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FEDERATION OF ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETIES

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

The FAS Convention 2005 - A Cornishman's Perspective

A Likely Story.....from the keyboard of Brian Parsons and through the lens of Nick Tonkin, on a weekend trip to the FAS AGM in Cambridge. *The Happy Travellers - Brian Parsons, Nick Tonkin, Mark Timbrell and Frank Johns*

The 2005 FAS Convention was a full day event on Saturday Oct 1st starting at 0830 hrs, and ending (on time) at 1800 hrs. The serious business started with 'Mars Revisited', a review by Dr. Alan Longstaff, from The Royal Observatory, Greenwich, of the evidence disclosed in recent years by a range of Martian rovers and orbital surveyors for and against the prolonged past presence of free standing and flowing water on the surface of Mars.

It would seem that the pictures painted by orbital photography of ancient river beds, shoreline erosion and even frozen pack ice are at odds with the more detailed analysis of the Martian regolith revealed by the surface rovers and by remote orbiting sensors. This author is unqualified to comment at all on the detailed mineralogical arguments presented by Dr Longstaff, but it would appear that minerals which one would expect to find within the regolith following prolonged exposure to water are present in insufficient quantities. Others, which one would expect to have been depleted by such exposure to water, are abundant, as is the evidence for exposure to solar radiation for billions of years.

There are puzzles too with regard to the images which, at first sight, reveal the explosive release of subsurface water from the crumbling walls of craters with long dry rivulets eroding their way to the crater bed. Some of these walls face the poles and solar heating will have been limited. Exciting times, illustrated by fantastic pictures, A lake of frozen water there may well be but Dr. Longstaff is not a believer in ancient Martian oceans or in Martian rain.

The morning's events concluded with the Annual General Meeting of the F.A.S. Not, in my view, as dry and unfriendly an event as one might have anticipated. The business was conducted efficiently and informatively.

Lunch consisted of a hurried chocolate biscuit and a cup of coffee. There



Tea time with 'biccies' in between lectures

was a tour of the Astronomical Telescopes at the Institute - brief, but nonetheless interesting and informative. I am always in awe of the sheer size and mass of the structure which supports a serious research telescope and those at the Institute are not disappointing in this regard. The refracting Northumberland Telescope was described by our guide as the 'nearly famous' telescope, since this instrument was used by Challis in his unsuccessful search for Neptune.

The 1 m reflector on the other hand is in continuous use for on-going research - reportedly for well over one hundred nights observing during the past year.

The weather in Cambridge is clearly better suited to practical astronomy than it is in Cornwall. But Cornish weather is apparently not confined to

(Continued on page 2)

FAS Secretary Retires

At the recent AGM in Cambridge, a major event went almost unnoticed: Clive Down stood down from the post of FAS Secretary after many years loyal service. Clive joined Council at about the same time as me in the early 1990s. Clive's reports to the AGM have become legendary - usually consisting of one sentence: "Nothing to report."

It is a testament to Clive, that during his tenure, there were no problems with the running and administration of the Federation. That alone is a measure of Clive's success in the role. The Secretary's role is the same in the Federation as elsewhere: thankless and the dumping ground for the jobs that no one else will do, but which need to be done.

During his time in office, Clive has been everything and more than an organisation needs. The Federation has a lot to thank Clive for, and he will be greatly missed.

Thank you Clive.

Ron Kelley, Vice-president



Members of Cardiff AS enjoying a dinner at their 30th Anniversary Convention
Photo: Ian Davies

(Continued from page 1)

Cornwall! We rushed back to the lecture theatre for a live Faulkes Telescope demonstration by Dr. Edward Gomez from the School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Cardiff, only to discover that it was raining in Hawaii! Dr. Gomez, however, used the Telescope Simulator to demonstrate the use of this remotely controlled instrument.

The afternoon's programme began with Neil Bone 'Talking up a Storm - Aurorae in Cycle 23'. Neil presented a string of auroral pictures, many of them his own and taken near Chichester, but he included others from Scotland and elsewhere in the northern hemisphere. Once again, fantastic pictures, but this time accompanied inevitably by the usual mutterings from any audience of amateur astronomers of 'I wish I'd taken that!'

It was a privilege to listen to Prof David Southwood, Science Director, European Space Agency, talk on 'Titan, Mars and beyond'. Prof Southwood reviewed, with justifiable pride, the record of ESA during recent years and discussed those projects currently on-going and those planned for the near future. These are indeed exciting times, but Prof Southwood reflected also on the human side of space exploration, recalling that he had seen grown men cry on two recent occasions. Once, when faced with the disappointment of failing rocketry after years of painstaking planning, but again when faced with the exhilarating success of the Huygens Lander.

With the Cassini spacecraft in an orbit around Saturn which would bring it repeatedly back to Titan and with continuing encounters with the other moons in the Saturnian system, Prof Southwood looked forward to the continuing success of this mission. He concluded with a review of spacecraft presently under construction or planned for the near future, which will endeavour to contribute significantly to our understanding of a range of topics, from Gravitational Radiation to Galactic Dark Matter.



The Happy Travellers

Brian Parsons, Nick Tonkin, Mark Timbrell and Frank Johns

To end the day the F.A.S had invited Professor John Brown, Astronomer Royal for Scotland to talk on 'The High Energy Sun - Highlights of the RHESSI Mission'. Unfortunately Prof. Brown had been taken ill and could not attend, but his place was, more than ably, taken at short notice by Dr Lyndsay Fletcher of the University of Glasgow.

Dr Fletcher reviewed the processes whereby solar plasma, trapped in an unstable and tangled web of magnetic flux around sun spots releases energy culminating in Coronal Mass Ejections. Once again, her talk was illustrated with beautiful time lapse imagery. But there is mystery here too - the sites of emission of gamma radiation are not the same as those emitting ultra violet. It would seem that there is a nuclear physics element to sun spot activity. Dr Fletcher concluded her talk by looking forward to two missions currently at the planning stage and which present severe technical challenges. One of these will hopefully provide a three dimensional view of sun spot related magnetic structures, whilst the other will involve a spacecraft in solar orbit at 0.2 AU.

Thanks are due not only to the speakers, who gave real insight to their particular interests and conveyed the excitement of modern astronomy, but also to the F.A.S for their efficient organisation of the event and to the various trade organisations who provided much to see and occupy us all during the breaks in the programme.

This report should not end without mentioning the apparent suspension of the laws of chance during the draw for the raffle, which saw delegates from Brannel Astronomy depart with no less than five of the minor prizes. We can now all have a good read!

Soon after 6.00 pm the Octavia Primus Stove leapt into action once again and transported us away from Cambridge.

NOTICES

Society Changes

We have been informed of the following Society Changes:

- ◆ The website address for Bristol AS is now www.bristolastrosoc.org.uk
- ◆ The Secretary for Guildford AS is now John Axtell - johnaxtell42@aol.com
- ◆ Jim Swift (jimswift@btinternet.com and citron@btinternet.com) has taken over as Secretary of Crawley AS from Sue Hudson-Cook.
- ◆ Scarborough & District AS has changed its name to Scarborough & Ryedale AS.
- ◆ The new Secretary for Harrogate AS is Patricia Hunt, Broadgates, Main Street, Scotton, Knaresborough, North Yorks HG5 9HS
- ◆ West Cornwall AS now meet at St Michaels Hotel, Falmouth on first Wednesdays of the month
- ◆ We welcome Basingstoke AS, Ayrshire AS and Melton & District AS as members of the FAS
- ◆ The phone number of Barry Bellinger-Farnham AS has changed to: 07748 766610
- ◆ Wadhurst AS now meet at the Methodist Church Upper Room, High Street, Wadhurst.

ILKESTON & DISTRICT ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY SILVER JUBILEE CONVENTION

Heanor Welfare Centre, Wilmot Street, Heanor, Derbyshire
Saturday, 20th. May, 2006 Approx. 10-00a.m. to 4-00p.m.

- ◆ Four Guest Speakers—including Prof Ken Pounds from Dept of Physics & Astronomy— 'Space Science in the UK and Europe'
- ◆ Trade Stands
- ◆ Refreshments & Quality Raffle
- ◆ Parking onsite and in public car park next door. Level access to hall
- ◆ Close to Town Centre
- ◆ Convenient for Public Transport, various cafes/restaurants/etc., nearby

Further details from: Mary McNulty 01298 78234

The SPA's Eclipse! DVD is an ideal basis for a society meeting in advance of next March's total solar eclipse. It looks at how and why eclipses take place, what happens, and how to observe them. The DVD runs for 45 minutes and includes stills and video of eclipses, and also has a special demonstration by Francisco Diego of methods of observing the Sun. You can get the DVD for £5.95 post free by ordering it from the SPA website - www.popastro.com.

British Astronomical Association Back 2 Basics Workshop

Following the success of the first BAA Back 2 Basics Workshop they are holding the next one at the University of Kent at Canterbury on 21st January 2006

The British Astronomical Association has designed this programme of talks and practical sessions to help you learn some of the basic techniques in astronomy & develop your interest to its full potential. During the day experienced people will be on hand to help answer your questions.

The cost of this event is £10.00 per person, including a Lunch (Mixed Salad with Jacket potato & filling or a Vegetarian Quiche), tea /coffee. The day starts at 10.15 with registration and finishes at 17.30 Bookings with remittance should be sent to the British Astronomical Association, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0DU by 31st December 2005

The programme is made up of: -

- ◆ Solar observing - Kevin Smith
 - ◆ Identifying Stars Brightness Made Easy - Guy Hurst
 - ◆ Imaging - Martin Taylor
 - ◆ Lunar drawings - Bob Marriott
 - ◆ Observing and drawing Jupiter - Mike Foulkes
 - ◆ Walking the night sky for deep sky objects - Guy Hurst.
- Plus Practical Solar Observing (weather permitting) by SEKAS - Visit the BC&F room for equipment demonstration & advice.

For booking details please contact the BAA office at the address above or check the website www.britastro.org

KNOW THE (ex) COUNCIL MEMBER

Clive Down – Secretary FAS (recently retired)

I have been interested in astronomy for as long as I can remember, and bought my first telescope when I was just 9 years old. It was no more than a cheap plastic toy but I could see the craters of the Moon through it and it resolved that strange patch of cloud in the winter sky into a myriad of stars. I was later to learn that it was called the Pleiades. Larger and better telescopes followed but most were home made and my biggest triumph was successfully grinding an 8.5" mirror. How things have changed in recent years! Equipment is so much more affordable and it hardly seems worthwhile devoting countless hours to constructing anything these days.

In 1985 I became an active member of Bridgend Astronomical Society and discovered a use for my newly acquired BBC Model B



computer. It could be used to produce very nifty society newsletters! Other societies were also producing computer generated newsletters and it seemed a good idea to set up a newsletter swap scheme to find out what they were up to as well. In 1994 I became FAS Publicity Officer and on Christine Sheldon's retirement in 1997 I took over as Secretary - probably the easiest job on the FAS Council!

I am also secretary of Bridgend AS, local officer for CfDS and compile the SPA Electronic News Bulletins which actually started out life as part of Bridgend AS newsletter. It just goes to show what a closely knit bunch we amateur astronomers are!

Cardiff Celebrates 30 years

As part of a year of special lectures Cardiff AS held a one day convention on Saturday October 15th with trade stands and advice on hand to help the novice and more experienced observer and many goodies to contemplate.

The lectures were provided by Dr Paul Roche (Faulkes Telescope), Professor Monica Grady (Open University), Professor Alan Fitzsimmons (Queens University, Belfast) and Nik Szymanek who ably demonstrated the unique role of the amateur astronomer within today's pursuit of scientific knowledge. With some humor, Professor Fitzsimmons proved that weapons of mass destruction do actually exist and have done so for some time. Professor Grady showed us how it isn't just telescopes that are needed to study the Universe but that so much can be achieved using a microscope that for the next event we should perhaps have a trade stand selling those. Dr Roche gave us an update on the Faulkes Telescope project and its exciting future plans.

At the following dinner the main speaker was society Vice President Professor Mike Disney who told his future vision of astronomy lies with strengthening collaborations between the amateur and the professional with the increasing availability of relevant technology and the databases accessible through the Internet. The society received congratulations from Dr Rodney Hillier of Bristol AS and University, and Chairman Martin Chick gave us a brief history of the society and some of its highlights such as the many successful public events.

Among other societies represented were Swansea, Bristol, Newbury and Tiverton.

Many thanks to the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Cardiff University for their support, to check out future events please visit <http://www.cardiffastronomical-society.org>



The Trade Stand Area at the Cardiff AS 30th Year event



The remains of the observatory of the Birmingham AS - as reported in Issue 79

Eric Zucker Award to Neil Bone



FAS President Ron Kelley presenting the Eric Zucker Award to Neil Bone

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS AT SHEFFIELD

The Sheffield AS stands on the edge of the fulfilment of a dream - to have its own meeting place and observatory. They have recently obtained planning permission to build an Astronomy and Space Centre on the western outskirts of Sheffield. The new buildings will include an astronomical resource centre, a telescope control room, a small meeting room and a two-domed observatory. One dome will be permanently set up for CCD imaging and the other for visual use.

A full report will be included in the next issue of the FAS Newsletter.

REVIEWS

Fred Hoyle's Universe By Jane Gregory

Hardcover, 416 pages (May 26, 2005)

Publisher: Oxford University Press ISBN: 0198507917. Price £20

This book is a skilful blend of biography and the history of astronomy and cosmology.

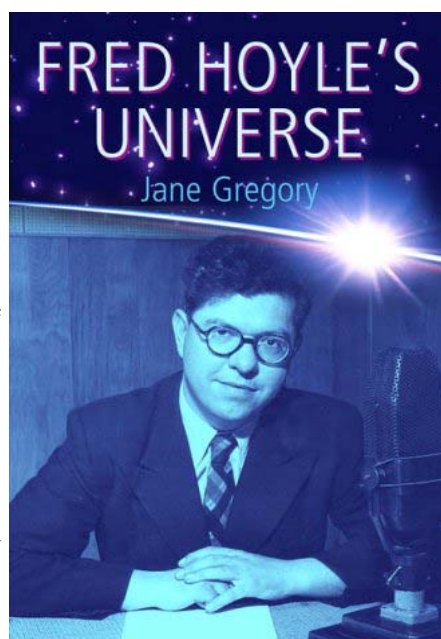
The references show that Jane Gregory has carried out extensive and detailed research; that is hardly a surprise since her PhD thesis was entitled "Fred Hoyle and the Popularisation of Cosmology". What is remarkable about this volume for me is the way Gregory writes - one could almost believe that the author was present to witness the events described first hand.

The book charts the life of Hoyle from his school days in Yorkshire and the varying fortunes of his family through his studies at Cambridge, war service and academic career. His ground breaking BBC Radio broadcasts of 1950, *The Nature of the Universe*, are of course discussed as these were to propel him in to the public eye and the public imagination. Hoyle will long be remembered as one the great popularisers of science along with the like of James Jeans before him or Patrick Moore today. It seems strange now that his efforts to bring science to public attention should have been met with disdain by many of his peers.

The science is the second thread which is woven in to this book. The development of astronomy and cosmology are narrated through the life and work of Fred Hoyle. This provides a rich cast of characters to draw from: the group of Hoyle's supporters and opponents includes just about every major figure in post war astronomy and cosmology and more! What struck me reading this book is the way it brings to life the humanity of science - whilst scientific method may be a cool, impersonal and rational process it is nevertheless a human invention and as such subject to the frailties of people: the passion, the jealousy, the rivalry and the disagreements. The no nonsense Yorkshireman Hoyle had more disputes than most with the establishment and was never afraid to take on his peers and fight for his ideas. Perhaps that is one of Hoyle's greatest achievements and one we should remember today: scientific research needs sceptics and challenges in order to progress.

Gregory's prose are lucid and well-paced, the book is a pleasure to read. The text weaves the fine thread of a biography though the colourful tapestry of post war cosmology. The result is a superb text charting the life and work one of the most colourful and controversial scientists of his generation.

Shaun O'Dell Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society,



Hemisferium

Leonard Honey has recently sent a catalogue of model antique gnomonical, astronomical and navigational instruments - ALL WORKING MODELS - all new to the UK, he is importing exclusively from Spain, manufactured by Hemisferium of Madrid.

The range of instruments with respect to their scientific, historic, and aesthetic value make them interesting and are reproductions of original artefacts in museums or private collections.

He has a range of some thirty such instruments, which he is offering to members of the FAS at special rates! From pictures and information sent me, I would have thought that any of these attractive devices would appeal to readers who also have a general interest in science or education or wish to give an unusual, attractive gift.

The newest part of the collection consists of:

Everlasting Calendar - which can be used to calculate many years both in the past and the future (1600 to 2700)?

Capuccino Quadrant - the name derives from the path of the pearl in both tropics tracing two lines that resemble the hood of Capuchin monks.

Nocturnal/Tide Computer - A replica of a Nocturnal and Tide Computer from 1570, signed by Humphrey Cole, the first "maker" of English instruments. Currently this instrument can be found in the British Museum, London. One of its faces is a Nocturnal and the other is a Tide Computer.

In addition, the collection includes a number of very attractive string-gnomon diptych compass-dials, made in the traditional manner of paper on wood, ranging in price from about £10 to £14. This form of dial contains a small magnetic compass and, like a book, may be opened when required for use and closed afterwards in its stylish case. There is also a nice looking 'brass' analemmatic sundial on a wooden base at £18, or an adjustable cube dial on a stand, 190 mm in height, suitable as an exhibit on an executive desk, at just £25, or a fine 'brass' universal equinoctial ring-dial, 100 mm in diameter, which sits neatly on its base for display purposes, for £30.

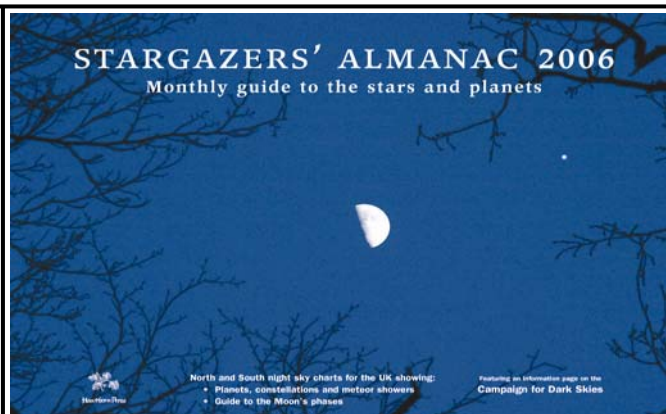
However, of all these various articles, the two 'hour-glasses' or sand-glasses, one 15-minute glass and one 30-minute glass, both 160 mm in height at £20 each, seem to me to be the most useful. Also, at only £12 each, there are some miniature versions of the astrolabe, the mariner's astrolabe and the nocturnal, which may be purchased as such or as key-rings.

Any items from this range serve would surely make delightful inexpensive little Christmas presents.

For pictures and further information see their Web site:

www.hemisferium.net

A CD ROM is included with each order containing over 50 slides describing the historical development of sundials.



Stargazers' Almanac 2006 is now available via mail order from Booksource on 08702 402182. This calendar style Almanac is available to Newsletter readers at a special offer of £9.99 (plus p&p) - over 20% off the normal retail price. Please quote 'FAS' when ordering to receive your discount. Payment can be made by credit or debit card and p&p will be charged at £2.40 for 1 Almanac plus 45p for each additional item.

LETTERS

Hello -

I work to help orphans living along the Burma/Thailand border that have lost their parents as a result of war and widespread disease. Known as IDP's, or Internally Displaced Persons, they do not have refugee status and they are isolated from contact from international aid organizations. They receive very little support and suffer from severe shortages of basic necessities.

I'm reaching out to people and organizations that might be willing to get involved in bolstering the education system for these kids. There are about 350 orphans and another 700 IDP children attending three schools established in free Shan State, Burma. Located in the mountains they live in a great place to start an ASTRONOMY CLUB. I'm hoping to get donated telescopes, microscopes and supporting materials. Would you like more information, and/or would you be willing to get involved in helping with this project?

Regards, Todd Jones. Shan Orphan Support - SOS
www.shan-orphans.org todd@shan-orphans.org

Presidents Log

First a few words of thanks to those that have gone before. Thanks to Ron Kelley for steering the FAS through the last two years, and an especially big thanks to Clive Down who was secretary for many years. Sam George who takes over as Secretary from Clive has a difficult act to follow, but I am sure he is up to the job. Thanks also goes to Stan Waterman who has done an excellent job as meetings secretary over the past 5 years, and has stood down due to health concerns. John Parratt is also leaving the FAS Council after many years, and much thanks goes to John for all the many tasks he has performed over the years - always prepared to lend a hand, or tackle some job that needs to be done. Thanks also goes to Bob Dryden who continues to look after the slide collection, but is no longer a council member.

We held a council meeting in November and there was a very full agenda including a review of the just passed AGM and Convention and discussions about the 2006 event, which will be on the 30th September 2006 at the Birmingham & Midland Institute, Birmingham. We are now working on the speakers programme, and as soon as this is fixed up we will let you know through the Newsletter and website. We also looked forward to Astrofest 2006, and hope that this will be successful event this year - the FAS will be present in the Societies Room, so if you are along please stop by and say hello. Final discussions about the new Handbook were held, and in the near future this should be distributed to members. Thanks goes in particular to Frank Johns who has been spearheading the production of the Handbook (in addition to the Newsletter).

Publications were also discussed at the council meeting, and our main problem here is content. We have some old publications that are somewhat out of date and need revamping. We also need some new publications. Our principles are to produce small,

cheap booklets that Societies can sell to members or the general public at your events. I would welcome input from Societies about the sort of publications we should be producing that would meet your needs. Also, if you have written something that might be distributed to a wider audience then please let me know. We are entirely open to producing new publications, so no holds are barred.

FAS finances are always on the agenda at our council meetings, and thanks goes to Peter Cooke for maintaining our accounts and records. Managing the finances of the FAS is a fine balancing act. We try to operate our core business at cost neutral. So our income from subscriptions must balance the operational costs (newsletter, website, council expenses). Other items are self-financing, so costs of publications must be met by sales, the AGM/Convention costs are balanced by ticket sales, and the PLI costs are reflected directly to the members.

Finally (thank goodness I hear you say), it should be remembered that everyone on the FAS Council and indeed in your own society committees is doing it in their own time, because they want to. Committees are always looking for more help (in my experience) so I would strongly urge you to get involved. It can be fun, fulfilling, and it gives you something to do on those cloudy nights !



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SOCIETY ROUND UP

ABINGDON AS

Meets at the Methodist Church Hall, Dorchester Crescent, Abingdon, at 8.00pm. For more details telephone Bob Dryden 01491 201620 or visit our website www.abingdonastro.org.uk

9 Jan: Meteors

13 Feb: SPIRE—and New Space Instrument

13 Mar: Glows, Blow and Haloes

10 Apr: Latest Advances in CCD Imaging

8 May: The Weird and Wonderful Universe

12 Jun: Searching for WIMPS in the UK

Neil Bone

Dr Tanya Lim

Richard Fleet

George Sallitt

Paul Warren + AGM

Prof Nigel Smith

ALTRINCHAM & DISTRICT AS

Meets at 8.00pm on the first Friday of the month (except July & August) at the Timperley Village Club Hall, 268 Stockport Road, Timperley. Altrincham
For more details telephone Don Utton 0161 941 4185 or visit our website www.astradas.org.uk

AS OF HARINGEY

Meetings generally 3rd Thursday at Ashmole School, Southgate, London N14, at 7.30 pm www.ashaastro.org.uk.

ANDOVER AS

Meetings 19:30 third Thursday of the month except August in Grateley Village Hall.

Secretary: Charles Roach e-mail: croach@worldonline.co.uk

www.andoverastronomy.org.uk

AYLESBURY AS

Meetings take place at the Scout Hut, Oakfield Road, Aylesbury.

Contact Simon Foster on 01844 216108

www.aylesburyastronomy.org.uk

AYRSHIRE AS

Contact: Pheigi MacDonald email: pugzrocks@hotmail.com

BASINGSTOKE AS

Contact: Andria Harbinson email: andria.harbinson@ntlworld.com

Website: www.basingstokeas.org.uk

BATLEY & SPENDBOROUGH AS

Contact: I Newsome 01924 443860 email: beviaan11@hotmail.com

BEDFORD AS

Meets last Wednesday at 19:30, Bedford School, Burnaby Road, Bedford, MK40 2TU

Contact: , 01234 211532 society@bedsastro.org.uk

www.bedsastro.org.uk

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

10 Jan: Short talks by members

31 Jan: 2MASS—A New View of the Universe

Paul Money

26 Sep: A Warwickshire Eclipse

Mike Frost

BOLTON AS

Bolton TIC Centre, Minerva Road (nr Bollton Royal Hospital), from 7.30pm to 9pm. Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday.

<http://boltonastro.fateback.com/index.html>. Secretary: Peter Miskiw.

BRADFORD AS

Meetings usually held on a Monday in the upstairs room at Eccleshill Library, Bolton Road, Bradford, BD2 4SR at 7.30pm until 9.45pm.

For any further information please see our website at www.bradfordastro.freemove.co.uk or ring Hilary on 01274 6725711.

For information about weekly night-time observing ring Andy on 01274 413464 or John on 01274 419142; or for weekend solar observing ring Colin on 01274 586584.

BRANNEL ASTRONOMY

Meetings on third Friday, and from April - the first Saturday, of each month at Brannel School, St Stephens, Cornwall .

www.brannelastronomy.com

Contact: Paul Hughes, 0796 6961802 or Frank Johns, 01637-878020

BRECKLAND AA

Open Meetings are on the second Friday of each month at Great Ellingham Recreation Centre near Attleborough, Norfolk at 7.30 PM.

Open meetings are followed by a tour and observing (weather permitting) at our adjacent observatory, which houses a computer controlled 20 inch reflector. We also have a 9 1/4 inch celestron Scmitt-Cassegraine, an 8 inch reflector and an 8 1/2 inch reflector.

Further details and a full contact list are available on our website at

www.breckastro.supanet.com telephone 01953 602045

Contact: Tony Osborne. Anthony@emanti.wanadoo.co.uk

BRIGHTON & HOVE AS

Four meetings per year at Patcham Village Hall, Brighton, BN1 8XR

Contact J. Luvian-Wade tel. 01273 889112 john_wade@ntlworld.com

www.bhas.fsnet.co.uk/

BRISTOL AS

Meetings held on Friday evenings at 7.15pm at Bristol Grammar School,

Contact John Pickard (Vice Chairman), tel. 01454 632692 or Tricia Brown

(Secretary), tel. 0117 968 5023

www.bristolastro.org.uk

CALLINGTON COMMUNITY ASTRONOMY GROUP

Meetings: First and third Saturdays (except August), at Callington Space Centre, Callington Community College, Launceston Road.

Becky Watson; callintonastro@kimwatson99.fsnet.co.uk

www.callington-astro.org.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

www.cardiff-astronomical-society.org

CLEETHORPES AS

Meetings held at the Beacon Hill Observatory, Cleethorpes, start at 7.30pm.

Contact Paul Thompson 01472 233552 or e-mail

paul@cleethorpesastronomy.co.uk. www.cleethorpesastronomy.co.uk

CLEVELAND & DARLINGTON AS

Most monthly meetings held at Grindon Parish Hall.

Contact: Neil M. Haggath, 01332 740977, E-mail: neil.haggath@ntlworld.com

CORNWALL AS

Meets second and fourth Thursday of every month at The Godolphin Club, Wendron St., Helston. Contact: Robert Beeman (01326-341164)

Email: robert.beeman@btinternet.com or info@CornwallAS.org.uk

www.CornwallAS.org.uk

COTSWOLD AS

Meets second Saturday of every month at Shurdington Church Hall, Shurdington, Cheltenham. 7.45 pm. Contact Duncan Willoughby (01452416405)

www.cotswoldas.org.uk

COVENTRY & WARWICK AS

Contact S Payne 02476-474227

www.cawas.freemove.co.uk

CRAWLEY AS

Meets third Friday of every month (exc July & Aug) at Ifield Community Centre. 7.30 pm. (December dates can be variable)

Contact: Jim Swift 01293-882560 or 07973-142779 (mobile)

E-mail: cytron@btinternet.com and/or jimswift@btinternet.com

CREWKERNE & DISTRICT AS (CADAS)

Have outline planning permission to build an observatory, meeting room and work room in a dark sky site close to Crewkerne.

Anne Dodgson Crewastra@aol.com

Dumfries AS

Monthly meetings at the St. George's Churchhall, George Street, Dumfries 7 to 9.30 pm. September to May. For dates/details contact the Secretary Klaus Schiller at lesley.burrell@btinternet.com or 01387 269762

Society web-site www.astronomers.ukscientist.com

EASTBOURNE AS

Meeting first Saturday in month at the Willingdon Memorial Hall, Church Street, Willingdon starting at 7.30 p.m. Contact Peter Gill, tel. 01323 646853, email pbj.gill@btinternet.com. www.EastbourneAS.org.uk

EAST RIDING ASTRONOMERS

Contact Tony Scaife, email astrogen@astrogen.karoo.co.uk

EWELL AS

Meets 2nd Friday each month at Nonsuch High School for Girls, Cheam. Secretary; Richard Gledhill, tel. 0208-393-1068

FARNHAM AS

Meet 2nd Thursday at The United Reform Church, South Street, Farnham

Secretary; Barry Bellinger, tel. 07748766610 barry.bellinger@nokia.com

www.farnham-as.co.uk

12 Jan: Cosmology—The X-ray Universe

Prof Ian Hardy

9 Feb: Astronomy—Back to Basics

various members

9 Mar: Variable Stars

James Fradgley

13 Apr: Eclipse in Turkey

Barry Bellinger

11 May: Astro Imaging from Mauna Kea

Nik Szymanek

8 Jun: Observing Eclipsing Binaries

Steve Woodbridge

10 Aug: Solar System

Maurice Kent

12 Oct: Lessons from the Leonids

Neil Bone

FLAMSTEED AS

Meets 1st Monday each month at Royal Observatory & National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Contact: Friends Office. tel. 020 8312 6678

As well as a full programme of lectures and visits members assist astronomers at the Royal Observatory with many and various projects, such as assistance with the 28", the seventh largest refracting telescope in the world and regular public solar viewing sessions using the Society's own Coronado telescope.

GUERNSEY AS

Meetings at the Observatory, Rue Lorier, St. Peters, Guernsey. Every Tuesday evening and Friday if clear for observing.

Contact: Jessica Harris. 01481 247193

www.guildfordas.org

GUILDFORD AS

Meet at the Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford on the 1st Thursday of

every month (bar August).

Contact: John Axtell. 01932 341036 johnaxtell42@aol.com

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB AS

Meets at 7.30 pm Room 3 (the Oriol Room) Free Church Hall, Northway, London NW11. Entrance via the door on the left side of the building.

Contact: Dianne Fishman 020 8458 4038 hgsas@dfish.demon.co.uk

HANNEY & DISTRICT AS

Last Wednesday in month, 20:00hrs. Royal British Legion Hall, Hanney, Mill Orchard, East Hanney, Oxon, OX12 0JH

Contact: Mr J Walker 01235 771706 email: johnwalker@mac.com

HARROGATE AS

Meetings last Friday of the month. Harlow Community Centre, Harlow Ave.

Contact: Lyn Smith 01937 531171 lynsmithbridgehouse@hotmail.com

HAVERING AS

Meetings 3rd Wednesday of the month. Cranham Community Centre, Marlborough Gardens, Upminster. Contact: Frances Ridgley 01708 227397 www.ccdland.com (follow link for Havering AS)

HERSCHEL AS

Secretary. A.E.Fanning (Tony), 56 Edinburgh Gardens, Windsor, Berks. SL4 2AW (01753 865053)

HIGHLANDS AS

Meetings 1st Tuesday of the month at The Green House, Beechwood Business Park North, Inverness. Contact: Dr Pat Williams, Inverness Tel: 01463 793464 pat.williams@ndirect.co.uk

HULL & EAST RIDING AS

Meets 1st Monday of month at 7.30 from Sept to April. Room 110, Wilberforce Building, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX

Contact: Sharon Long, Secretary. E-mail: charon@charon.karoo.co.uk

HUDDERSFIELD ASTRO. & PHIL. SOCIETY

Meetings at Observatory and at 4A Railway Street.

Contact: Paul Harper 01484-606832 www.huddersfielddastry.org.uk

6 Jan: Public Lecture t.b.a.

13 Jan: Astronews

Marcus Armitage

20 Jan: The Struves—Astronomical Dynasty

Stuart Clough

27 Jan: DeepSky—Adventure Down Under

Robert Williams

3 Feb: Life & Death of Very massive Stars

Dr Paul Crowther

17 Feb: Gravity Waves

Marcus Armitage

24 Feb: Astronomical Visits II

Paul Harper

3 Mar: Public Lecture t.b.a.

17 Mar: Night Sky in Spring

Robert Williams

31 Mar: Texas Star Party Report

Gain Lee

7 Apr: Chemistry of Interstellar Dust

Prof D W Allen

ILKESTON & DISTRICT AS

Meets on second Tuesdays at Hayloft Erewash Museum, Ilkeston, Derbyshire and start at 7.45p.m.

Contact Mary McMulty, tel. 01298 78234 email: mintaca@msn.com

10 Jan One Small Step

Andrew Green

14 Feb Hamurabi to Hubble

Rod Hine

14 Mar Mars

various members

11 Apr Diverse Solar System

Anthony Southwell

9 May t.b.a.

Paul Money

13 Jun Cosmic Collisions

Dennis Ashton

10 Oct Variable Stars

Alan Heath

14 Nov Astronomy with the I S S

Dr Nigel Bannister

12 Dec AGM & Christmas Party

Also meets last Wednesdays at The Green Room, Shipley Park Visitor Centre, Heanor, Derbyshire at 7.45 pm

IRISH AA

Meets alternate Wednesdays at 7.30pm at the Teachers Training College, Stranmillis, Belfast.

Contact: Johns Hall e-mail: jimmyaquarius@btinternet.com

JERSEY AC

Meets 2nd Monday of the month, 8.00pm at Sir Patrick Moore Astronomy Centre, Les Creux Country park, St Brelade.

Contact: Eileen Besnard. 01534-860802 e-mail: hakmat@jerseymail.co.uk

LEEDS AS

Centenary House, North Street, Leeds between 7.00 pm and 9.30 pm

Mailto: xavier@leedsastronomy.org.uk

LEICESTER AS

Meets 2nd and 4th Tues 19:30. National Space Centre, Exploration Drive, Leicester LE4 5NS

Contact: Chris Gutteridge 0116 270 0596 chris@gutteridge.co.uk

www.leicester-astronomical.co.uk

LETCHEWORTH & DISTRICT AS

Meets last Wednesday of the month at Plinston Hall, Letchworth: 7:45pm

Contacts: Nick Ellis e.mail: ellis.nick@virgin.net

LIVERPOOL AS

Venue for monthly meetings is the Roman Catholic Cathedral's Crypt Concert Room, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. Meetings commence at 7pm to 9pm.

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. Contact Jerry Workman (0208-507-7568)

las-astro.org.uk

LOWESTOFT & GT YARMOUTH RA (LYRA)

Tues 18th Feb AGM

Meetings normally take place on the 2ND Thur at the Sunrise Inn in Corton Road. All meetings begin at 8pm.

Richard Chilvers: 28 Blyford road, Lowestoft 01502 57401

email: good.goat@tiscali.co.uk www.lyra.gb.net

MARR AS

Meets: Last Tuesday of the month at 1930, Learney Arms Hotel, Torphins.

Observational meetings as weather permits

Contact David Pattullo, wolfscoot@diastart.net

www.freewebs.com/marrastro

MID KENT AS

Meetings of the society are held first and last Fridays of the month at The Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road, off The Street, Bredhurst, Kent

Contact: 01634 308035 email m.morrison-smith@lineone.net

http://www.mkas-site.co.uk/

MILTON KEYNES AS

Meetings are held at Rectory Cottages, Church Green Road, Bletchley, Milton

Keynes on alternate Fridays, starting at 8.00 pm.

MORAY AC

Meetings 1st Friday of every month starting at 7.30PM at Elgin High School,

New Elgin, Elgin, Morayshire. Observing Evenings every Friday from mid

September at The Bothy, Easterton Airfield. For details contact Ian

Brantingham on 01466 771371 or ian@branters

freeserve.co.uk Web site: http://www.sigma-astro.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. Contact Bernard Beeston, tel. 020 8363 5696

NORTH ESSEX AS

Public meeting at 7:30pm on the third Thursday of every month (excluding

August & December) at the BT Exchange Social Hall in Collingwood Road,

Witham. For more information contact (01376) 521897.

http://www.neas.org.uk

OFFA'S DYKE AS

Contact: Graham Arnold 01547 530205

ORWELL AS

email ipswich@ast.cam.ac.uk www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich

Roy Gooding (Secretary) 01473-462977

PAPWORTH ASTRONOMY CLUB

Meets at Upper Pendrill Court, Papworth Everard, nr Huntingdon

on the first Wednesday of every month at 19.30. Contact Keith Tritton -

phone 01767 677219, email kpt2@tutor.open.ac.uk

4 Jan: Filming the Moon and Stars

Dave Early

1 Feb: Cosmology in the Corridor

Roger O'Brien

1 Mar: NASA Stardust Mission

Simon Green

5 Apr: Astrium—Satellite Building

Alistair Scott

3 May: Apollo Missions to the Moon

Andy Green

PORT TALBOT AS

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday each month at 7.15pm, at Mozart Drive

Community Centre, Sandfields, Port Talbot.

Contact: Andrew Short (secretary) - phone 01639 765146.

SALFORD AS

Sept to April: Weekly meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7.30pm, at Room

115—Level 1, University of Salford, Maxwell Building, The Crescent.

May to April: Meetings held 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Contact: Kath Radford - phone 0161 794 3179.

25 Jan Latest Developments in Astrophotography

David Ratledge

22 Feb Astronomy, Telescopes and Drinking Beer

Gerard Gilligan

22 Mar Sun and the Aurora

Dr Barbara Bromage

12 Apr Total Solar Eclipse in Turkey

Gubir Singh/Tony O'Sullivan

SCARBOROUGH & RYDALE AS (Note the change of name)

Meetings held on the first and third Wednesday of the month at Salford Ob-

servatory, Chaseley Field, Chaseley Road, Salford. Contact 0161 794 3179

email: mail@howarddazely.demon.co.uk www.salfordastro.org.uk

SEKAS (SOUTH EAST KENT)

We are an active one, have excellent speakers, and are very sociable too !!!

Instruments include a 20" DarkStar dobsonian, and ccd work is pursued by a

good number, as well as h-alpha solar observation ,traditional observations,

public observation nights, etc. Contact: Tony Bennet 01843-831079

Secretary@sekas.co.uk

www.sekas.co.uk

SHETLAND AS

Meet monthly, South Mainland, Shetland

Contact: Peter Kelly Tel: 01957 733242 theglebe@zetnet.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE AS

Speaker meetings are generally held on the first Friday of the month at Gate-

way in Shrewsbury with a monthly observing meeting at Rodington Village

Hall Phone 01952 820082 for details. www.shropshire-astro.com

SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY

Contact: Stuart Williams, secretary@shastro.org.uk www.shastro.org.uk

SOLENT AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Meetings 3rd Tuesday 19:30-22:00. Room 8, Oaklands Centre, Fairisle Road,

Lordshill, Southampton

Contact: Ken Medway. 02380-582204 ken@medway1875.freeserve.co.uk

www.delscope.demon.co.uk

LIST OF OFFICERS 2004/2005

For President, Secretary, Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

See front cover for details

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Tel: Evening: 01709 586695 Mobile: 07714 093723
E-Mail: membership@fedastro.org.uk

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Minutes Secretary: **Richard Sargent**
4 Bache Drive, Upton, Chester, CH2 2JB
Tel: 01244 378349 E-mail: minutes@fedastro.org.uk

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Tel: 01536 725563, E-mail: chilterns.rep@fedastro.org.uk

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East Anglia Group : **VACANT**

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4 Bache Drive, Upton, Chester. CH2 2JB
Tel: 01244 378349 E-mail: north.west.rep@fedastro.org.uk

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Olympus Mons, 13, Jacmar Crescent, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands. B67 7LF
Tel: 0121 5654845 E-mail: west.midlands.rep@fedastro.org.uk

Yorkshire Group : **Paul Harper**
45, Lydgate, Lepton, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD8 OLT
Tel: 01484 606832

(Continued from page 7)

SOUTHAMPTON AS

Meetings are held at Edmund Kell Unitarian Church Hall, Bellevue Road at 7:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month.

Ian Gore - Secretary 01329 310876 Ian.Gore@fshfc.org

Lawrence Harris - Publicity 023 8090 8488

12 Jan	Observing the Lunar 100	Dr Lilian Hobbs
10 Feb	Galaxy Evolution and the Cosmic Web	Dr Ian Waddington
9 Mar	Explosions from the Sun	Dr Louisa Harra
13 Apr	Binocular Astronomy	
11 May	Was Einstein 100% Right?	Prof Malcolm McCallum
8 Jun	Solar Neutrinos	Dr Robert Smith
13 Jul	Short Talks by Members	

STAFFORD & DISTRICT AS

Meetings held at Weston Road High School, Stafford. 19.15

Contact L Hodkinson, 01785 712065

STOUR AS

Meets monthly in the Jubilee Room of Cavendish Memorial Hall, Cavendish, Suffolk on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30 p.m.

Contact K. Marshall, 01787-249534

STRATFORD UPON AVON AS

Meetings 7.30pm at the Home Guard Club, Tiddington, Nr Stratford upon Avon. Contact: Mike Whitecross 01789 731784 www.astro.org.uk

SUNDERLAND AS

Meets 2nd & 3rd Sunday at 19.00hrs

Contact: Graham Darke 0191 415 2625 darke@bun.com

www.sunderlandastro.com

SWANSEA AS

Meetings held at 7.30pm in lecture theatre C of the Science Block at the University of Wales Campus, Swansea

12 Jan:	Robotic Exploration of Mars	Colin Gravelle
26 Jan:	TBA	Yasmine Friedmann
9 Feb:	TBA	Nick Lewis
23 Feb:	Building a Dobsonian	Colin Harris
9 Mar:	The Moon—in western imagination	Dr Martin Griffiths
23 Mar:	Astronomical Distances	Dr John Birks
27 Apr:	Timing the Earth	Brian Spinks
11 May:	The Exploration of Titan	Andy Lound
25 May:	A G M + Members Talks	

THURROCK AS

Meetings are held first Wednesdays (except August) at 7.30 p.m. at The Methodist Hall, High Street, Hornndon -on-the-Hill, Essex SS17 8LN

Contact: Roy Hookway Tele: 01375 676602

email: roy.hookway1@btinternet.com

web: www.thurrockastronomy.com

TIVERTON AS

Meetings are held Fridays at 7.30 p.m. at St Aubyn's School, Blundells Road, Tiverton.

Contact: Neil Purves 01884-277425 ww.tivas.org.uk

13 Jan Women in Astronomy Carol Boote

13 Jan	Seeing the Light	Peter Strong
3 Mar	Light in Islamic Art	Mousa Al-Kordi
5 May	Dark Galaxies	Prof Mike Disney
9 Jun	The Lord of the Rings	Andrew Lound

TULLAMORE AS

http://www.iol.ie/~seanmck/tas.htm

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM AS

We are a University society with the majority of our members being Undergraduate students, but we always welcome people along.

Contact Scott Porter, email: scp@star.sr.bham.ac.uk

www.astrosoc.org.uk

VECTIS AS (Isle of Wight)

Meetings held in Parish Hall, Town Lane, Newport.

rosmarypears@aol.com website: www.wightskies.fsnet.co.uk

WADHURST AS

Meetings held on third Wednesday of month at the Methodist Church Upper Room, High Street, Wadhurst.

Contact: G G Rathbone, 13 Brookfield, Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN15 6SQ

WEST CORNWALL AS

Meets first Wednesday of month at St Michaels Hotel, Falmouth, and

Third Thursday at the CPR Learning Centre, Camborne

Contact: Robin Wadding email: robinwadding@westcornwallastrosoc.org

Website: www.westcornwallastrosoc.org

WEST YORKSHIRE AS

Meets every Tuesday of month at 7.30pm at 'Rosse Observatory', Carlton Rd, Pontefract. Contact: Ken Willoughby 01977 795535.

www.wyas.fsnet.co.uk Email: ken.willoughby@btinternet.com

WEALDEN AS

Meets third Wednesday of month (exc Aug) at 7.30pm at Upland Community College. Contact: Keith Woodcock. Email: wealdenas@hotmail.co.uk

WHITE PEAK ASTRO OBS GROUP

Meets Hopton Cottage, Hopton, Top Hopton, Derbyshire, DE4 4DF

Contact: Robin Spencer. Email: thespencers@care4free.net

www.wpaog.co.uk/

WOLAS (West of London AS)

Secretary: Duncan J Radbourne. 9 Wellington Road, Hatch

End, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4NF. Email: duncan.radbourne@gmail.com

Website: www.wolas.org.uk

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. Contact: Sydney Crump (tel 01299 871606),

email secretary@wolvlas.org.uk www.wolvlas.org.uk

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. Contact Hazel on 07944 751277

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. However if the details of your society are incorrect, or indeed if you aren't included, please send details to the Editor.

Deadlines for submission for newsletter in 2005/6:

Spring 2006 - 14th April 2006

Summer 2006 - 11th August 2006

Please remember to send ALL items to the Editor, Frank Johns. Regrettably material can only be returned if supplied with a SAE.