

Ewell Astronomical Society AGM 2024

Secretary's Report

"The universe is still a place of mystery and wonder."

Martin Rees - Astronomer Royal

This year we have hosted 9 exceptional guest speakers who gave us some great talks covering the Planets, Comets, the Sun, Planetary Imaging, Debris in Space, Gaia Mission, The Star of Bethlehem, and Life on Mars. Our very own Martin Howe also gave us a great talk on Defending the Earth from Asteroids.

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

This past year has certainly been a good year one for the Society. The weather however has not matched up to the same standard and many of our planned observing sessions were cancelled as a result. Ad-hoc observing sessions however helped fill some of the gaps whenever clear weather permitted.

Thanks to Steve Roebuck, Shirish and Martin for organising the observing sessions for us this year.

Following the failure of the School Observatory's Telescope mount back in 2019, we have unfortunately had an extended period in which we were unable to run any User Group observing sessions using the School's Telescope.

This year has however seen the school invest a substantial amount of money having the broken mount completely replaced and the telescope refurbished. After the successful completion of work, we finally managed to start organising a number of viewing sessions for both School students and EAS members. The weather however had different ideas and all of these sessions unfortunately had to be cancelled.

Then in June it was also discovered that the roof also needed refurbishing. The Observatory again had to be dismantled and the Dome itself moved to undertake the work. As a result, we have still been unable to run any observing sessions. Hopefully we will finally be able to resume viewing sessions again using the Observatory early in the New Year. Fingers crossed.

After a very successful event last year, we again attended the Nonsuch Town and Country Show back in May. The Sunday was great with lots of visitors coming to our stand. The weather itself was ideal allowing us to show many visitors the collection of Sunspots present on the Sun through several suitably filtered telescopes.

Monday however presented us with a completely different day with lots of rain, not many visitors and the heavy rain eventually forced us to pack up early.

My thanks to all of our Volunteers who attended and helped throughout the weekend.

Anita, Steve, John, Martin, Ron

A particular thanks to Anita and Suzanne who braved the weather throughout the day on the Monday.

Although not as prevalent as last year we did manage to undertake some outreach activities. We gave a talk to the residents of a retirement home in Tadworth and provided support and a training for the Teachers at Surbition High School on how to use their telescope.

In September we attempted to hold our annual Picnic; again however, true to form, the weather stepped in and we had to cancel the event. Fingers crossed for next year,

Committee

The Committee has seen a few changes of membership. At the start of the year, we welcomed Suzanne Fox to the Committee and said goodbye to Paul Evans who left the Society after having moved away. Ron Canham also sadly stepped down from the Committee after moving away in the Summer.

The committee members have met six times during 2024, with all our meetings taking place via Zoom. The meetings were held on the following dates:

1st Feb, 8th Apr, 30th Apr, 8th Jul, 25th Sep and 12th Nov

The committee members for 2024 were as follows:

Anita King (Chairperson), Peter Scott (Secretary/Webmaster), Steve Roebuck, (Treasurer), Shirish Phade (Registrar), John Davey (Newsletter), Ron Canham (Sky at Night), Ron Johnson (MGO), Martin Howe (Nonsuch Walk) and Suzanne Fox(Website BU)

I'd 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.

The Maurice Gavin Observatory project, having the aim of building the Society's own Observatory, again saw very little progress this year whilst awaiting for other unrelated work at the school being approved and started. This unrelated work has now been approved and so hopefully we should see some progress early in the new year. Again fingers crossed.

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

An exciting new project this year which was suggested by Martin Howe, is a potential Solar System walk where walkers can learn about and get a perspective on our home Solar System.

Thanks to Martin Howe for championing this project and helping move it closer to a reality. Thanks also to Suzanne Fox for her help with the proof of concept web page.

Online presence

The Society continued to maintain it's Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp accounts as well as hosting the 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 has 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 an excellent source of information and interesting articles and very 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 all of their great article submissions.

Finally I'd like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and to wish everyone clear skies for 2025.

Peter.