

# Ewell Astronomical Society AGM 2023

## Secretary's Report

*“Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist.”*

Stephen Hawking

The past year has been a good one for the Society with us holding a full 12 months of meetings at Nonsuch High School. Having previously agreed to continue the option of virtual Zoom meetings, attendance using this option remains popular.

During the year, we had 6 guest speakers visit us and give great talks covering William Herschel, the Gaia Spacecraft, Saturn, the size of the Milky Way, Water in the Universe and on How Astronomers Control Our Lives. Three of our own members also gave talks ranging from Astrophotography, to Telescope technologies and How we know what we know about Stars.

Thanks to Anita, Ron Johnson and Shirish for finding and arranging all our great speakers for the year.

In October we did something slightly different and held a members evening of talks, a film about our old Observatory and some quizzes; all accompanied by biscuits and doughnuts.

The beginning of 2023 saw clear skies and as such we held a number of group Observing Sessions at Ranmore Common. Further observing sessions were held throughout the year but, with the weather turning less favourable and less predictable, the sessions became less frequent.

Thanks again to Steve Roebuck for organising these sessions for us.

During the Bank Holiday weekend at end of April we attended the Nonsuch Town and Country Show. The Society hosted a stand which proved very popular with many members of the public attending. The 2 days proved very busy and a lot of interest was shown by the all visitors to the stand. Apart from a brief heavy downpour on the second day, the weather luckily held and we were able to show many of the visitors the group of sunspots active at the time on the Sun.

My thanks to Anita King, Ron Canham, Ron Johnson, John Davey, Steve Roebuck and Martin Howe for all their help over the weekend in making the event a successful one.

The School's 11-inch SC Telescope has unfortunately been out of service for most of the year with technical problems and so we have been unable to hold viewing sessions using the School's Observatory. With repair work currently underway, it is hoped that we will be able to reinstate these sessions in the near future.

In September we held our annual Picnic again. It was a relaxing evening chatting with others and, we had the added bonus of clear skies.

## Committee

The committee membership remained unchanged during the first half of the year but in October we welcomed Martin Howe to the committee - welcome Martin.

The committee now consists of the following members:

Anita King (Chairperson), Peter Scott (Secretary/Webmaster), Steve Roebuck, (Treasurer), Shirish Phade (Registrar), John Davey (Newsletter), Ron Canham (Sky at Night), Ron Johnson (MGO), Paul Evans and Martin Howe.

The committee met seven times during 2023, with all meetings taking place via Zoom. The meetings were held on the following dates:

11th Jan, 7th Mar, 12th Apr, 3rd Jul, 4th Sep, 9th Oct, 6th Nov and 27th Nov.

The Maurice Gavin Observatory project having the aim of building the Society's own Observatory has unfortunately been placed on hold whilst the School awaits a planning decision by Epsom and Ewell Council. The planning request is not for the observatory itself, but we are not permitted to proceed until it has been granted.

I'd like to thank Ron Johnson for his continued perseverance in keeping the project active and in driving it forward.

I'd finally like to thank Anita King for the leadership, hard work and dedication she has provided to the Society and committee over the past year as Chairperson.

## Online presence

The Society continued to maintain its Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp accounts as well as hosting the [ewellastronomy.org](http://ewellastronomy.org) website.

WhatsApp continues to prove particularly popular with a lot of good chat, notifications and sharing of some really stunning Astro images. It also continues to be used for exchanging information about online courses and publicly available talks and events between members.

The monthly copy of Janus, available via the website, continues to be a good source of information with many interesting articles and remains popular with members.

I'd like to give my thanks John Davey for all his hard work ensuring the newsletter continues to remain a valuable asset. I'd like to also thank all our contributors for their great article submissions.

So after a great 2023 for the Society, we now look forward to another great year in 2024. It therefore just remains for me to wish everyone a

**Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and to wish everyone clear skies in 2024.**

*Peter.*