

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

The Society has had another exceptionally good year, with an excellent range of speakers for which we must thank Shirish, Ron Johnson and myself.

We began in January with Martin Howe, our member, who showed us how to take great photos with an DSLR Camera. He went through general Camera setup and talked about what settings to use to obtain great images of the Sun, Comets, the Milky Way, M31 and Stars. Ron Johnson followed with the weather report for the year. The evening saw great attendance; what a fabulous way to start the year.

In February we listened to Robin Scagell from the Society of Popular Astronomy (SPA) talking about William Herschel & his Telescopes. William Herschel was born in Hanover in Germany before moving to Bath with his sister Caroline where they worked on making mirrors for his telescopes and observing the skies. He discovered Uranus, catalogued various Nebulae and made many other discoveries.

In March we had our own George Seabroke from MSSL, He gave a wonderful Talk on the Gaia space observatory and how it works. It has discovered 21000 planets during the first 5 years of the mission and has been working for a further 5 years. So far it has collected enough data to keep Astronomers busy for the next 30 years.

In April we had our own member and Secretary, the wonderful Peter, talking about different types of telescope from Gamma Ray though to X-Ray, Ultraviolet, Infrared, Microwave, Optical and though to radio waves. Who inverted the Telescope was Hans Lippershey which I didn't know. What the difference is between a Georgian, Maksutov and Cassegrain-Schmidt telescope; my mind was blown way, it makes sure no stone is unturned or made-up form.

In May we had Professor Michael Foulkes talking about Saturn. I didn't know that the Rings are 9 times the diameter of earth, that 4 spacecraft have visited Saturn, and the last count of the number of moons there was 145, Which I find absolutely amazing. There is so much more to Saturn than I dream to imagine. It is not just a pretty ring system.

In June we had our patron Professor Ian Morison give us the Maurice Gavin Memorial Lecture. He talked about our Island Universe, all about Stars, Galaxies, Nebula, Black Holes, and Dark Matter.

In July we had our own David Fishwick talking about Stars 'How Hot How Old and how we know'. I never knew the star Vega was twice as heavy as our sun and is 400 million years old and that Capella is like our sun, just a bit bigger. My mind was blown away by the fact that using one second of the sun's energy we could power America with 7 million tons of energy. Wow

In September we had the Picnic at Headley Heath. It was a wonderful night with great company. We saw M13, M82, Saturn, Jupiter, a number of meteors and we spent time putting the world to rights. lol

On the September meeting we had Professor Jonathan Tennyson talking about Water in the Universe.

He was charged with finding elements and possible water on Exoplanets as well as on the Moon, Mars, Enceladus and comets etc. I never knew how much water there was. Including our Sun!. It Is astounding.

In October we had a members evening with lots of fun. Ron Johnson talking about the Society's old observatory and about the new one that we are trying to build. Peter and Martin talked about their telescopes and how to set them up. I had a crazy quiz evening and Ron Canham finished the evening with the sky at night for us which was a lovely evening.

The last Speaker was Professor Brad Gibson who presented on How astronomers Control your life. It was a fascinating talk all about the technology produced because of space. For example, CCDs, Wi-Fi, GPS and, many health problems now use diagnostic tools that started in Astronomical investigations into X-rays, MRI's etc. Telescope mirrors have influenced cooker tops and new computer languages developed for Astronomy are now fast tracking postage. I wish my postage will come through though. It was a wonderful way to end the year on a high.

I must thank all my fellow committee members for all their hard work and support and who make my job such a joy to do.

School Space for the use of the school.

An excellent job by Steve for keeping our Accounts for last year and observing sessions.

John Davey for his splendid work on Janus.

Peter for all his help in the Secretary role, for continuing to develop our website and the outreach for scouts etc.

Maurice Gavin Observatory along with Ron Johnson and Paul Evans.

Thanks to Ron Johnson, Shirish, and Matt Graydon & I for organizing speakers for 2024.

Ron Canham for all the sky at night sessions which were most informative, Interesting & Fun.

And let us not forget Gary Walker who helped the committee with tables and chair set up.

Finally, may I wish you a merry Christmas and a wonderful new year.

Anita King EAS Chairperson