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ISSUE 52

FEDERATION OF ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETIES

FAS Spring Convention and AGM Hosted by Newbury AS Saturday, 9th May 1998 St. Bartholemew's School, Newbury.

PROGRAMME

10.00 - 11.00	George Sallit "Asteroids, Galaxies, and CCDs"
11.00 - 11.30	Tea Break
11.30 - 12.30	AGM
12.30 - 14.00	LUNCH
14.00 - 15.00	Ian Halliday "UK Funding of Astronomy"
15.00 - 15.30	Tea Break
15.30 - 16.30	To Be Arranged
16.30 - 17.30	Jim Emerson (QMW) "Star Formation"
17.30	Closing address, President FAS

Admission is £4.00 pre-booked and £5.00 on the day.

Tickets from Dave Sutton (Treasurer FAS). Contact details - see top of page. To pre-book send an S.A.E. or e-mail and pay on the day. A map will be included with tickets and one copy also included with this mailing to the society secretary.

Contact Ann Davis, Newbury AS, (01635 30598) for a list of possible overnight accommodation.
Refreshments/meal will be available, and a list of nearby restaurants and pubs supplied on the day.

Provisional trade stands: SCS Astro, Fieldview/Earth & Sky, Society for Popular Astronomy (SPA), Webb Soc., Lambda Publications, BAA, David Hinde, Katano Gallery, Venturescope, John Meacham, The Campaign for Dark Skies, Night Life Publications.

Information on the new web site as available, <http://www.fedastro.demon.co.uk>

S.A.G.A.S. Celebrates its 25th Anniversary

18th July 1998, 10.00a.m. - 9.00p.m. Royal Sailors Home Club, Portsmouth.

Speakers include: Dr. Patrick Moore, Douglas Arnold, Mark Armstrong, & Dr. John Mason.

Tickets: £6.00 per head, but reduced rates for 10 tickets.

Contact: Nightlife, 31 Paignton Ave, Copnor, Portsmouth, PO3 6LL Tel: 01705 618113 or e-mail: pete@nightlife.demon.co.uk

Drop in on the Nightlife web site at <http://www.nightlife.demon.co.uk>

A Joint Convention - West Yorkshire AS and FAS

Saturday June 6th 1998. 10am to 6pm. Carleton Grange Centre, Pontefract, West Yorkshire

Speakers include: Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe, Professor Sir Arnold Wolfendale, Professor Michael Woolfson, Dr Tom Hartquist, Dr Paula Chadwick

Refreshments Bar facilities Trade stands. Admission £5 Meals (book in advance) £4

Tickets (SAE) Ken Willoughby, 11 Hardistry Drive, Pontefract, West Yorkshire. WF8 4BU.

Details on WYAS web site at <http://staff.ndl.co.uk/terry/wyas>

EDITORIAL

I'm very pleased that more reports, including photographs, are coming in. You can send pictures via the e-mail or by post. If the latter I'll scan them in and return your originals. We have more entries for the Bulletin Board this issue. It works, as the note below shows.

"Thank you very much for putting our request for FAS Newsletters nos. 1-4 in the current issue of the Newsletter. We have just had a duplicate set of these issues from the Stafford and District Astronomical Society, so our run of

them is now complete.

*Mary Chibnall, Assistant Librarian,
Royal Astronomical Society."*

Unfortunately I shall have to stand down as newsletter editor at this AGM, due to a change in personal circumstances. We must have a newsletter editor so please consider putting your name forward. I shall be happy to give you a description of the job if you contact me..... and I will do the June newsletter if you wish to give you more time to get the hang of it. Now there's an offer you can't refuse, so contact me to find out more!

Pam Gill, Editor

NEW OFFICERS WILL BE NEEDED!

The following FAS officers will not be standing for re-election at the AGM:

Theresa Cooper - Publicity Officer

Pam Gill - Newsletter Editor

Mike Hurrell - Minutes Secretary

Mike Inglis - Meetings Organiser

Anyone wishing to take on any of these positions, contact Clive Down, FAS Secretary (contact details on the front page)

BULLETIN BOARD

Telescope appeal

I am director of a Centre that promotes British astronomy in North America, emphasising the historical aspects. Incidentally, we have many of the early Leeds AS publications in our library!

We have been searching without success for an old Calver or With reflector to make the showpiece of our observatory, and are now turning to amateur societies to help us locate such an instrument. If anyone knows of such an instrument (including ones belonging to schools or colleges), please contact me directly. We are willing to pay a finder's fee to anyone helping us to find a suitable instrument (for example, if one of your members puts us in touch with a school or another individual that has one). We are able to restore instruments and would be happy to obtain even an unmounted Calver or With mirror, though a whole instrument would be preferred. With thanks.

Dr. Peter Wlasuk, FRAS

FIU Dept. of Astronomy & Physics, 521 Countryside Drive, Naples, FL 34104

Telephone: 941-348-1862, Facsimile: 941-348-1863, E-mail: fiuastro@aol.com

Wanted: Handbook back issues

Would anyone who has spare or unwanted FAS Handbooks for 1977, 1978, 1980 & 1993 contact me as I would like to complete our reference back issue set.

Malcolm Jones, FAS Publications Secretary

Tel 01508 578392 or E mail 100257.1434@compuserve.com

Your Chance for Stardom

The BBC program "The Other Half", hosted by Dale Winton, need couples and individual people with lively, witty, personalities who enjoy 'fooling' people (they are particularly interested if you have got a small observatory in your back garden). Tel 0181 225 7557/0181 225 7549 for an application form. The prize is a luxury holiday and could also give us some astronomy PR!

Ideas from Mexborough and Swinton AS

We are now a charity thanks to FAS and other societies that sent us a copy of their constitution. Does anyone know if we can now claim our VAT back?

(What about societies sending in information about this matter to the newsletter, with tips and pitfalls for others? Editor.)

Eclipse 1999. We are stopping around St. Austell so if other societies want lists of hotels and other accommodation etc. let us know!

(Another good offer for other societies. Don't forget to let the Bulletin Board have details when you can supply information. Editor)

SOCIETY NEWS ROUNDUP

AYLESBURY AS Lots of observing notes in the newsletters. The December quiz was based on the TV game "Blockbusters", an idea for a social evening. Contact Peter Biswell on 01296 85125

BEDFORD AS Contact Peter Cox on 01234 354552

<http://www.powernet.co.uk/bas/bashome.html>

<http://www.powernet.co.uk/bas/basevent.html>

BIRMINGHAM AS We have a full lecture programme for 1998 including May 26th "20th century astrophysics through the eyes of a woman" - Prof Jocelyn Bell-Burnell, and June 30th "Very high energy astrophysics, to the future" - Jeremy Lloyd-Evans, University of Leeds. We have also started making plans for a 1999 Total Eclipse Trip, and our Society's 50th Anniversary in 2000.

Hopefully 1998 will also see the commissioning of a new BAS observatory, in association with a local school. The BAS has a new Chairman, Dane Carty who can be contacted for further information on 0121 353 6577.

BOSTON AS Details are available from the Secretary Lorraine Kendall at 18 College Park, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9 6RE Tel: 01507 524037

BRIDGEND AS Lots of information packed into the newsletters and a full programme. The BAS meet on alternate Fridays, September to June, in the Bridgend Bowls Centre. Contact Clive Down on 01656 740754. E-mail clivedown@btintnet.com

<http://members.aol.com.BridgendAS/>
CAMBRIDGE AA and YOUNG ASTRONOMERS

Congratulations on bringing Project Cyclops to a successful conclusion. The society decided to make improvements to its Project Cyclops telescope system and now has its own video projector. However unable to rest on their laurels for long they have applied for, and received a PUST grant for Project Odyssey. This is to fund a tripod, CCTV camera and telephoto lens.

The Young Astronomers group is thriving with sessions for two age groups. Contact David Herbert, 67 Howard Close, Cambridge, CB5 8QU.

<http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/caa/caahome.html>

CASTLE POINT AC Meetings are at St. Michael's Hall, Dawes Heath every Wednesday. Contact the Secretary Andy Turner on 01702 258640

CHESTERFIELD AS Contact the Secretary - Robert McGregor, 34 Higher Albert Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 7QE

CORNWALL AS Contact Sue Bristow 01726 813345

CRAWLEY AS Crawley AS has a new secretary. He is Ron Garner, 1 Pevensey Close, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 7BL. Tel: 01293 531096.

CRAYFORD MANOR HOUSE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY To start on a sad note, Bert Carpenter died on 21st January after prolonged health problems. Bert had been a member of Crayford since the late 70s and was our Lunar Section Leader.

Bert had tireless enthusiasm for his lunar work and organised many field trips to observe Grazing Occultations, he was also the BAA southern co-ordinator for grazes. Bert was a valuable asset to the society and a friend, who will be greatly missed. (See photograph).

1997 was an eventful year for Mark Armstrong, discoverer of supernova SN 1996bo. He received the Stevenson Award at the BAA exhibition meeting on June 28th, was voted onto the BAA council at the AGM on 26th Nov, has been recruited by Astronomy Now as a Contributory Consultant and assistant to Pam Spence, and is expected to write the CCD column from June 98 onward. The finale for the year was the discovery, along with his wife Claire, of an asteroid with the temporary designation of 1997WQ28. Mark uses a computer driven 10inch LX200 and CCD camera. (See photograph of Mark and his observatory).

Contact Mark at mark.armstrong@dia1.pipex.com

EASTBORNE AS Eastborne has had a busy programme of meetings, including and excellent talk from Prof. Halton Arp from the Max-Planck Institute. Contact Peter Gill, on 01323 646853

LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNESAISE ASTRONOMY SECTION If you are heading towards Guernsey for your holidays contact Geoff Falla the Hon. Secretary on Guernsey 724101

<http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/estate/vs76/astrosec.htm>

HAMPSHIRE AG Contact Roy Dodd on 01705 646875

AS OF HARINGEY Contact Gary Marriott on 0181 803 5961 or e-mail - expo@garym.demon.co.uk <http://www.garym.demon.co.uk/index.htm>

HINCKLEY & DISTRICT AS We were formed in 1983 and are a thriving society of about 30 members. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month, September to May inclusive, at the

Burbage Common Visitor Centre, Hinckley. This is the interpretative centre for a local country park, and is quite a dark site by urban standards. Speakers are drawn from our own members and from further afield. The University of Leicester has proved a rich source of lecturers. A 'highlight' is the annual inter-society Christmas Quiz & Social, which has been going for many years now.

The Society Secretary is Shaun Albrighton, 4 Walnut Close, Hartshill, Nuneaton CV10 0HX (01203 397183).

HUDDERSFIELD & DISTRICT P&AS The society meets at 4A Railway Street on Friday nights 7.30 p.m. - 9.30 p.m. Talk to Philip Heppenstal on 01484 661497

ILKESTON & DISTRICT AS The society meets at the Erewash Museum, Ilkeston. For details of the programme contact Mark Thomas on 0115 939 8133 or John Brown on 0177 376 8836.

IRISH AS Contact Stephen Ryan at PO Box 2547, Dublin 11 or Tel: (from the UK) 00 3531 864 1382

LEICESTER AS Another busy few months for Leicester AS. For the second year running we were victorious in the annual Inter-Society Christmas Quiz held at Hinckley. We have an interesting programme lined up for the next few months with varied topics ranging from the very early universe via Mir to amateur telescopes and no doubt we will have a number of trips out as well. The Young Astronomers Group is going from strength to strength and a group project on the planets will form a major part of the LAS display at the Judgemeadow college Open Day to be held in March. The youngsters have worked very hard on this with pleasing results.

The Leicester AS meets normally on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm at Judgemeadow college, Marydene Drive, Evington, Leicester. The Young Astronomers Group normally convenes on the last Saturday of the month from 10 am to 12 noon. Further details from Ann Bonell, 53 Wardens Walk, Leicester Forest East, Leics. LE3 3GG Tel. 0116 2394481

<http://www.thenet.co.uk/obiwan/astroAnIndex.html>

LETHWORTH & District AS Contact Eric Hutton on 01462 626032.

Web Site: <http://www.rmpc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/bookman/ldas/>

LIVERPOOL AS Contact Ken Clark at 31 Sandymount Drive, Wallasey, L45 0LJ with a SAE or on 0151 638 3270 for more details.

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/~ggastro/home.html>

MANSFIELD AND SUTTON AS Contact Graham Shepherd on 01623 552276

<http://www.innotts.co.uk/~shepherd/index.html>

MEXBOROUGH & SWINTON AS

We are currently constructing a 5 meter dome for our observatory. 2500 hours have been spent on the project so far, its going to be good when it is finished. MSAS to be on the internet shortly with every member to have access and an e-mail address. A full weekly program is booked for 1998, including some notable guest speakers.

Yorkshire Societies Astromind quiz was hosted by Mexborough & Swinton AS in Oct. 1997. It takes the form of a mastermind type quiz. Cleavland AS and Huddersfield AS also took part and the outright winner was Neil Haggarth from Cleavland AS (See picture).

Anyone wanting further info contact Mark Benton 01709 587887 or e mail Mark.benton@rotherham.gov.uk

MILTON KEYNES AS

What MKAS lacks in numbers (20 members), it makes for up in enthusiasm with the launch of a full programme for 1998. Three guest-speakers will visit the society during the Spring session and educate us further in their relevant fields. Mark Armstrong will talk on SN Patrol with a CCD camera on March 20th. Alan Dowdell will take us back to the observing days of the Reverend T Webb on April 17 and Dr Stuart Clark will transport us at z-speed with his talk 'Redshift'. Meetings are held on alternate Fridays at The Rectory Cottages, Bletchley Further details from Pierre Girard on 01234 391489 or pgirard@compuserve.com

NORTH EAST LONDON AS

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month (except August) at Wanstead House. The Programme Secretary, Andrew Lawrence, can be contacted on 01376 510329.

NORWICH AS Contact Malcolm Jones on 01508 578392 for more details.

NOTTINGHAM AS I am pleased to report that the Nottingham Astronomical Society is still very much alive after its 50th anniversary and has become a registered charity (No 1066645).

I am also pleased to report that our CfDS here in Nottingham is going well. Nottingham City Council have taken on board the CfDS comments about security lighting, and some aspects of street lighting. Contact Carl Brennan on 0115 938 4521 for details of their programme.

ORWELL AS Contact Peter Richards on 01473 659806 for details. Email enquiries: oasieng@btbc.bt.co.uk

<http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk:80/~ipswich/>
PAPWORTH AS Papworth have recently had a slide show from David

Malin, resident photographic scientist at the Anglo-Australian observatory who presented a personal view of the Universe. They have also had Jonathan Shanklin from the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge talking about working as an astronomer in the Antarctic. Papworth meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except July) from 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. in the Bradbury Progression Centre, Papworth Everard, nr Huntingdon. Further details Keith Tritton on 01767 677219 (evenings). Email: kpt2@tutor.open.ac.uk

PONLAF The Astronomy Forum at the University of North London.

Meetings on the last Friday of the month at 6.30pm, room 5, 6th floor, Tower Block, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB. Contact Pat Prigmore, 0171 753 5126

SALFORD AS The Society's 30th Anniversary (actual date Sept: 6th) combined with a Star Party was attended by around 50 members and visitors. Fine but mainly cloudy, a brief break mid-evening allowed views of Saturn.

Our thanks to all who helped make the celebration a success.

In December over 70 people attended Dr Allan Chapman's Christmas lecture on "The Prism and the Plate".

In January Chris Marriott launched his latest computer charting program, 'SkyMap Pro 4' which is available from well-known Astro: Distributors. Our thanks to Chris who donated a copy for the above raffle's first prize.

Further enquiries contact Kath Redford on 0161 7943179.

SAWTRY & DISTRICT AS For meetings contact Brooke Norton on 01487 831683.

SCOTTISH ASTRONOMERS

GROUP Contact Ken Mackay at Hayford House, Cambusbarron, Stirling FK7 9PR for details of the programme.

Web Site: <http://star-www.st-and.ac.uk/~fv/sag/sag.html>

SHROPSHIRE AS Contact the Chairman David Woodward on 01743 872991 of the Programme Secretary John Chidlow on 01743 249823 for details on forthcoming events.

SOLENT AS have a number of trips with a useful tear out sheet in the newsletter. For information on the programme contact Ken Medway on 01703 582204.

SOUTH EAST KENT AS Last year was the 25th anniversary of SEKAS, a very successful year culminating in a symposium with the University of Kent Space Sciences Unit. They had nearly 400 visitors and an exciting line up of speakers and exhibits. SEKAS has been very active with public observing

sessions and outreach to schools and youth groups. They gave a demonstration 'Chemistry in Space' at Pfizer's Schools Science Extravaganza. Along with media broadcasts this has all swelled membership to an all time high. They have teamed up with the Thanet Countryside Trust for plans for an observatory. Contact John Kemp on 01227 766470 for more details.

STRATFORD UPON AVON AS The new contact is Robin Swinbourne, 18 Old Milverton, Leamington Spa, CV32 6SA, Tel: 01926 882187 for more information

SUNDERLAND AS Sunderland is also part of the regional organisation the Northern Area Group of Astronomical Societies (NAGAS). Monthly guest lecturers included 'Gamma Ray Astronomy in Australia' by Dr. Paula Chadwick and 'Infra-red Astronomy in the Antarctic' by Dr. Bernie Rauscher. Unfortunately Sunderland AS were unsuccessful in their bid for funding for an observatory by the Millennium Commission. However, they are not giving up! They have complete plans and a good site and will continue to work towards their objective. On a positive note the renovation of Backhouses rooftop observatory is now complete. NAGAS comprises Cleavland and Darlington, Durham, Hartlepool, Newcastle, South Shields, and Sunderland AS. Harrogate and York are also hoping to join. They have a full programme of quarterly meetings. Dr. Alan Chapman gave a popular talk on Captain James Cook and was presented with a framed photograph of 'Endeavour'. Contact Don Simpson, Chairman, on 0191 5670151 for more details.

SWANSEA AS 1998 is the 50th year of the Swansea Astronomical Society. The SAS was spawned by the Bristol Astronomical Society when Gordon Taylor who had moved from Bristol organised a meeting in The Swansea Y.M.C.A. on February 13th 1948. At this meeting, the Swansea Astronomical Society was formed.

On February 13th 1998 Prof. Mike Barnsley gave the Golden Jubilee Lecture at the University of Wales Swansea. The lecture was entitled "Reflections on a Changing Planet: Observing the Earth from Space". There have been changes on the Council of the Swansea Astronomical Society this year. The Chairman, Phil Brady has been replaced by Dr John Birks. Phil has moved to Bangor where we hope he will continue his astronomy. The new Secretary elect is Mrs Sandra Stewart who is gradually assuming her duties as Hon. Sec. during this session.

Email sandra@moonmoths.demon.co.uk. <http://www.swan.ac.uk/astra/starpage.htm>

VECTIS AS Congratulations on the grant for £25 000 for a new observatory which has been approved! For news of events contact John Smith on 01983 865451 or write to him at 27 Forest Road, Winford, Sandown, I.O.W. PO36 0JY.

WEST CORNWALL AS A recent talk was on the European Space Agency by Derek Gould, and in May Prof. Mike Disney will visit to speak about the Hubble Telescope.

A meeting was arranged with the Millennium Commission to discuss the future of the Cornwall Planetarium, but it does not look as though there is any further possibility of funding there. However, we have Planetarium plans ready to go, complete with masses of local support, so if you would like to build a Planetarium and be instantly famous please get in touch.

The WCAS meet in Falmouth on the first Wednesday and in Helston on the third Thursday of each month. Contact Robin Hughes, on 01209 890736 for more information of forthcoming events.

WEST OF LONDON AS Contact Duncan Radbourne on 0181 952 2816 for information on events.

WEST MIDLANDS FEDERATION OF AS The West Midlands Federation of Astronomical Societies (WeMFAS) has representatives from the following societies:

Birmingham Astronomical Society - Patrick Tracey and Andy Salmon Heart of England Astronomical Society - Andy Morris Midlands Spaceflight Society - Dave Evetts Walsall Astronomical Society - Alan Ledbury Wolverhampton Astronomical Society - Mike Bryce. Andy Salmon was elected as chairman and selected as the representative of WeMFAS to the FAS and other outside bodies. He is secretary of the Midlands Spaceflight Society and is also an active member of Birmingham Astronomical Society.

His main forte is "public outreach" on space & astronomy, with events for children and appearances on local radio and lectures.

WeMFAS has been quiet as a group since its first events in early 1996 but it is hoped to improve contact between its member societies, help to organise joint activities and to represent them at FAS meetings. A joint visit of WeMFAS to Keele observatory was organised for Feb 28, 1998.

Public star parties at Lickey Hills Visitors Centre, Warren Lane (off the Old Birmingham Road, Birmingham) were organised for March 20 and October 23, 1998, from 7.30 PM.

A joint WeMFAS leaflet was put together for publicity at Astrofest and will be refined for later use. Plans were set in motion to exchange lists of lecture dates by member societies, to encourage specialist interests amongst their members, and to exchange lists of contact details for speakers the societies had used recently, to give more ideas to those trying to find speakers. We hope to announce more joint events later in the year.

Contact details for WeMFAS chairman and representative to the FAS:

Andy Salmon, "Olympus Mons", 13 Jacmar Crescent, Smethwick B67 7LF.
Home telephone: (0121) 565 4845
andy_salmonn@compuserve.com
andy_salmonn@icom-solutions.com

WEST YORKS AS Our lottery bid is rumbling along. We think we have a reasonable chance of getting funding for research/fact-finding so that the architect can begin work.

We've also approached PPARC for additional funding too to enable us to upgrade our observatory/scope etc.

Contact Ken Willoughby, 11 Hardistry Drive, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 4BU on 01977 795535 for a programme

of meetings. Email Terry Cymbalyak on terry@ndi.co.uk

Web Site: <http://staff.ndi.co.uk/terry/wyas>
(See front page for details of joint convention in June)

WILLIM HERSHEY SOCIETY Contact the secretary - Al Crotcher on 01225 311342 or write to him at William Herschel Society, 19 New Kings Street, Bath, BA1 2BL, for more information.

WOLVERHAMPTON AS WAS meet on alternative Mondays between September and April at 7.30p.m. at Beckminster Methodist Church Hall, Birches Barn Road, Wolverhampton. Contact Michael Bryce, at Iona, 16 Yellowhammer Court, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 4PP;
Tel: 01562 863545;
e-mail Michael_Bryce@compuserve.com
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Michael_Bryce

WORCESTER AS Contact Ian Gray on 01386 47352 for details of the programme.

WORTHING AS Meetings take place on the second Wednesday of each month in the Heene Church Rooms, Heene Road, Worthing, commencing at 7.30 p.m.
Contact Nick Quinn at
nick@nquinn.demon.co.uk for full details

of the programme.
<http://www.nquinn.demon.co.uk/was>.

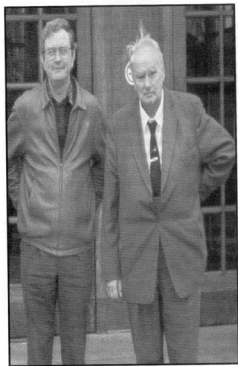
***** A NEW GROUP HOPING TO JOIN *****

CENTRAL SIDEWALK ASTRONOMERS

Stuart Williams is now organising a new non-profit group, based on the ideals of John Dobson, of Dobsonian mount fame, and affiliated to The Sidewalk Astronomers in the USA.

Central Sidewalk Astronomers will, I believe, be the first group of its kind in the UK. We do not plan to work as a conventional society with formal meetings. Instead, Central Sidewalk Astronomers is designed as a roving team with a strictly limited membership aimed purely at promoting astronomy as a science and hobby. We will do this by organising Star Parties and public stargazing or similar events.

Contact Stuart Williams, Central Sidewalk Astronomers, 26 Matlock Road, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 3QD.



(Above) The late Bert Carpenter with Patrick Moore (See Crayford Manor House AS)



(Above) Mark Armstrong pictured with telescope and observatory.
(see Crayford Manor House AS)



(Above) Yorkshire Societies Astromind quiz. Pictured are: Paul Money, Neil Haggarth, Maureen Broadhead & Les Marsden.

Web sites

Don't forget to keep up to date with the FAS by checking the web site. It is at <http://www.fedastro.demon.co.uk/index.html>

Thanks to Nick Quinn for doing this.

Also send in details of your home page or interesting sites that members may want to access. Here are a couple for you to look at.

From Richard Pearce

Here you will see some of the photographs I have taken of the Aurora Borealis over the last ten years or so.
<http://members.aol.com/RPearce738/index.html>

Dave Eagle has a home page:

<http://www.btinternet.com/~cosmodave/davehome.html>

Book Review by Richard Pearce

I writing to tell you about a recently published book called 'The Aurora - An Introduction for Observers and Photographers' by Jim Henderson and John MacNicol. You may or may not have seen this book but I would like to recommend it to any astronomers or photographers interested in the subject.

It contains over 70 colour plates of the aurora many of which have been taken from Scotland by the authors. It is not particularly technical but does give useful tips on taking auroral photographs and brief details on the causes of the aurora and is suitable for all levels of experience. The book can be obtained directly from Jim for £14.99 (inc UK P&P) at the following address; Jim Henderson, Crooktree Images, Kincardine O'Neil, Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, AB34 4JD

A Successful Astrofest

The Federation had its usual stand at the annual Astrofest, held on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st January in London. The idea of us having a stand is to promote interest in joining a local society to the 4500 or so readers of Astronomy Now who go to the meeting. Most visitors who stopped at our stand, in order to inspect the range of slides booklets etc we had on sale, were asked "do you belong to a local society?" They all left with the address of the secretary from a society near their home. They are all new members for some society.

About a dozen or so societies responded to my request and sent leaflets or newsletters, which were happily grabbed by the visitors. It is an easy way of

advertising our society and I hope to receive more next year. Not only do we have a stand, but the organisers asked us to organise the Society Showcase at Astrofest. Here six Federation Societies provided full displays of their work, including this year's largest telescope display at the show, a 20 inch from Newbury AS.

Astrofest, as those who have visited in the past will tell you, can be expensive on the pocket! The temptation to buy another eyepiece, book or telescope is high. There is something for all in the three floors of the trade halls. For those who want a little room to wander, then Friday morning is the best time. By Saturday afternoon it is getting-ones-elbows-out time. However, there is even more than all the trade stands and a full lecture programme is provided throughout the two days. This year the lecture theatre on the Saturday afternoon was almost full to capacity.

I would like to thank all those societies and individuals who helped the FAS stand to have its best year in promoting local astronomical societies. When you get a call from a possible new member in the new few days, they may have been inspired to join because of Astrofest and Astronomy Now.

Thanks to Alan Dowdell for this report.

Lights Out For Nightclub

The lights must go out at a Worthing night spot, say council chiefs. The mansion House nightclub in Littlehington Road appealed after Worthing Council refused permission for the 'spaceflower effect' spotlight on its roof. But now a Government inspector has thrown out the appeal and borough planners say the light will have to go. The powerful spotlight shines beams into the sky, and when it first appeared police switchboards were jammed with reports of UFO sightings. There were 29 objections against the original application from people in Goring and Ferring, and the British Astronomical Society said it interfered with stargazing. Now the appeal inspector has sided with them, and against the Chapman Group, owners of the Mansion House.

As Reported 'Evening Argus' 31st.Dec 1997 Midday Edition and submitted by Dave Sutton

FILTERS

The FAS has sourced a UK supply of Astronomical filters and is proposing to offer these to FAS members. The first ones will be OIII 'Nebulae' filters of a standard 52mm diameter suitable for a standard camera lens filter holder. Tests have

suggested that they are as good as Lumicon, if not better.

Size	52mm
Thickness	1mm
Flatness	1/2 wavelength
Price	Depending upon quantity but less than £100

The FAS would have to commit to 100, which would be a considerable expense and we would need a reasonable number of societies to be interested.

If the interest is for a standard 1 1/4" eyepiece mount size the price would be less. Please write or e-mail me if you are interested, with your preferences and likely quantities. If this is successful we could look at other types such as H alpha.

M. Jones, Tabor House, Norwich Road, Mulbarton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 8JT
e-mail 100257.1434@compuserve.com
ASAP please.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Due to the success of the Astrocalendar and Observational Astronomy we are producing some more booklets. 'Choosing a Telescope and Binoculars' was released at Astrofest and sold nearly 100 there - retail cost 75p.

'Using a Telescope' and 'Step-by-Step Astrophotography', both of these in conjunction with Liverpool are next. The expected retail cost is £2.20 and £1.60 with the usual discounts to Societies for reasonable quantities. It is hoped that they will be available at the AGM on 9th May at Newbury.

This will give additional information to Society members and provide extra revenue to FAS Societies from sales to the general public. Bring your cheques to Newbury and save on postage!

M. Jones; Publications Secretary (see above article for contact)

MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARY!

Cambridge Autumn Convention
October 3rd 1998
Details in June newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Please remember to send any details of contact changes to the Membership Secretary, Eric Hutton, 14 Folly Close, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 9DG. Tel: 0142 431988.
E-mail: bookman@rmplc.co.uk

Deadline for submission for next newsletter - 15th May 1998.
Send to Pam Gill, Editor