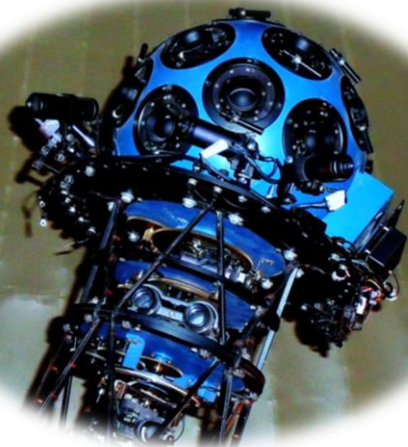


SAGAS News Summary and Events Round-Up - July 2014

SAGAS Summer Convention 19 July 2014



The Star-Projector at South-Downs Planetarium

There are still places left for this event - for more information please go to SAGAS online at <http://www.sagasonline.org/2014/04/relativity-rocksthe-sagas-summer-convention-2014/> and scroll down for details and booking form.

Following last-year's sold-out 40th Anniversary Summer Event, this year's Summer Convention will be held at **Sir Patrick Moore Building , South Downs Planetarium in Chichester** and is organised by Foredown Tower Astronomers.

"From Relativity to Rocks" includes speakers from **University of Sussex, UKMON, British Sundial Society, UCL's Mullard Space Science Laboratory (MSSL)** and **Dr John Mason of South Downs Planetarium.**



Dr John Mason chats to attendees during a break in SAGAS 40th Anniversary Event

Outreach Activities Across the SAGAS Area

Outreach: Following feedback from all SAGAS societies of their activities during **National Astronomy Week** it was clear that many societies have extensive Outreach Activities operating throughout the year. These range from **Farnham AS** Observing in Forestry Commission areas to **Eastbourne AS** observing from Victorian Forts at the Redoubt Fortress.



Alice Holt Visitor centre (image Farnham AS)

Outreach events make good use of one of the primary objectives of SAGAS: they frequently involve co-operation between different SAGAS societies in supporting such events



Redoubt Fortress (image Lindsay Knight, Eastbourne Museums)

Outreach: Foredown Tower Astronomers held a three-night event during National Astronomy Week to show Jupiter and the Galilean Moons to the public. The event was held in the Grounds of the Emmaus Community, Brighton, (which offers care, support for vulnerable and homeless people) and during the course of the event there were more than 150 people attending. One of the Management Team at Emmaus who was helping with the set-up took a look through the Dobsonian and then when asked if he could see the cloud belts, he said “yes, but I can see a small black dot as well.” I had not mentioned to anyone that Europa was in transit at 7 p.m. For someone not involved in astronomy to see a transit of Europa made his first sight of Jupiter’s Moons a little bit more special.



Members of Foredown Tower view Jupiter

Outreach: Al Nagler joins Crawley AS Outreach Event...



Crawley AS’s Star Gazing evening at Oriel High School was a night to remember with the surprise visit of Al Nagler from the USA and his family to the joint Star-Gazing event – and blessed with a clear sky in a Winter otherwise on record as the wettest ever.

Al was in the United Kingdom on a visit that included a talk at European AstroFest held in London over the 7th and 8th February. He spoke had described the development of his company’s remarkable Telescopes and his legendary eyepieces which give the observer an apparent field of view in excess of 100 degrees.

Al Nagler at Jim Swift’s telescope to view Jupiter (Image Neil Morrison)

Monkton Science Group

We welcome a new member to SAGAS: **Monkton Science Group**. The Group based in Kent are scientists and engineers willing to give up their free time to educate the public in scientific matters.

They have taken over the running of the Thanet Observatory and its 12” Newtonian, where they run induction courses and public viewing evenings – the next is soon - 26 July.



Thanet Observatory (image Monkton Reserve)

At the Group’s Astronomy Induction meeting John Hislop’s presentation placed the Earth in the celestial sphere, and described finding your way around the night sky. Afterwards everyone got the chance to use the 12” reflector.

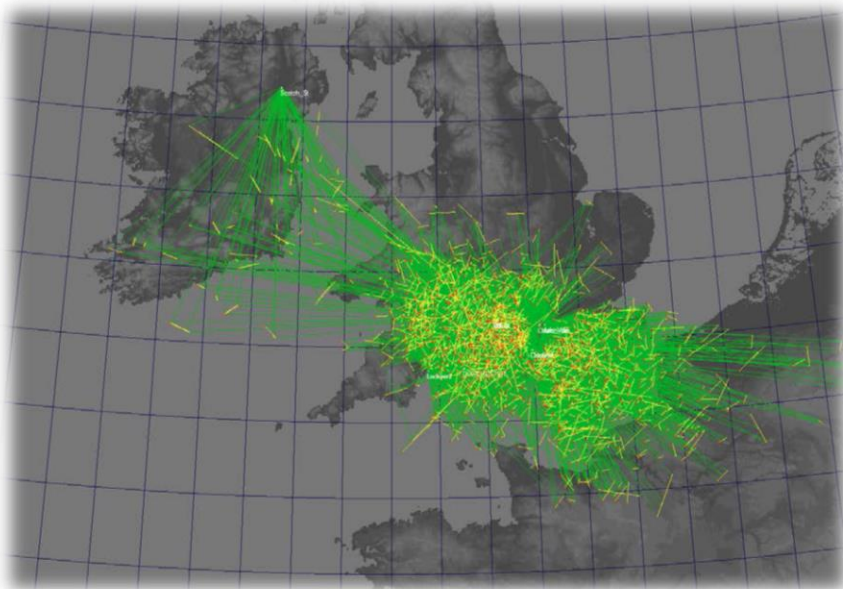
This is an exciting initiative - if you’ve an interest in astronomy and you’re in the area go along and meet the Group.

For more details about the Group and their activities and calendar of events click on

<http://www.monkton-reserve.org/observatory/about-the-observatory>

UK Meteor Network (UKMON)

UKMON was set up by members of SAGAS societies. This network continues to grow with members of the Cardiff AS joining recently, to add to the **Normal Lockyer Observatory** which came on board last year. The network is also linking with **Armagh, Scarborough and Rydale AS**. UKMON creates 3D representation maps of observed meteors derived from analysis of the data created from UKMON's network of cameras and uploaded to the UKMON server.



UKMON's combined meteor count currently stands at 19,949 singles, 8,643 orbits (Image: UKMON)



UKMON Meteor Data converted to 3D plots of Perseid Meteor Shower (image UKMON)

Hampshire AG New Scope: A Step closer

Work continues with **Hampshire Astronomical Group's** project to replace their existing telescope with a new 610mm RC telescope. The old telescope has been dismantled with the dome completely stripped. In preparation a 7½ ton concrete base was laid. The dome's refurbishment is almost complete and two representatives of the Group will visit the German manufacturers on the 28th June with the intention of officially accepting the telescope from the factory. If the telescope is deemed satisfactory the telescope is expected to be delivered the following week and installed.

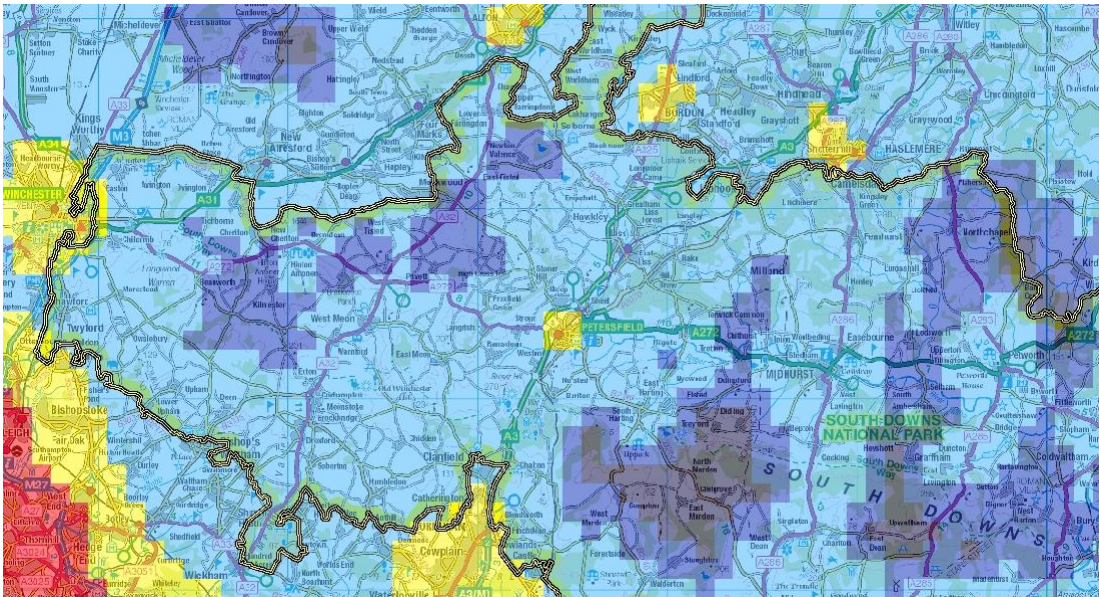


Hampshire AG 24" dome: New floor laid and refurb nears completion

Dark Skies Initiatives in SAGAS Area

Wadhurst AS Light Pollution Campaign: Wadhurst AS they have developed very good links with their local Parish Council. The society and the Council collaborated with to audit the streetlights around the society's observatory, as part of the Council's programme to reduce light pollution. Wadhurst AS then produced a comprehensive report on results for the Council.

South Downs National Park (SDNP): A number of SAGAS-society members are involved in monitoring and measuring the sky brightness in the National Park. Dan Oakley (SDNP Ranger), Dr John Mason (Director, South Downs Planetarium) and Graham Bryant will be presenting a series of papers at the **Artificial Light At Night (ALAN)** conference to be held at De Montfort University, Leicester in September this year. These papers are based on the work they are all doing in monitoring sky glow as well as writing lighting policies for planning purposes within the National Park.



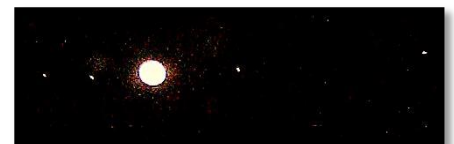
Map of SDNP Dark Sky Areas (image SDNP)

Isle of Wight: Vectis AS have been measuring sky brightness on the Isle of Wight to provide input into initiatives to in order to limit or reverse light-pollution in the darker areas on the Island. Each year around the spring equinox there's a star party at Brighstone Holiday Centre on the Island's south coast, with uninterrupted dark southern skies looking directly across the Channel.

New Forest National Park: Representatives are discussing a link-up with the SDNP and its initiatives such as dark sky monitoring. They are also watching with interest the progress of the SDNP application for IDA Dark Sky Reserve application. More as it develops...

JUPITER WATCH

From George Hurrion (Chairman Foredown Tower Astronomers): The National Astronomy Week "Jupiter Watch" was extremely successful in introducing astronomy to our local public - the essential element at the event. National Astronomy Week is a "Free Standing Event" not caught up in the glaring publicity given to "Stargazing Live" by the BBC.



Jupiter – via phone camera

Our group meet at the Emmaus Community Centre, an International Charity based in Hove that provides a home for people who are homeless for one reason or another. The speaker at our May meeting was **Dr. Robin Gorman**, the originator of "National Astronomy Week." Robin took a close interest in Foredown's activities held over three days in the grounds of the Emmaus Community and he inspired this short report.

Visitors included a teacher from a local school. Could we bring our telescopes around one evening so the children can observe Jupiter? We could, making a total of four days of "Jupiter Watching."

Robin told me he got a "wow" factor from the remarks of the residents of Emmaus: it was real, hands-on, they could use a telescope live, experiment with different magnifications, discuss with regular astronomers and more.



Emmaus Centre: Analemmatic Sundial

More memorable remarks as we set up the scopes came from a 'Companion' of Emmaus: "Do you know there is a black dot on the viewer." Unprompted, he could see one of the Moons in transit - an observation that eluded some experienced observers. And a thank-you from a young lady: "I always hated clear nights when I was sleeping rough on the beach because it was going to be cold. Thank you for giving me a new look at the night sky, it is wonderful."

A follow-up - the school above asked if we can give a talk about the Solar System to the whole school as an end of term treat. Many thanks are due to Robin Gorman and National Astronomy Week. Long may it continue.

Vernal Equinox and Eclipse

Also from George Hurrion: I'm firmly in the camp of those who find that inviting people to share astronomy is both a joy to them and to those viewing for the first time. During National Astronomy Week we found an interest in astronomy from many apparently 'non'-astronomical visitors. This interest needs only the spark of an exciting event in the day- or night- sky for a wake-up. Like National Astronomy Week's "Jupiter Watch."



There will be soon an opportunity to show a Solar Eclipse on Friday, March 20th, 2015: aka "Vernal Eclipse Day". This is a special eclipse. In the 100 years from 1950 to 2050 this is the only Total Solar Eclipse at the Vernal Equinox (there's another Annular in 2034). First contact is at 7.40 a.m. and the last contact is 11.50 a.m. There's a really good coverage of this with eclipse-track animations at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_eclipse_of_March_20,_2015

There is also an opportunity for astronomers to encourage youngsters - our future members - to understand astronomy. March 20th, as well as being "Eclipse Day" is also the Vernal Equinox. These two big events in the astronomical calendar being on the same day gives an opportunity for astronomical societies to approach a local school and offer the services of an astronomer to talk about both events. Or invite the school to come to your event so the children can view the eclipse in complete safety by the use of solar telescopes. The timing of the eclipse is convenient – right within the school day.

SAGAS AGM April 2014

Brief notes from the AGM: Amendment to the Constitution passed - SAGAS societies who cannot attend may send a 'postal' (including email) vote to the AGM.

Re-elected: Chairman: George Hurrion (Foredown Tower), Secretary: Graham Bryant (Hampshire Astronomical Group), FAS representative: Tony Questa (Guildford AS), Phil Alner (Farnborough AS) Treasurer, Peter Campbell Burns (Farnham AS) Webmaster. Note Tony is now also PLI secretary of the FAS.