

Issue: September 2017



>>> **Ayrshire Astronomical Society Newsletter**

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Picture taken by Dave Hancox, Dalmellington,
Using a Pentax K70

DON'T FORGET:

Meeting dates for this season:

23 October

27 November (see page 3 for info)

11 December – Christmas Meal

22 January 2018

26 February

26 March

23 April

21 May – This will be the AGM
and is MEMBERS ONLY

Next Meeting:

18th September 2017

Prestwick Academy at 7pm

Speakers this month are

Nick Martin on 'The Origin of the Solar System'

Derrick Oldfield 'Astronomical News roundup'

And

John Burns on 'The total solar eclipse USA on the
21st August 2017'

Other short talks if time permits

Note:

Subscriptions are due, please pay on the night

Events and News

What 'astronomical events' have our members attended over the summer month?



Belleisle Rangers

The AAS was participating at the fun family day in Ayr. Unfortunately it was cloudy but still created lots of interest and the kids loved it.

Jodrell Bank

Two of our members were visiting Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre, south of Manchester and also the National Space Museum in Leicester.



There was a very interesting talk given by Astronaut Michael Foale CBE in Kilmarnock in June.

Perseid Meteor Shower in August



Marc Charron



Dave Hancox

27th November AAS meeting

Members should note that the meeting scheduled for the 27th of November will be held at **The Scottish Dark Sky Observatory at Dalmellington.**

There will be no meeting at Prestwick Academy.

The meeting at the SDSO has been arranged by Nick Martin and is at no cost to AAS members. It will include a tour of the facilities and, if the skies are clear, a chance to observe through the 20" Plane wave and the 14" Celestron.

The planetarium is now in place and operational so if the skies are obscured there will be the opportunity for a sky tour in the planetarium.

It is appreciated that some members may not have transport to get to the observatory or may not wish to tackle driving up the access road. If you fall into either of these categories please let Angela know at the September meeting and we will try to make arrangements for car sharing or transport.

This FREE visit to the SDSO for AAS members is something we have been seeking for a long time and, now that has been offered, we should make a special effort to have the maximum turn out, so please make the effort to attend even if you have been before.

If you wish to take your own scope along and stay on after the visit please let Angela know.

President's word

Mr President and his First Lady are still on holidays. They are loving the French mentality of 'joie de vivre' way too much but I have been promised that Graham will be back for a welcome speech on the 18th September!



Alex's article

Incoming

Look up on a clear night at the starry sky and if you are patient you may well be rewarded with a thrilling sight of a meteor flaring across. These fiery flyers from far frontiers are often called *shooting stars* or *falling stars*, but this is misleading as they really have very little to do with the stars.

Have you ever wondered where the word 'Meteor' comes from? It originates from the Greek word *meteoros*, meaning 'high in the air' - and that is indeed where meteors occur. Meteors are fragments of asteroids and pieces of comet debris from distant reaches of our Solar System, burning up around 100km (60nm) above our heads. For most of these objects their glowing descent is the final chapter in a very long story that goes back 4.5 billion years to the very beginning of our Solar System. Asteroids and comets are the left-over debris of this planet building process and so, the fragments colliding with our atmosphere are a direct link to the earliest period in our planets history.

You are probably not able to guess how much weight of this material hits our atmosphere each year. It is an incredible 40'000 tons! Fortunately it is mostly in the form of particles, not larger than a grain of sand and the vast majority burn up completely before they reach the ground. Some of the bigger pieces manage to penetrate our 'twin defensive shield' – the magnetic field and the atmosphere – in which case they graduate from meteors to *Meteorites*.

What an incredible voyage these visitors from the void have made and what a fantastic story they could tell – if only they could talk.



A rather large *Meteor crater* in Arizona

Last but not least, it is that time of year again!

