

# Ayrshire Astronomical Society Newsletter November 2014



Please send articles to [newsletter@ayrastro.com](mailto:newsletter@ayrastro.com)



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## Christmas Meal

This year the Christmas Meal will be on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December will take place at the Waterfront in Ayr. The Waterfront is located at the end of Fort Street by Ayr Academy. There will be a 2 course menu for £15.99 and a three course menu for £19.99. Drinks will be in addition and on a personal PAYGO basis.

If you wish to go along please let Derrick know as soon as possible as there are only twenty places in the provisional booking.

## Next Meeting and Topic

The next meeting is on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November when the speaker will be Dr Giles Hammond. Giles has spoken to us several times before and always delivers a good talk - so don't miss it! His subject this month is "The Year of Light 2015".

## Loudoun Hall Feedback

Now that we have had a few meetings in Loudoun Hall the committee is seeking feedback on the new venue. For example; Do you prefer the new location to the old location? is parking an issue? Are the stairs a problem? Are the toilet facilities adequate? Is the room layout satisfactory? Is the fact that the entrance door is on a latch and buzzer system a problem? Please let us have your views positive or negative let a member of the committee know or just email your comments to [president@ayrastro.com](mailto:president@ayrastro.com).

## Subscriptions

Please note that all subscriptions need to be paid up by the end of December if you wish to remain a Member. If you cannot make it along to the meeting then please send your cheque to Derrick Oldfield at 11 Springvale Park, Ayr

## Members Night

We are planning to have a Members Night at the AGM in May. As part of the evening we would like to have a fun type astronomical quiz and a seek potential questions . The format should be question with answer or question with multi choice answers (one of which must of course be the actual answer). If you have any suggestions please email to [president@ayrastro.com](mailto:president@ayrastro.com) or pass to a member of the committee.

As part of the evening we would also like to have a showing of members astronomy themed photographs. The idea here is for anyone to present their photo or photos, no matter how simple or non technical or if indeed if you only have one. It is not just for our more expert imagers, although

we hope that they will take part. Please have a think about what you have. Each photograph or image should include details of subject where, when and how it was taken and preferably be on a USB stick for easy presentation. If you would like to take part or need any help to present your photographs/images please speak to a member of the committee or email [president@ayrastro.com](mailto:president@ayrastro.com).

If you have any other ideas for a Members Night again please let a member of the committee know or email to [president@ayrastro.com](mailto:president@ayrastro.com). Remember – a Members Night only works if the Members get involved so DON'T BE SHY!

## December Skies:

### The Geminids

The Geminids are the most active meteor shower of the year and will reach their peak between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of December and high rates should also be seen on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. A waning gibbous moon will hinder observations leading up to the maximum but the last quarter of the moon rises around midnight on the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> and should not be too much of a problem. The radiant lies close to Castor.



### The Ursids

The radiant lies close to Beta Ursae Minoris (Kochab) and there will be activity during the week leading up to the peak during the 22<sup>nd</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> of December.

### The Planets

Most of the planets are unfavourably positioned during December with the exception of Jupiter which is in western Leo, presenting itself in the early morning skies and improving towards the end of the year when it rises at 20h and transits at 04h. At magnitude -2.4 it will give a good eight hours viewing. Saturn begins to appear again in late December in the pre dawn skies.

## Alex's Space



### *Let there be Light.....*

What colour is deep space? In 2008, after analysing the light from many parts of the Universe using a variety of filters, the Australian Galaxy Redshift Survey concluded that the Universe was dark green and not black with silvery bits!, but a few weeks later they had to admit that they had made an error in their calculations and the Universe was in fact more of a sort of dull shade of beige.

Since the seventeenth century, some of the greatest and most curious minds have wondered why the night sky is black because, if the Universe is infinite and contains an infinite number of uniformly

distributes stars, there should be a star everywhere that we look and the night sky should be as bright as day! The German astronomer Heinrich Olbers suggested that thousands of distant stars have not yet been “switched on”, but it was Edgar Allan Poe who said “The answer is quite simple – the distant stars are so distant that the light from them is still on its way to us”.

In 2010 the Ultra Deep Field camera of the Hubble Space Telescope was pointed at what appeared to be the emptiest piece of the night sky and the area imaged for 15 days. The resulting image – the now famous “Hubble Deep Field” – showed tens of thousands of hitherto unknown galaxies each consisting of millions of stars stretching away to the dim edges of the Universe – so why is it dark out there?

## Hmm!

Two astronauts went into a bar n the Moon but left a few minutes later  
.....it had no “atmosphere1”

