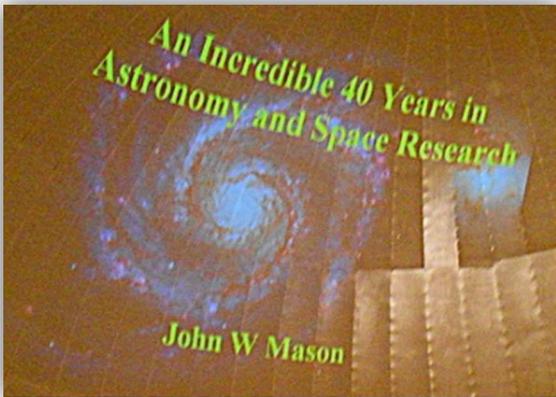


## SAGAS News Summary and Events Round-Up - November 2013

### SAGAS 40<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The SAGAS Summer Event celebrated SAGAS' 40<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Sir Patrick Moore Building, South Downs Planetarium in Chichester on 14 September - 40 years (and 2 days) after the formation of SAGAS on 12 Sep 1973.

The theme for the day was appropriate: **40 Years of Major Events in Astronomy.**



Graham Bryant (Hampshire AG) started with 'SAGAS: An Entertaining Look at Forty Glorious Years' covering 40 years of SAGAS events and people, placed in the context of astronomy and space-flight milestones during that period.

The talks took place inside the Planetarium with slides and images projected onto its dome.

Other speakers were Dr Steve J. Fossey 'Exoplanetary Tales: Detecting and Characterizing Extrasolar Planets', Ian Sharp: 'Imaging the Moon and Planets: How Things Have Changed in Forty years', Nick James 'Remarkable Comets: Past and Present'

Events were concluded by Dr John Mason, South Downs Planetarium with 'An Incredible Forty Years in Astronomy and Space Research'. For the latest on South Downs Planetarium: <http://www.southdowns.org.uk/sdpt/>

SIR PATRICK MOORE  
BUILDING



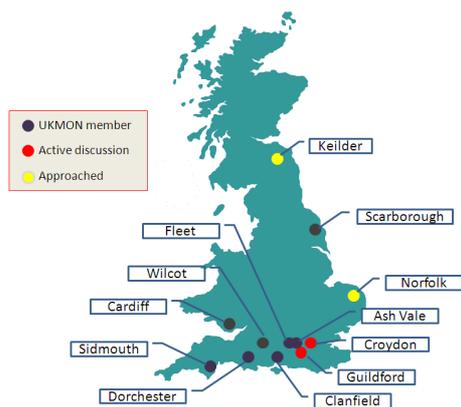
In between talks, plenty of time was left for members to mingle, talk, reminisce, swap ideas, pose for photos inside and out...

... and eat the splendid cake (see here and above) that Phil Alner (Cody AS) baked for the occasion!



(Note for next year - Foredown Tower Astronomers have volunteered to organise the 2014 Event - planning is underway.)

## UK Meteor Observation Network (UKMON)



We'll let Richard Kacerek and Peter Campbell-Burns (UKMON co-founders and Farnham AS) set the scene: "Almost everything we have ever learned about meteors is based on visual observation - and visual observation has remained the most important source of data.... *until now!*".

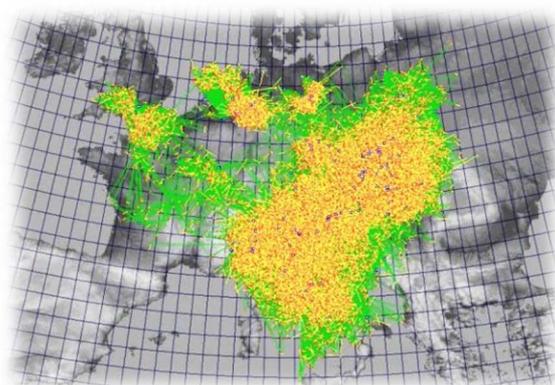
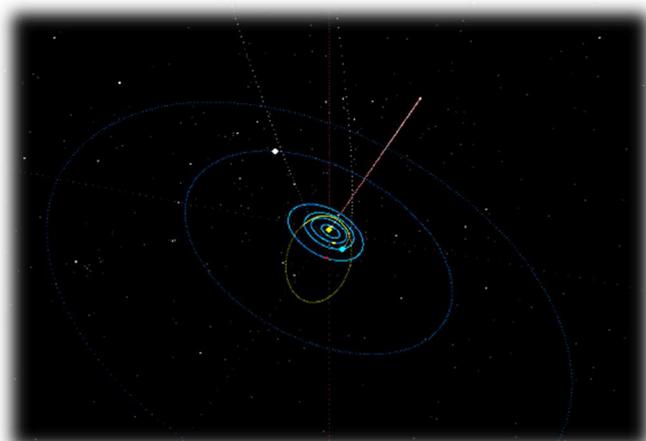


Image: Jakub Koukal / EDMOND

A number of SAGAS societies are part of the UKMON project and since the last report other societies and organisations around the UK have joined in. Current UK detector locations are shown left. The image on the right shows that this is part of a growing Europe-wide network - the EDMOND collaboration. If you or your society would like to get involved, please contact Peter at [ukmeteornetwork@gmail.com](mailto:ukmeteornetwork@gmail.com).

Over to UKMON again: "... we are one of several European networks but UKMON is different - we encourage public engagement and participation. The network is generating much interest and is growing steadily with a high level of

public interest and enquiries from individuals and societies. There's a huge potential for relationships with media: we can be the first to provide real data following bright fireball events like this (image left) meteor of -4.7 magnitude captured from Ash Vale North camera..." (mid-way between Guildford and Farnham).



The UKMON project has real science in mind – right is an example of the '3-D' plotting of a single meteor that two or more viewings can – processed by appropriate software – produce.

For more on UKMON: <http://www.ukmeteorwatch.co.uk/> and <http://ukmeteornetwork.co.uk/downloads/>

## Hampshire Astronomical Group: New 24" RC Scope - Update

Last time we reported that Hampshire AG are planning to replace their existing main scope with a new 24 inch RC from APM Telescopes at a cost of about £100,000 – but they still were short of full funding.

The update - Hampshire AG now have full funding and installation is on target for June 2014.

(HAG's existing 24" Newtonian and mount are looking for a new home – if you've got any ideas please contact Graham Bryant at HAG.)



24-in dome Image © Hampshire Astronomical Group

## Emmaus Analemmatic Sundial

Following earlier reports, this sundial is now complete – see right. This is a summary from George Hurron (Foredown Tower Astronomers).

It had a strange beginning - the result of a competition by Foredown Tower Astronomers for the Emmaus Community annual Open Day.

This Community is housed in a former convent with extensive grounds that enable a new start for homeless people and we hold our monthly meetings in their restaurant. At Emmaus 2012 Open Day, we planted a tent pole (gnomon) at 10am and asked visitors to mark the spot where they thought the shadow would be at 3pm. It became clear that the apparent movement of the Sun through the sky was a mystery to many.

Then Emmaus' General Manager Christine Squince asked if we'd leave the gnomon to show visitors the shadow's movement through the day. We did so - and suggested that with so much space they could build a large permanent analemmatic sundial to show the movement.

And after we marked out the positions, members of the Emmaus Community then indeed built this amazing dial!

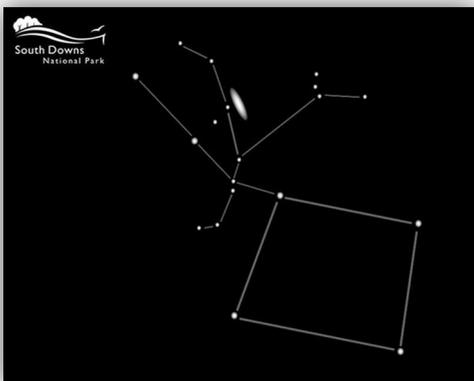
It depicts the Sun and its rays with a few astronomical "friends" hidden in the ceramic decorations. Polaris is the 12 noon marker, and a careful search will reveal Orion, Ursa Major, Saturn and Titan and a comet. Sir Patrick Moore recorded a message for the public opening.



## South Downs National Park (SDNP)

To recap: SDNP is encouraging dark-sky preservation and re-introduction in the SDNP area. SAGAS societies in the area are consultees on this remarkable National Park initiative – for the latest, click on the links below.

SDNP is also running an online survey "Did you see the Galaxy"? (see left) and "How many stars can you count within the four stars that make up Orion's feet and shoulders?" from their websites.



They also have a number of other astro-activities, a learning-zone, resources toolbox, useful monthly star-map, a one-page dark-skies planning summary, a forum, links to other information... Do have a look at their sites

<http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/looking-after/dark-skies>

<http://learning.southdowns.gov.uk/wildlife-and-habitats/dark-night-skies>

Image © South Downs National Park

*We think it's a major progress that a National Park Authority considers that the question 'Why are dark skies important?' needs to be asked - and then provides all the right answers. Please look out for more information on South Downs National Park's Dark Skies endeavour and give them any support you can.*

(Images not individually credited: Peter-Campbell-Burns, George Hurron, Richard Kacerek, Tony Questa)