

Federation of Astronomical Societies



Editor: Michael Bryce

Newsletter

No 148: February 2026

fedastro.org.uk

The Newsletter for Members of FAS Affiliated Astronomical Societies



**Dr Allan Chapman
1946-2026**

'The Team': Dr Allan Chapman and his wife Rachel

Image Credit: Martin Stott (International License)

Full obituary to appear in our April Issue

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President's Spot:

Clare Lauwers



Lovely astronomers, I am not sure I am in the best place to be writing this, but Michael (Newsletter Editor) does insist, so here we go.

Firstly, the reason I may not be best placed to write is because I am all out of words. When I'm not doing astronomy things, some of my spare time goes to the parish council. Our local city council is consulting on a new Local Plan. You can all Google what a Local Plan is. Should you ever be in a position to comment on one – and individuals can – your “friend” is the National Planning Policy Framework. It's also a useful document if a planning application might cause light pollution. Anyway, the long and the short of it is last week saw me finish the 4000 words for the Parish Council's response, then do a shorter version as a personal response and then other response as there is a plot of land in the draft plan which is nearish to my society's observatory. So many, many words....

But on to more astronomy related matters

There's another “parade of planets” on the horizon. Who knows if there will be same media excitement as last year, but in my opinion anything that gets people, especially young people, interested in space is a good thing.

Mars is sitting this one out (got a better offer maybe!) but Mercury, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune will be lining up. Get ready to explain to journalists and the public that the AI image of all the planets is a long way from reality.

If you want to mark your calendar with another date where the media and public will get overly excited, there's a blue Moon in May. It's not a supermoon, but we do have two more of those to come this year. I'm placing bets on the Christmas Eve Full Moon getting a lot of coverage.

June sees the conjunction of Venus and Jupiter, so it's bound to be cloudy that night!

Things get really busy in August, with the solar eclipse (90% in the UK, 100% in central Spain) on the 12th, the Perseids peaking on the 13th (hurrah it's during new Moon) and then partial lunar eclipse on the 28th.

Saturn will be at its very best in October, reaching opposition the 4th. As it will be rising at around sunset and setting at around sunrise, it should be a great time to photograph it.

And it's worth remembering that the Sun is still in the active part of its cycle, so the chance of aurora is still there.

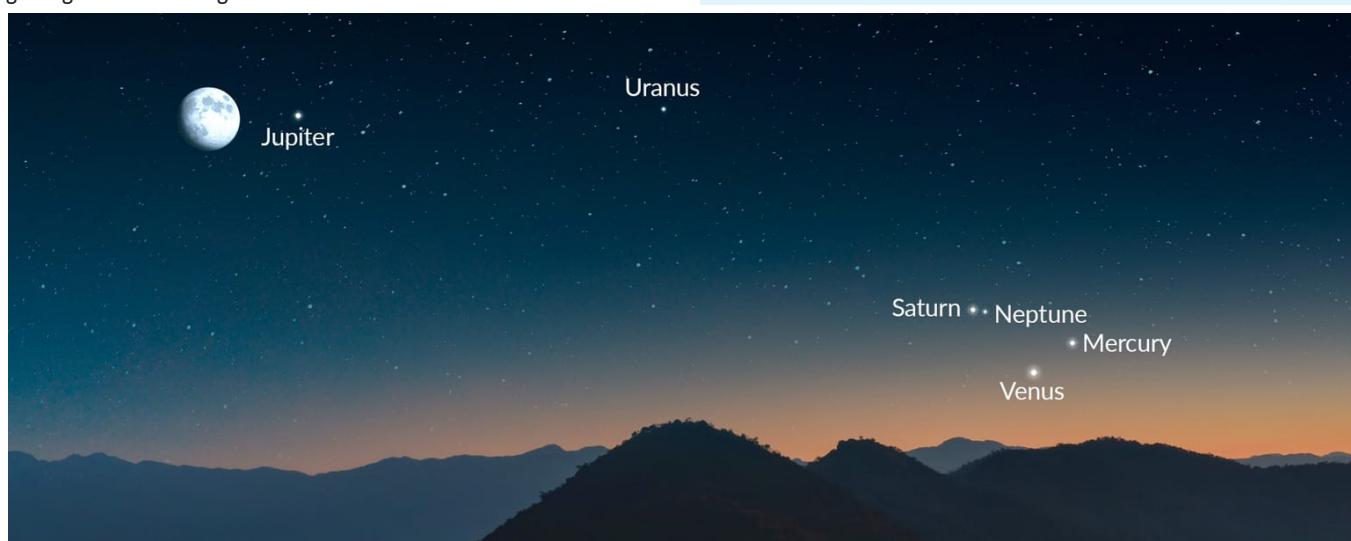
As I often say, the wonderful thing about astronomy is that there is always something going on. Yes clouds often get in the way, which is why I also say that astronomers are both optimistic and resilient!

Clare

Note: This article was written before the passing of Dr Allan Chapman. I'm not being rude and ignoring this but leaving the obituary to those who knew him well.
Clare

Image Below: Look for a large planetary alignment around 28 February 2026! In the evening, about an hour after sunset, six planets – Jupiter, Uranus, Saturn, Neptune, Venus, and Mercury – will align in the sky.

Text and Image Credit:
<https://starwalk.space>



**The Federation of Astronomical Societies
is pleased to announce its**



2026 Convention

**Will be held on Saturday 27 June
At Cardiff University**

Once again, we are organising a whole-day event where astronomy enthusiasts can gather and hear from some top speakers.

The following speakers are already confirmed

Prof. Paul Roche FRAS - “Using astronomy to engage students in STEM”

Chair of Astronomy Education at Cardiff University

An astronomer who specialises in outreach and education, working with schools to develop astronomy and space-themed STEM education resources and programmes. His current research interests are in asteroids and comets, but he has previously worked on hot stars, black holes and neutron stars.

Prof. Mike Lockwood FRS - “Space Junk - The danger of orbital collisions”

Professor of Space Environment Physics at the University of Reading and President of the Royal Astronomical Society from May 2024.

His research interests include variations in the magnetic fields of the Sun, interplanetary space, and the Earth and in general solar influence on global and regional climate.

Prof. Mike Edmunds MA PhD FRAS - “The Antikythera Mechanism”

Emeritus Professor of Astrophysics. Former Head of the School of Physics & Astronomy. Chair of the Antikythera Mechanism Research Project - an international collaboration that investigates the extraordinary Greek calculator which, although well over 2,000 years old, can predict astronomical positions and events.

Doors will open at 9am, and the programme will run from 10am

There is a discounted price for members of FAS affiliated societies. A promo code will be sent to all societies so their members can purchase tickets for the low price of just **£10** per person, **£5** for under-16's, **£20** for families (plus bookings fee). Public tickets will be made available later if space permits.

There are opportunities for involvement in the following ways:

- **Sponsors**
- **Exhibitors**
- **Advertisers**
- **Displays from astronomy societies, which are offered at low cost**

Regarding any of the above, please write to Jerry Stone - meetings@fedastro.org.uk

Tickets will be available very shortly on the FAS website at fedastro.org.uk



Dark Night Skies update: The CfDS reinvents itself – and needs your help!

Steve Tonkin



For more than three decades the British Astronomical Association's Commission for Dark Skies relied upon the time, expertise and energy of a few very dedicated individuals, the most notable of whom was its Co-ordinator, the late Bob Mizon MBE FRAS. After Bob's sudden death in 2023, it became clear that there was nobody else able to step into the breach and that this way of working was no longer viable. A new committee has since devised a new mode which it hopes will be better suited to a changed light pollution environment.

The CfDS has re-adopted its original name, the Campaign for Dark Skies. It sees its role as supporting initiatives to reduce light pollution in local communities. Committee member Howard Lawrence writes:

"It's early days, but the idea is to empower local astronomical societies to act as community hubs, driving progress in specific areas of concern. For instance, if commercial greenhouses are a problem in a particular area, a small group of AS members could organise a campaign to address it. I won't propose the specifics of the actions, but by taking a local approach, we can potentially achieve tangible results. Furthermore, a local public campaign will raise awareness about light pollution, potentially influencing more people. If every community nationwide made similar incremental improvements, overall light pollution would likely decrease.

"We're asking that at least one member from each AS volunteer as a liaison person. These liaison officers will promote the dark skies cause, interact with the CfDS Network and other organisations, and use the network to obtain literature, posters and other campaign

materials, including grants from the central CfDS fund. Hopefully, each AS will form an action group to plan and implement campaigns in their local areas."

We agree that this is potentially a more productive approach. Unlike the 1990s, everyone has now heard of light pollution, and the challenge now includes the need to reduce it while still enabling legitimate lighting tasks, which differ in different situations. This calls out for people to campaign in the situations and communities they know.

The formal launch of the new Campaign will be at the BAA Winchester Weekend (10-12 April), but we hope that more astronomical societies register their interest before that. AS representatives can register using this [Google form](#), which also enables request an invitation to the WhatsApp group that will be a primary Campaign communication channel.

Let's Do This!

Steve Tonkin
Dark Skies Advisor.

Image above produced with Microsoft Co-Pilot



AEROSPACE BRISTOL

Saturday 7 March 2026

WALES & WEST SPACEFEST



Join us on 7 March for a jam-packed day of out-of-this-world events and activities as Aerospace Bristol hosts the first Wales & West Spacefest. Whether you are a space enthusiast or looking for a fun family day out with the kids, there is something for everyone to get involved in. A collaboration between Bristol Astronomical Society, Bath Astronomers and Cardiff Astronomical Society with Aerospace Bristol, this immersive event offers something for everyone from curious newcomers, keen astronomers, and families alike.

MORNING: Astronomy & Space in Wales & the West

10:00 am	Herschel and the Discovery of Uranus	Jonathan Hall	Herschel Museum
10:35 am	35 Years of Hubble and the Connection to Filton	Dr Nigel Wright	Aerospace Bristol
11:15 am	From Bristol to the Planets – a personal reflection on Europe's role in Space Exploration	Prof David Parker	Univ of Southampton
12:05 pm	Why Space is Everyone's Business	Dr Rosie Cane & Matthew Wills	Space Wales & Space West

LUNCHTIME TALK

12:45 pm	Where is the Universe? (for families)	Dr Jane Clark	Cardiff Astro Soc
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AFTERNOON: Exoplanets

2:00 pm	Discovering Planets & Stars around other Stars	Dr Ingrid Pelisoli Dr Thomas Wilson	Univ of Warwick
2:35 pm	How can Lessons Learnt from AI help us with Building a Space Mission?	Dr Gordon Yip	King's College London
3:20 pm	Unveiling Exoplanets in the UV & Mapping Exoplanet Atmospheres	Ailsa Campbell Daniel Valentine	Univ of Bristol
3:55 pm	Of Space Missions and Exoplanets – Spotlight on the Ariel Space Telescope	Prof Giovanna Tinetti	King's College London

Book at aerospacebristol.org/whats-on



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MessierPlanner

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Logging and planning your astro sessions should be more beautiful than a CSV or a lost bit of paper.

Messier Planner is a free browser-based tool, designed to help amateur astronomers and astrophotographers decide what to image and when. Using your location and the night sky conditions, it shows which deep-sky objects are realistically visible—so you spend less time guessing and more time imaging.

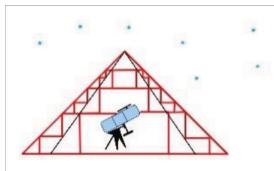
Join a growing global community from beginners choosing their first targets, to experienced imagers planning, tracking and logging structured projects for their next imaging session. Search over 1200 objects from GUM to Messier, RCW to NGC and lots more in between.

You can even use our beautifully simple Sky Atlas that helps locate objects for your sessions and acts as a great tool for finding out deeper information on your chosen object including mosaic mode and more.



Milton Keynes Astronomical Society

Registered Charity No: 1084943



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Church Green
Road
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK3 6BJ
www.mkas.org.uk

Programme 2026

Date	Meeting	Programme Event
16 January	Astrodome	By members
30 January	Guest Speaker	Dr. Mike Leggett Astronomy & Exploration
13 February	Astrodome	By members
27 February	Astro Quiz	Mark Hurn
13 March	Astrodome	By members
27 March	Guest Speaker	Sheridan Williams Eclipses
10 April	Astrodome	By members
24 April	Oscars	By members
8 May	Astrodome	By members
22 May	Guest Speaker	Mark Hurn via Zoom History of the Sun
5 June	Astrodome	By members
19 June	Guest Speaker	Mary McIntyre General Astrophotography of Meteors
3 July	Astrodome	By members
17 July	Guest Speaker	Paul Fellows Northern Lights & Space Weather
31 July	Astrodome	By members
14 August	Short Talks	By members
28 August	Astronomers Question time	By members
11 September	Astrodome	By members
25 September	Guest Speaker	Dr. Matt Bothwell Update on James Webb Telescope
9 October	Astrodome	By members
23 October	Guest Speaker Richard Lambert Memorial Lecture	RLML Mike Frost Who's who in the Moon?
6 November	Astrodome	
20 November	AGM	Annual General Meeting + Election of New Committee
4 December	Astrodome	
18 December	Christmas Social Members & invited Guests Event	



Liverpool Astronomical Society

145 Years of Astronomy on Merseyside

1881-2026

We can report a great turnout for the monthly meeting of Liverpool Astronomical Society, held on 16 January, 2026, at the Quaker Meeting House, 22 School Lane, Liverpool City Centre.

The meeting featured an excellent talk by former Society President, Mr Steve Southern, entitled "What are U.A.P's in which he discussed the interesting topic of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena, which covered a wide range of subjects, and discoveries as our technology, engineering has improved our knowledge of the Earth, Solar System, our local Galaxy, and Universe. The period between the first Wright Brothers powered flight and the first human stepping on the Moon is less than seventy years. So, what will we discovery over the next seventy to hundred years?

Congratulations go to Steve Tomkinson who was the winner of the raffle prize draw, a impressive, framed display of Apollo mission patches, kindly donated by LAS Librarian Anne Smith who is seen on the attached image presenting the Prize to Steve during the meeting.

Future Monthly meetings: from 7pm 3rd Friday of the Month

20 March 2026

"Small Steps to Giant Leaps: Deciphering the Glacial History of Mars in Preparation for Human Missions"

By Dr Frances Butcher – School of Geography & Planning, University of Sheffield.

17th April 2026

"Art in Astronomy"

By Steve Warbis - Macclesfield Astronomical Society

Text with thanks to Phil Williams and Gerard Gilligan



Image Above: Prize Presentation from Left to Right, David Galvin (LAS Vice-President), Colin Murray (LAS President), Steve Tomkinson (Winner!), Mrs Anne Smith (LAS Librarian & Minutes Secretary), Mark Galvin (LAS Secretary)



Image Above: The Society President, Colin Murray, presides over the first monthly meeting of 2026 of Liverpool Astronomical Society on 16 January.

Image Below: The Audience of the first monthly meeting of 2026 of Liverpool Astronomical Society on 16 January

Images credit: Phil Williams and Steve Stix



A Blue Plaque for The West Yorkshire Astronomical Society

On Saturday 20th September in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, a blue plaque was dedicated to the West Yorkshire Astronomical Society's origins. The plaque commemorates its first permanent meeting place, affectionately known as 'The Barn.' The area has long since been redeveloped into residential housing, but the plaque has been installed close by The Barn's original location in what is now Baileygate Court.

Formed on 5th June 1973, the Society is still very active 52 years later. Following the first few weeks meeting in a local school the Society gained access to more permanent premises. This rather dilapidated outbuilding, kindly offered for a peppercorn rent by our Chairman's father-in-law Charles Huddlestone, was quickly renovated by the members and within a few weeks 'The Barn' was habitable enough for twice-weekly meetings to start. Having a permanent base enable the Society to set down roots and provided a place to store assets and undertake projects.

Guest speakers came from far and wide, invariably enjoying the unique atmosphere The Barn provided. One particular highlight was the visit by Dr Grenville Turner from Sheffield University when he brought along a sample of moon rock from the Apollo 17 mission. Dr Turner was one of the foremost researchers of the day relating to moon rock dating techniques. It was standing room only in The Barn as everyone queued up to hold the sample (which was in

a suitable container to prevent contamination of course!). After the meeting I took Dr Turner across the courtyard to meet my father-in-law who held the moon rock with great excitement and wonderment. He couldn't wait to tell friends and acquaintances but to his eternal frustration no one believed him!

After three great years at The Barn the society relocated, having the opportunity to build its own observatory within the Community Centre grounds on the south side of Pontefract. Seven years later the Rosse Observatory was duly completed and was officially opened by Patrick Moore, accompanied by The Countess of Rosse (of Birr Castle fame) and Sir Bernard Lovell. The opening was reported in the BAA Journal1 and elsewhere.

We wonder how many other local astronomical societies have a dedicated Blue Plaque? I can't imagine there are many.

Reference:

1, *Hufton, D., 'A New Observatory in West Yorkshire', J. Br. Astron. Assoc. 94(1), 34-35 (1983).*

Derek Hufton FRAS
West Yorkshire Astronomical Society Hon Life Member
(Hon BAA Member)
<https://www.wyas.org.uk>

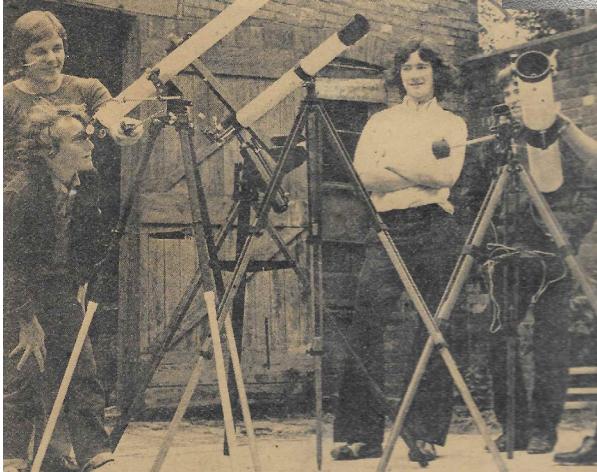
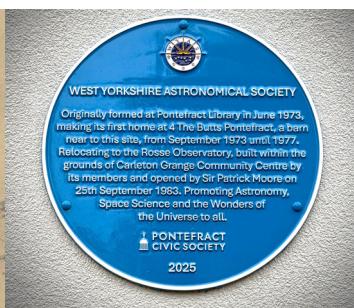


Image Left: A few members gather in front of The Barn Sep 1973 (I am the adult at foreground left). Not great quality but a nostalgic reminder.

Image Centre: Close up of the Blue Plaque.

Image Below: A few members and friends gather under the Plaque at the recent ceremony.

Images Courtesy West Yorkshire Astronomical Society

Society for the History of Astronomy

Society Spring Conference 2026



**Doors Open from 9:30am on
Friday 24th April**

**In The Lyttelton Lecture Theatre
Birmingham & Midland Institute
Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS**
**The 2026 Michael Hoskin Lecture:
“From a Bright to a Dark Universe”**
Keynote Speaker: Vladimir Brljak
Other confirmed Speakers:
Mary McIntyre, Martin Mobberley
Wendy Bevan-Mogg, Roger Hutchins.

Booking in Advance at £20 per person for SHA members.

£25 per person for non-members.

Per-Booked Lunch Buffet £6.50 per person.

**More details and pre-booking only. Please Contact
SHA Meeting Secretary – meetings@shastro.org.uk**

Images: © BMI web site & Wikipedia Images
Society for the History of Astronomy.

The Society for the History of Astronomy



Society for the History of Astronomy



SHA 2026 Spring Conference

Friday 24th April Doors open 09:30

**The Lyttelton Lecture Theatre, Birmingham & Midland Institute,
Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS**

Time	Speaker	Subject	Note
09:30 to 10:00		REGISTRATION & Second-hand book sales open. Freebee desk available. SHA Library open for Members.	Tea & coffee and biscuits will be provided in the John Peek Room
10:00	Ms Carolyn Kennett FRAS: Chair, SHA	Welcome to the BMI & SHA Conference. Housekeeping etc.	Venue Health & Safety Notice.
10:10 to 11:05	Mary McIntyre	<i>The Augsburg Book of Miracles</i>	
11:05 to 11:55	Martin Mobberley	<i>Eccentric BAA characters of the 20th Century</i>	
11:55 to 13:15		LUNCH BREAK Delegates Pre-booked Buffer Lunch. In John Peek Room	The BMI has also excellent café which has been opened for to-day's meeting.
13:15	Ms Carolyn Kennett FRAS: Chair SHA	Welcome back	
13:20 to 14:15	Wendy Bevan-Mogg	<i>Nevil Maskelyne (no, not that one!) - Astronomer and Magician.</i>	
14:15 to 15:10	Roger Hutchins	<i>An appreciation of our honorary President Dr Allan Chapman</i>	
15:10 to 15:30		AFTERNOON REFRESHMENTS In John Peek Room	
15:30 to 16:25	Vladimir Brljak	<i>The Michael Hoskin Lecture From a Bright to a Dark Universe</i>	
16:30 Approx	Ms Carolyn Kennett FRAS: Chair, SHA	CONCLUSIONS & DISPERSAL	Safe Journey home

All times and speakers are subject to Change.

**Please Book in advance, at £20 per person for members, £25 per person for non-members,
Pre-Booked Buffet Lunch £6.50 per person.**

Refreshments and Buffet Lunch in John Peek Room.

To pre-register use booking form attached or contact meetings@shastro.org.uk

Public Observing at Jeremiah Horrocks Observatory, Preston

Graham McLoughlin FRAS



Preston and District Astronomical Society (PADAS) host public observing nights at Jeremiah Horrocks Observatory, Moor Park, Preston on the third Thursday of the Month 7.30pm onwards September to April which is free to attend, also group visits are accommodated at the observatory from youth and multi faith groups.

During the summer Months regular safe Solar observing events are held with the Society Halpha and White light Telescopes.

Preston has a rich history of public observing and outreach going back as far as 1881 when Preston Corporation funded a municipal Observatory The Deepdale Observatory with the then Preston Scientific Society Astronomical Section hosted public observing nights, The Observatory housed an 18 inch speculum mirror Newtonian Telescope.

In 1913 the then Observatory Curator George Gibbs FRAS sourced a replacement Telescope funded by the Corporation a 8inch Thomas Cooke Refractor.

The Observatory was made of a wood and Canvas structure and required replacement.

In 1927 the Curator George Gibbs designed a new purpose built Observatory funded again by Preston Corporation it was named Jeremiah Horrocks Observatory in honour of the First Transit of

Venus observed in 1639 at Carr House, Much Hoole just outside of Preston.

The Observatory was opened to coincide with a Total Solar Eclipse Wednesday 29th June 1927 with Preston being on the centre line, this was the first total eclipse visible in the U.K. for 203 years, over 30000 people gathered on Moor Park by the Observatory to witness the much anticipated spectacle , totality occurring at 6.23am for a mere 23 seconds of totality.

The National Lottery in 2017 funded an interior refurbishment of the Observatory , today the Observatory is managed by the University of Lancashire, with PADAS hosting public observing nights , could this observatory be the oldest public Observatory in the U.K ?

Graham McLoughlin FRAS
Secretary
Preston and District Astronomical Society
www.padas.org.uk



Penrith Library Star Studded Evening

Nick Higgett



At the end of last year, Penrith Library and the Eden Valley and Penrith Astronomy Group recently organised an exciting evening of Astronomy and Stargazing for local Squirrels and Cubs. We started in the library with the Squirrels where the youngsters were introduced to the solar system using, of all things, a bowl of fruit and some inflatable planets. A giant pumpkin became Jupiter for the evening with an apple doubling for Neptune, the furthest planet. The Squirrels thought it was hilarious especially when Nick Higgett, from the Astronomy Group, took a bite out of Neptune as he raced to the opposite end of the library to show the relative distance from the sun itself represented by a big yellow umbrella. Luckily kids have a great imagination! The Squirrels next job was to build a Space Rocket out of cardboard.

Meanwhile, Claire Dougherty, Outreach Co-ordinator for the Library, Nick and other members of the group rushed down to the nearby Scout Hut to meet up with the Cubs. Here we met another enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of children. They particularly enjoyed the talk on the future NASA Artemis 2 mission to the Moon and counting down the launch video of Artemis 1 from 2022. We even managed to get outside to point out some constellations with a laser. For once in Cumbria, the skies were clear but street light pollution made it quite difficult to spot anything. Finally, with the help of some very observant Cubs, we found the Plough (part of the constellation Ursa Major). We also photographed the Star Cluster Pleiades using

Image Credit: Penrith Cubs. Used with permission.

our Seestar S50 Smart telescope. It was absolutely freezing but the Cubs were soon warmed up with great big steaming mugs of hot chocolate.

The evening was supported by the Reading Sparks project which uses the creative power of reading to engage families with STEM activities (science, technology, engineering and maths) and build science confidence in young people. The project is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with public libraries with funding from Arts Council England and the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC).

Many thanks to all the library staff and group members Carole, Sarah, Rosemary and Caroline for turning out in the freezing weather to help out and support.

Nick Higgett
Eden Valley and Penrith Astronomy Group
<https://penrithastro.org>

Reader's Images

Bob Stuart: Mid Wales Astronomy Society



Bob Stuart, chair of the Mid Wales Astronomy Society (MWAS), was fortunate enough to manage to image Saturn (LRGB) during a brief clear spell during average seeing. 03 January 2026 19:37 UT. 25cm f6.3 Newtonian, ASI 174MM, 3x Televue Barlow, Optolong LRGB filter set, SkyWatcher EQ350 Pro mount. Best 30% of 3000 frames each in AS4! and Registax, combined in Photoshop. Separate LRGB images are reproduced on the right.

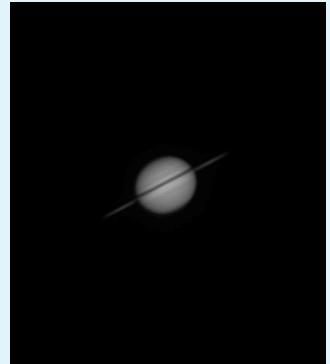
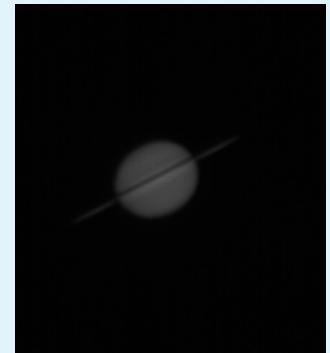
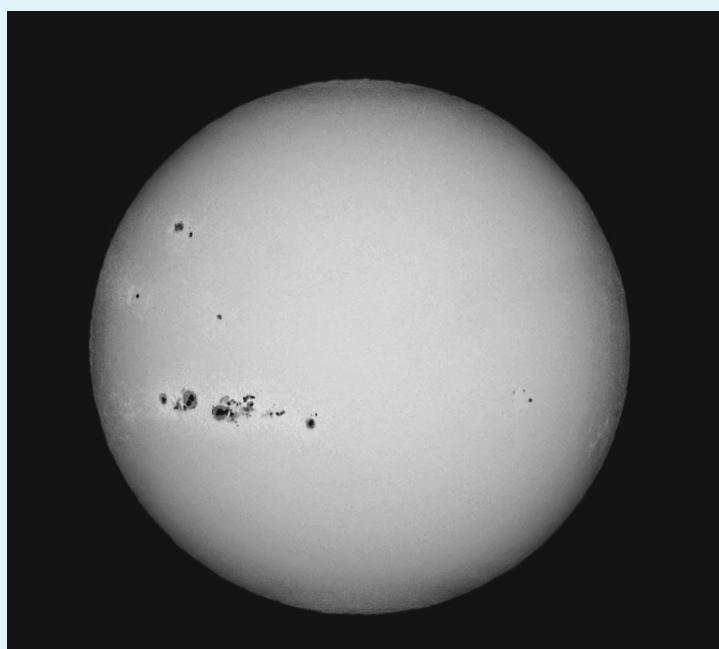


Image top Left:Luminence filter, top right: red filter, bottom left: green filter, bottom right: red filter.



Sonia Turkington: Manchester Astronomical Society

Sonia Turkington, Vice President of Manchester Astronomical Society, captured these images of our Moon and Sun. The Sun was taken on 3 December 2025. Seestar S50 and Badaar solar filter. The moon was taken on 2nd December. 10" Dobsonian and Google pixel 10 pro.



Steve Fox: Farnham Astronomical Society

Taken 5pm New Year's Eve (31 dec 2025). Canon R6, manual mode, 1/800 sec, f/13, ISO 640 - RF200-800mm lens at 800mm with 1.4x extender (1120mm) - Stack of 32 images with same parameters, processed in Autostakkert and Affinity 3 Steve Fox, Farnham Astronomical Society



John Haigh-Turner: Macclesfield AS

I took the picture on Friday 10th January 2025 just outside my front door using a Seestar S50.

Macclesfield sits just a few miles south east of Manchester airport and depending on wind direction gets departing aircraft zipping by or incoming aircraft circling the hills between here and Buxton.

Whilst setting up for a moon shot, I'd seen a few of those circling, when I saw an aircraft coming from the south appearing to make a beeline for the moon. It was United airlines 787 flight 935 from Heathrow to Los Angeles according to flightradar24.com. I had no idea if this sort of picture was possible so just kept my fingers over the shutter (on my mobile screen) and chanced it. I was amazed as to how little time the plane was on shot and how good it came out.



Bill McSorley: West Yorkshire Astronomical Society

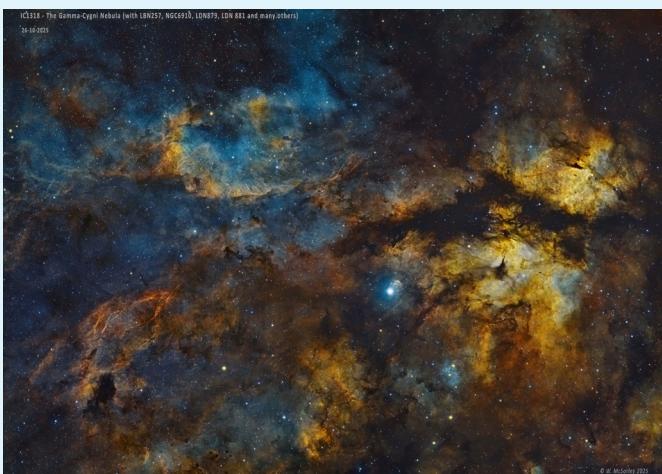
The Gamma-Cygni Nebula:

IC1318, The Gamma-Cygni Nebula, is the diffuse emission nebula surrounding the bright star Sadr (official designation, Gamma-Cygni) at the center of the Cygnus Cross. Also referred to as The Sadr Region, it is one of the surrounding nebulous regions; others include the Butterfly Nebula and the Crescent Nebula. It contains many dark nebulae in addition to the main emission diffuse nebulae.

Imaged using my SharpStar 61EDPH Triplet on a SkyWatcher EQ6R Pro Mount.

Exposures captured using and a ZWO ASI1600mm Pro camera through Baader UNB Ultra Narrowband filters.

Processed in the Hubble Palette using PixInsight, then finished in Photoshop.



Lynd's Dark Nebulae, LDN 892, 893, 894 and 895 in Cygnus:

This is an image of a dense area near the centre of the Cygnus Nebula. The image contains a smorgasbord of smaller nebulae, including many from the NGC, IC, LDN and LBN catalogues.

Imaged over the course of two weeks in November 2025, using my SharpStar 61EDPH Triplet and ZWO ASI1600mm Pro camera, with Baader UNB Ha, Sii and Oiii filters.

Processed in the Hubble Palette using PixInsight, then finished in Photoshop.

Cheers

Bill



Meet Nova: The New Brightest Star at the York Astronomical Society

Since 1972, the York Astronomical Society (YAS) has been dedicated to one clear mission: helping people explore the wonders of the universe. Whether we are setting up telescopes on a freezing winter night or hosting lectures on the history of cosmology, our goal is to make astronomy accessible to everyone.

Today, we are thrilled to announce a new way to access that knowledge—right from the comfort of your home. We are proud to introduce the newest member of our team: **Nova**.

Who—or What—is Nova?

Nova is our brand-new AI-powered member, designed specifically for the York Astronomical Society. While our committee members and volunteers work tirelessly to keep the society running, they can't be awake 24 hours a day (even if astronomers are known for being night owls!).

Nova is different. She is available 24/7, 365 days a year, ready to guide both long-standing members and curious first-time visitors through the vast amount of information available on our website – <https://yorkastro.org.uk>

How Nova Can Help You

We know that navigating a website to find specific details can sometimes be as tricky as star-hopping through a faint constellation. Nova acts as your personal guide. Instead of clicking through multiple menus, you can simply ask a question in plain English on our website and Nova will fetch the answers for you.

Here are just a few things Nova is ready to help you with:

- **Meeting Information:** Not sure when the next lecture is or who the guest speaker will be? Just ask, *"When is the next meeting?"* or *"What's the next meeting about?"*
- **Visitor Details:** For those looking to join us for the first time, Nova can provide directions to our meeting spots or observing sites as well as information on facilities we have available – from parking to a hot cuppa and a slice of cake.
- **Membership Queries:** Interested in joining the society? Nova can guide you through the subscription costs and the signup process.
- **Astronomy Basics:** Nova isn't just an admin assistant; she knows a bit about space, too. You can ask basic questions about what might be visible in the night sky tonight in York or general facts about the society's history.

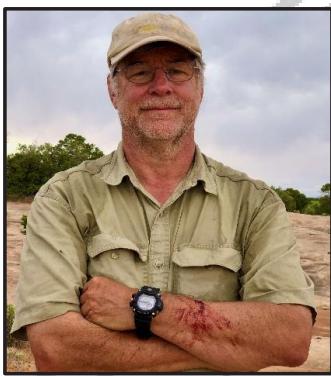


Society for the History of Astronomy



Online Zoom® Webinar

"Sightlines and Site Lines, Ancient Astronomy in Southeast Utah"



Jim Krehbiel, Emeritus Professor of Fine Arts at Ohio Wesleyan University

In this illustrated presentation, Jim Krehbiel will discuss his astronomical research at Ancestral Pueblo sites in the area. The project has evolved over 14 years to include discoveries about solar, lunar, and stellar uses. Jim will provide a visual tour of the ancient Pueblo sites with multiple time-lapse sequences of solar and lunar alignments events as seen in the field.

Jim Krehbiel is Emeritus Professor of Fine Arts at Ohio Wesleyan University, now retired to Albuquerque, New Mexico, from where he is the Principal Investigator of the Archeoastronomy Survey of Southwest Utah, documenting the ancient pueblos of the region.

Tuesday, 17th March 2026 at 7pm (GMT)

Zoom link details will be made available to SHA members near to date.

Please contact: - meetings@shastro.org.uk

Images Credit with thanks to © Jim Krehbiel



The Society for the History of Astronomy

Mid-Kent Astronomical Society



Our meetings are held at Bredhurst Village Hall.

Unless otherwise stated, meetings normally open at 7:40pm for an 8pm start, finishing around 10pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

13 March

Mary McIntyre - Topic TBC

All welcome

27 March

William Joyce - The Inner Planets

All welcome

10 April

Arthur Fentaman - Astrophotography using Smartphones

Arthur will give an overview of how to take images of the night sky using mobile phones, followed by an extended Q&A session.

All welcome

24 April

Annual General Meeting

The AGM is open to all MKAS Members and Visitors, however only Members are entitled to vote.

All welcome

8 May

Laura Mullin - Opportunities for Radio Astronomy from Home

See EVENTS page of our website for details of our events

www.midkentastro.org.uk/events



Loughton Astronomical Society

Discover the wonders of the universe with the LAS - West Essex's community for astronomy enthusiasts and sky watchers of all levels. Our society is dedicated to exploring the night sky, sharing knowledge, and igniting a passion for the cosmos. We offer a welcoming space for both novice stargazers and experienced astronomers to connect and grow.

5 February

LAS Members leading Public Observing

Join LAS members looking at the night sky through binoculars and telescopes. Scope Doctor: bring your scope to get the best out of it. Alternative programme if cloudy.

12 February

LAS Members leading Public Observing

Join LAS members looking at the night sky through binoculars and telescopes. Scope Doctor: bring your scope to get the best out of it. Alternative programme if cloudy.

13 February

AstroKyds Junior Section

AstroKyds is the Junior section of the LAS. 6:30pm at St Mary's Church Hall

<https://las-astro.org.uk/astrokyds.html>

19 February

Speaker: Jerry Stone "Is Pluto a Planet?"

Speaker website:

<https://astrospeakers.org/provider/jerry-stone>

22 February

LAS Members leading family Public Observing

18:30 - 20:30

Join LAS members in this weekend event looking at the night sky through binoculars and telescopes. Scope Doctor: bring your scope to get the best out of it. Alternative programme if cloudy.

26 February

LAS Members leading Public Observing

Join LAS members looking at the night sky through binoculars and telescopes. Scope Doctor: bring your scope to get the best out of it. Alternative programme if cloudy.

8 March

LAS Members leading family Public Observing

18:30 - 20:30

Join LAS members in this weekend event looking at the night sky through binoculars and telescopes. Scope Doctor: bring your scope to get the best out of it. Alternative programme if cloudy.

12 March

Speaker: John Davies "Photometry"

Speaker website:

<https://astrospeakers.org/provider/john-davies>

13 March

AstroKyds Junior Section

AstroKyds is the Junior section of the LAS. 6:30pm at St Mary's Church Hall

<https://las-astro.org.uk/astrokyds.html>

19 March

LAS Members leading Public Observing

Join LAS members in this weekend event looking at the night sky through binoculars and telescopes. Scope Doctor: bring your scope to get the best out of it. Alternative programme if cloudy.

26 March

Speakers: Malcolm Zack and Jonathan Daniels

"Spring Skies"

A view of what can be seen in the night sky with binoculars and telescopes

2 April

Speaker: Professor Ian Crawford "The Fermi Paradox - Where are the Aliens?"

Speaker website:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Crawford

Society Website:

<https://las-astro.org.uk/>



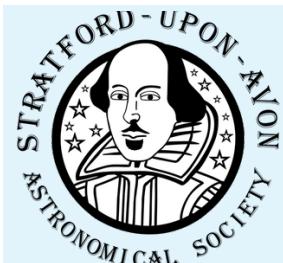
Hertford Astronomy Group

Meetings for 2026

Meetings are held at the Lindop Building, University of Hertfordshire from 8pm on the second Wednesday of each month from September to June.

January 14	Marina Galand	Professor in Planetary Science, ICL Aurora Around the Solar System
February 11	Dr Simon Foster	Outreach Officer, Department of Physics, ICL Our Living Sun
March 11	Students from the University of Hertfordshire	Various topics
April 8	Sheridan Williams	Ex-rocket scientist and computer historian Fascinating Astronomical Facts
May 13	Lewis Dartnell	Professor, University of Westminster Origins: How the Earth Shaped Human History
June 10	Louise Devoy	Senior Curator, Royal Observatory, Greenwich Royal Observatory, Greenwich: A history through objects

**For full details about the society, visit www.hertsastro.org.uk
Write to programme@hertsastro.org.uk**



Stratford-Upon-Avon Astronomical Society

The Stratford-upon-Avon Astronomical Society meets every first and third Tuesday at 8pm (doors open at 7.30pm) at Alderminster Village Hall. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners and those wanting to learn more.

Tuesday 3 February

Club Night

Tuesday 3 March

Club Night

Tuesday 17 February

Professor Susanne Schwenger from the Open
University

“13 years and counting: Curiosity at Gale Crater, Mars”

Tuesday 17 March

Dr Steve Barrett, University of Liverpool
“The Beginning of Everything”

More details on our website

<http://astro.org.uk>

In 1926 Robert Goddard launched the world's first liquid-fuelled rocket.
Celebrate the 100th anniversary with a special presentation from
space expert, broadcaster and author **Jerry Stone FBIS FRAS**

"Nell, Esther and Aunt Effie"

The story of the world's first liquid-fuelled rocket



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we went from the first liquid-
fuelled rocket to having craft
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adventure started in this
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Young Astronomers UK

A Request for Volunteers

The *Young Astronomers UK* organisation came about from a need to encourage children to take a more active role in astronomy, with the ultimate aim of attracting them into local astronomical societies. Many current societies have ageing memberships and, without an influx of younger members, a long term sustainability which is under threat; the ultimate survival rate – if not challenged and addressed – may eventually result in a large number of astronomical societies simply ceasing to exist.

The concept of *Young Astronomers* involves the formation of local societies comprising the younger generation (typically aged between 7 and 16), with each of these groups going under specific titles such as 'York Young Astronomers', 'Bradford Young Astronomers' and so on. This is intended to give them their own 'identity' rather than being 'part of something else', such as a 'junior section' or similar of a adult-based society. Each of the 'local' Young Astronomers groups would organise their own meetings, visits and other activities and would be run completely independently of their local astronomical society.

Although the individual Young Astronomers groups will be scattered across the UK, this will be under the guidance and support (as and when needed) of a central resources unit known as *Young Astronomers UK*. This central unit will provide individual children's groups with an integrated information matrix to which all UK-based Young Astronomers will have free access. In other words, *Young Astronomers UK* will be the pre-eminent national astronomy organisation whose remit is solely to promote local groups of Young Astronomers and in doing so hopefully, maintain, cherish, and preserve the existence of local astronomical societies, the very cornerstone of amateur astronomy.

The popularity of *Young Astronomers UK* is steadily increasing, although in order to achieve our goals we are in urgent need of volunteers to help run the *Young Astronomers UK* central unit and to bring the whole concept to fruition. The roles we urgently need to fill are those of Treasurer; Media Secretary; Advertising Sales Coordinator; Fundraiser; and Zoom Meeting Host.

We require that all applicants reside within the UK. However, as most (if not all) of the duties entailed by any of the above-listed roles can be carried out online, your precise geographical location would probably not be important. If you are interested in taking on any of the above-listed positions, or would like further details of what each/any of the roles entail, please contact Brian at stars@starlight-nights.co.uk

Also, if you would like a copy of the *Young Astronomers UK* 'Aims and Objectives' leaflet please contact Brian at the above email address.

Somerset Levels Stargazers

On Wednesday 18th February 2026 the Somerset Levels Stargazers will hold their yearly public outreach meeting in conjunction with the countryside charity C.P.R.E. To promote astronomy and the protection of our dark skies. Even in rural Somerset domes of light are appearing as new constructions take place and through this event with talks from various speakers, displays and a chance to look through our telescopes if weather permits we hope to show the importance of protecting our precious night sky.

Paul Adamson
Chairman
Somerset Levels Stargazers



Stargazing night
Middlezoy Village Hall
7.30pm, Wednesday 18th February

• Look through our telescopes (weather permitting)
• Displays and talks on astrophotography, astronomy and dark skies
• Family activities, led by Space Detectives
• Refreshments

FREE EVENT

www.cpresomerset.org.uk

100 YEARS CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England Somerset

Somerset Levels
STARGAZERS
Dark Skies on the Somerset Levels

SPACE DETECTIVES
ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY

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