stellar Processes Kevin Birkett

- 27-Jun Astromet

- 11-Jul TBA Alex Prior

- 25-Jul Astromet (Short Talks)

- 08-Aug Women in Space Angela Kushner

- 22-Aug Astronomers' Questions Time

- 29-Aug Open Night for National Astronomy Week Short Talk about Mars - Mike Leggett

- 05-Sep Astromet

- 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](mailto:naas@btinternet.com) [www.naas.btinternet.co.uk](http://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

#### **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.

Keith Tritton (tel 01767 677219, email [kpt2@tutor.open.ac.uk](mailto:kpt2@tutor.open.ac.uk)).

#### **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](http://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](mailto:sheffieldastro@hotmail.com) [www.sheffieldastro.org.uk](http://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](mailto:admin@sherwood-observatory.org.uk), [sherwood-observatory.org.uk](http://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 820082 for details.

[www.astro.cf.ac.uk/sas/sasmain.htm](http://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 [kenmedway@kenmedway.demon.co.uk](mailto:kenmedway@kenmedway.demon.co.uk) [www.delscope.demon.co.uk](http://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](mailto:John.G.Thompson@tesco.net) [www.southampton-astronomical-society.org.uk](http://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](http://www.astro.org.uk)

- 11-Jun Club night

- 24-Jun Understanding Nothing - the vacuum of space Dr. Nick Evans

- 09-Jul 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/astra/astro/starpage.htm](http://www.swan.ac.uk/astra/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**

Saturday June 7th in the Large ballroom, Carleton Grange Club. Pontefract.

Next to the observatory. Prof. Chandra Wickramasinge. 'Steps Towards Discovering Our Cosmic Ancestry'. Prof. Mike Edmunds. 'Sir Isaac Remembers'. Prof. Mark Bailey (Director of Armagh) Earth Relationships: The Science & Risk. of Near Earth Objects'. Prof. John Brown. ( Astro Royal for Scotland) 'Abra cad Astra. Starts at 10:30 to 17:00. Trade stands. Bar open. Buffet on request £4. Admission £10. Pay on door.

Ken Willoughby on 01977 795535 or

E-mail [ken.willoughby@btinternet.com](mailto:ken.willoughby@btinternet.com)

#### **WOLVERHAMPTON 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](mailto:editor@wolvas.org.uk)

[www.wolvas.org.uk](http://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: [worthing\\_astronomical\\_society@hotmail.com](mailto:worthing_astronomical_society@hotmail.com) [www.was.org.uk](http://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 Phillipa Browning

## LIST OF OFFICERS 2002/2003

**President:** **Malcolm Jones,**

See front cover for details

**Vice President:** **Ron Kelly**

11 Meadowcroft, Plovers Rise, Whitchurch, Shropshire,  
SY13 1BD. Tel: 01948 662201

E-mail: [rpk@ronkelley.demon.co.uk](mailto:rpk@ronkelley.demon.co.uk)

**Secretary:** **Clive Down,**

See front cover for details

**Treasurer:** **Peter Cooke,**

See front cover for details

**Assistant Treasurer:** **VACANT**

**PLI Secretary:** **Eric Hutton,**

29, Paternoster Close, Waltham Abbey, Essex,  
EN9 3JU. Tel: 01992 610243

E-mail: [bookman@rmpc.co.uk](mailto:bookman@rmpc.co.uk)

**Membership Sec.:** **Jack Climpson,**

Two ways, 328 Seafront, Hayling Island, Hants,  
PO11 OES, Tel: 02392468680

E-mail: [membership@fedastro.org.uk](mailto:membership@fedastro.org.uk)

Minutes Secretary: **VACANT**

**Newsletter Editor:** **Callum Potter**

See front cover for details

**Handbook Editor:** **John Parratt**

73 Woolbarn Lawn, Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple, North  
Devon, EX32 8PQ. Tel: 01271 372331

E-mail: [john@parratt8017.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:john@parratt8017.freeserve.co.uk)

**Education Secretary:** **Shaun O'Dell,**

147 Queen Street, Swinton, Mexborough, South Yorkshire,  
S64 8NG Tel: 01709 586695

E-Mail: [shaun@msas.org.uk](mailto:shaun@msas.org.uk)

**Publications Secretary:** **Malcolm Jones,**

See President, front cover for details

**Meetings Organiser :** **Stan Waterman**

Amadeus House, Temple End, Charlton, Hitchin, Herts.

SG4 7TE. Tel: 01462 433912

E-mail: [stanwaterman@aol.com](mailto:stanwaterman@aol.com)

**Publicity Officer:** **John Parratt**

See Handbook Editor above

**Slide Librarian:** **Bob Dryden**

21 Cross Road, Cholsey, Oxon,

OX10 9PE Tel: 01491 201620

E-Mail: [bobdryden@ntlworld.com](mailto:bobdryden@ntlworld.com)

**Website Co-ordinator:** **Gary Gawthrope**

19 Campion Drive Swinton, South Yorkshire,

S64 8QZ Tel: 01709 584116

E-Mail: [gary@theob.f9.co.uk](mailto:gary@theob.f9.co.uk)

**FAS Liason Officer:** **Pam Spence**

1, Water's Edge, Brighton Road, Lancing, West Sussex,

BN15 8LN Tel: 01903 752834

E-mail: [fas@astroscience.fsnet.cop.uk](mailto:fas@astroscience.fsnet.cop.uk)

**Chilterns Group :** **Ian Coulson**

19 Furnace Cottages, Furnace Lane, Finedon, Northants,

NN9 5NZ Tel: 01536 725563,

E-mail: [albedo@freewire.co.uk](mailto:albedo@freewire.co.uk)

**North West Group :** **Ron Kelley**

See Vice President above.

**West Midlands :** **Andy Salmon**

Olympus Mons, 13, Jacmar Crescent, Smethwick, WARLEY,  
West Midlands,

B67 7LF Tel: 0121 5654845,

E-mail: [Andy\\_Salmon@compuserve.com](mailto:Andy_Salmon@compuserve.com)

**Yorkshire Group :** **Paul Harper**

45, Lydgate, Lepton, HUDDERSFIELD, West Yorkshire,

HD8 OLT Tel: 01484 606832

**Devon Group :** **John Parratt**

See Handbook Editor above

**East Anglia Group :** **VACANT**

**SAGAS Rep:** **VACANT**

### 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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, this 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](http://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.