



Scarborough & Ryedale Astronomical Society

Annual General Meeting 2023

Report of the Secretary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 SARAS has had one of its busiest years for outreach in 2022/23 as well as the return of StarFest after 2 years of COVID restrictions.

2. Member events

- 2.1 In December we ended up not holding an Xmas Meal due to lack of member interest. Going forward it will need to be decided if we are going to continue to try and organise this event or cease altogether as it takes quite a bit of work to find venues and get a booking without knowing exact numbers.
- 2.2 In January we held an Astrophotography workshop and this has led to a increase in astrophotography interest in the membership.

3. Public events / Outreach

- 3.1 Following another change at Dalby, we no longer have access to the Visitor's Centre if the weather is unsuitable for observing. We now have access to Unit 2 in the courtyard area which is much smaller but still possible to get 30ish people inside. So far, on the 2 occasions, we had to use it, there were no complaints on the room size.
- 3.2 Nick Duffy, Neil Graham, Jonathan Mortimer, Howard Watson and Earl Howarth between them were able to do outreach this year with:
- 1st Scarborough Beavers
 - 2x inputs to Bradford Diocesan Academies at Dalby
 - Filey Junior School
 - 42nd St Marks Beavers
 - 2x events for Raincliffe Woods Community Enterprise (1 clouded out, 1 cancelled)
 - 2nd Scarborough E.L.O Cubs
 - 2x Observing events with Adventures for the Soul at High Dalby House (Paid events)
 - Brownies at Hutton Le Hole.
- 3.3 The event formerly known as Dalby Explorer Day, formerly known as Dalbyology, returned, and is now known as Dalbyology again! Nick Duffy, Phil Scaling, Howard Watson and Earl Howarth were present on the day with solar scopes and the theme this year was Communication.

- 3.4 SARAS were once again invited to Ayton Gala in August 2022 but due to unavailability of members we were unable to attend this year.

4 Membership numbers

- 4.1 At the end of last season the number of members was 49.
In the 2022/23 season we had 10 new members join throughout the year and alongside existing membership renewals and re-joiners, brought this year's total to 47 members.

5 Zoom / Ayton meetings

- 5.1 We have had another wide range topics from our guest speakers over the year and suggestions for new speakers is always appreciated.

6 Dalby Astronomy Centre

- 6.1 The domes were cleaned once again in April with member's help and a handheld pressure sprayer has been purchased to apply a anti-lichen solution to the domes post-cleaning.
- 6.2 We still have not had a permanent barrier code arranged to allow easier ad-hoc usage of the domes at short notice and out of hours despite multiple requests.
- 6.3 We do need to start using the domes more if they are to remain value for money spent each year for rent and electricity and hopefully easier out of hours access will allow this.
- 6.4 SARAS purchased their first digital telescope following a recommendation from Nick Duffy after reading about them online. There was some logical scepticism regarding the likely quality of a real-time image-stacking telescope at fraction of the cost of an astro-photography set up but I think everyone who has seen the images can attest that it is a really good bit of kit, especially for outreach.

7. StarFest

- 7.1 As can be seen from the upcoming Treasurer's Report, StarFest is our ain source of income and despite an increase in running costs, is still worthwhile to run. Registration fees will need to be increased for 2023 to account for the increased costs.

If anyone has any suggestions for additional activities or facilities please let me know.

It has been checked if a tailer type block of 6 toilets would be better than individual port-a-loos, however they are significantly more expensive and do not allow disabled access as they are raised off the ground.

8 John Harper

- 8.1 2023 is a sad year for the society as John Harper, the founder of Scarborough and District Astronomical Society (SADAS), which later became the current Scarborough & Ryedale Astronomical Society (SARAS), passed away on 22nd April 2023, aged 79.

John started the Society in 1976 and until only recently was regularly involved in the Society.

John sparked the interest in Astronomy for a lot of past and present members of the

society and he will be missed, our condolences to Sheila.

- 8.2 I wish to formally propose that the observatories at Dalby Forest be renamed from their un-official moniker of the “Dalby Astronomy Centre” to the “John Harper Observatory/Observatories”(or similar) and a plaque be commissioned for display at the domes.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 I would like to thank Phil Scaling for once again arranging our guest speakers and providing the varied programme of talks over the year.
- 9.2 Thanks go to Neil Graham, Nick Duffy, Howard Watson, Jonathan Mortimer and Earl Howarth for assisting with outreach over this past year.
- 9.3 Thanks to those who assisted with the field set-up for StarFest.
- 9.4 Thanks go to Earl Howarth for the time he has spent as a Committee member and the assistance he has provided at the vents and outreach sessions this year.
- 8.5 Finally, my thanks go out to John Harper for founding this society, imparting his knowledge to multiple generations, and instilling a sense of wonder on the many subjects he spoke about.