



## **Scarborough & Ryedale Astronomical Society**

### **Annual General Meeting 2019**

#### **Report of the Secretary**

##### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 I took over from Bryan last year and as my first year as Secretary of the Society I hope that the overall feeling from the membership is that nothing has drastically changed since last year and we have been able to keep the same momentum going.

##### **2. Member events**

- 2.1 I hope that everyone has enjoyed the range of talks at Ayton this year. These included a number of returning speakers, such as Professor Brad Gibson of Hull University and Dr Jurgen Schmoll of Durham University. We have also welcomed new speakers to the society like Roy Gunson. I am particularly grateful to our own members who gave their time to provide talks to the society as well this year. Thank you to Phil Scaling for organising external speakers for this last year.
- 2.2 We have only held a couple of ad-hoc viewing sessions this year, both of which centred around lunar eclipses and we do need to arrange more regular observing in the future outside the occurrence of celestial events.
- 2.3 I ran 2 sessions at Dalby for members to get to grips with the equipment we have in the observatories. This should hopefully give those members confidence when using the scopes in the upcoming season so we can get some good use out of the domes this year. I plan on running further sessions in the future.

##### **3 Membership numbers**

- 3.1 At the end of last season the number of members was 61. For various reasons a number of members did not renew their memberships. I chose to keep Bryan's target of retaining approximately 60 members this year. The year has seen a steady flow of new and enthusiastic members joining the society and current number of individual members is approximately 60 yet again.

## 4 Outreach

- 4.1 Four public observing sessions were scheduled at Dalby between October and March. Despite 2 of these being clouded out, we had a steady number of visitors across the 4 events and a scout group as well.  
Strangely, on our most poorly attended event, due to the weather forecast, with only 10 or so members of the public present, we received around £35 in donations.  
Thank you to these who assisted with talks during the inclement weather as well as driving telescopes for observing on the clear nights.
- 4.2 Presentations have been given to various community groups by Howard Watson, John Harper and myself. These have included a talk and observing session for Cubs staying at Birch Hall to a presentation at Northstead school, focusing on the Apollo 11 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- 4.3 Thanks to an event managed by Howard Watson, we ran a very successful event at the National Trust site at Ravenscar which was supported massively by the membership, I think we had about 9 members of the society on hand with telescopes, binoculars. Splitting the attendees into 2 groups and swapping them between observing and a presentation gave a good mix to the event and also prevented any overcrowding or waiting in line for the keen visitors. As a result of this event, we plan to hold further joint events with the National Trust at this site and we have also been offered use of the site for private member sessions in the future, something we plan on taking advantage of.
- 4.4 We enjoyed success at Ayton Village Gala last September. John and Sheila manned a stall inside the hall whilst myself and Jonathan Mortimer set up telescopes outside for solar viewing. We were even able to let the public observe Venus at 3 in the afternoon. A number of interested people on the day also attended our Public events at Dalby.
- 4.5 The recent Dalby Explorer Day was another successful event where SARAS had a stand and opened our domes to the public. Thank you to Howard for bringing his Lego Saturn V rocket which repeatedly drew in the public throughout the day.
- 4.6 Only 3 days ago we ran a public event to observe the partial Lunar eclipse at Holbeck Car Park in Scarborough and this event was a great success. Again massively supported by the membership, it was the perfect embodiment of sidewalk astronomy allowing the curious public to view the lunar eclipse, as well as Jupiter, Saturn and Albireo.
- 4.7 At the majority of our daytime and off-season events, we have previously relied on using a solar scope belonging to one of our members. Thanks to a generous donation by John Harper, the society now has 2 solar scopes for use at events. These will be useful for the upcoming Mercury Transit in November. John also donated a pair of 20x80 binoculars and tripod to the society, one piece of observing equipment we didn't have in the societies inventory and will now be available for loan to members.

## **5 StarFest**

- 5.1 The first StarFest run after a year's hiatus was a success and despite increased running costs over the 2016 event, did turn a profit for the society.  
We also hope to see ourselves on the North Yorkshire Moors documentary in 2020.  
It is still a popular event across the country and this year's event looks to be just as successful.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 It has been a good year for the society, with non-committee members supporting more events than in previous years and with the steady numbers of public guests attending the public nights at Dalby I hope this continues into this year.
- 6.2 We have decided to try and hold more regular ad-hoc viewing events this year, rather than organising events around certain astronomical events so if anyone has any suggestions around this, please let me know.
- 6.3 I am looking forward to the coming season and I hope you all are too, thank you.