

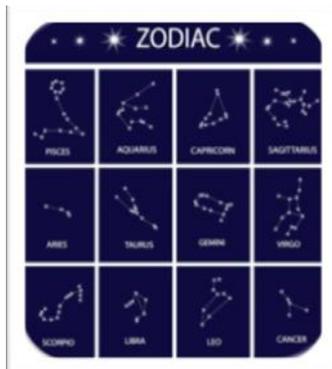
Issue: January 2017



>>> **Ayrshire Astronomical Society Newsletter**

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**DONT MISS...**

The brightest thing in the sky at the moment ...Venus  
.....with Mars nearby and Neptune hidden behind and close by Venus

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**WE HOPE YOU HAVE CLEAR SKIES AND GOOD SEEING  
FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR  
(optimism is good for you!)**

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**Next Meeting:**

**23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017**

**Dr Patrick Harkness**

**A Sample Retrieval Campaign from a  
Mars Analogue Environment**

**News :**

**THE FAMOUS! THE ONE AND ONLY!**

**McIntyre**

**STAR CAMP**

**returns for 2017**

**(Oh! No!)**

After its absence in 2016 due to me being buried alive among the wreckage of an ill conceived home renovation project starcamp arises from the ashes of last years early weather systems to return to this years calendar.

As before the venue is; The walled Garden Campsite at Kilkerran near Maybole on Friday and Saturday the 3rd and 4th of March. Having mostly put my house back in order I will be braving the elements for both nights with a guarantee of good weather for anyone joining me, probably. Of course I wont be alone. With me will be our glorious President in his luxurious accommodation. Looted after the demise of the former Dictator Saddam Hussein, the Presidential caravan boasts five bathrooms and a soda stream but don't expect automatic access without first taking off your shoes and showing the required pass. Qualification for entry is a deeply hidden secret in the society and after Paul Cameron had a dreadful accident with his tent (in the form of Willie Harding) in 2015 he was given emergency shelter in the awning, even though the first and second floors were free, however central heating was provided by Graham who used startling presence of mind and all his engineering skills to fill a Lenor bottle with water from his kettle saving the day, till the lid failed, soaking Pauls sleeping bag and jammies.

Enough of fun memories from Star camps of the past and back to the present; If you want to stay over its £7.50 per person per night with electric hook ups available (extra). You will pay the campsite separately for your electrical consumption. If camping or caravanning isn't your thing then just come along for one or both evenings for £4 per head.

The walled garden campsite looks south into The Galloway forest park with its incredible dark skies so if you don't fancy a drive to a wild lonely place then this is a much more comfortable alternative with great facilities.

The star camp is a great social event and but also a chance for anyone struggling with their kit to get some help and advice form the more experienced members. If your scope is pretty basic and you have only looked at the moon and the odd planet then I can help you find some of the things you thought were only available to those with computerised scopes. Want to learn how to take lovely starry pictures with your DSLR? come along and we will teach you or if you don't even have a telescope just come along and take advantage of an opportunity to see the universe through some of our members great kit. Feel free to bring along a friend even if they are not a member as long as they are interested astronomy then they are welcome. If you do decide to stay over then payment is due in full at the February meeting. Look forward to seeing you all there.

Allan

## **Outreach Events 2017:**

This year we are again joining with the Kilmarnock Engineering and Science Society to support their STEM programme in bringing Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics to a selected school in Ayrshire. We have done this for the past three years or so and have found it very rewarding to see the interest and excitement of the children when they get the chance to ask questions and get up close to telescopes and the like.

This year the school in question is Netherthird Primary near Cumnock. Our first event is at the science day on **Tuesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of January** when we will be doing our usual display of information and equipment for the pupils and giving a couple of short talks. It is an "all day" even starting at about 10 am and finishing at around 3pm. Others will also be doing science experiments and talks and the SDSO planetarium will be there.

Our second event is on the **Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> March** when we will be doing a similar thing but this time it will be an open event for pupils and parents plus anyone else who wants to come along

We will also be doing a similar event at Willow Bank Special needs school in Kilmarnock the day before on the **Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> March**.

Last year, as AAS only, we did a very rewarding evening for the Cubs group at Kingcase Church in Prestwick and this year we have been asked to do a similar thing for the Scout group. This will take place on the evening of **Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> February**. Hopefully we will be able to get some observing done with the scouts.

As usual (as AAS) we hope to do some of the local fayres but we have nothing organised yet. The St Joseph's School Classic car show will be on our list. Possibly the Holy Fair in Ayr and maybe the Dundonald Show. It depends on what comes up and when but, more importantly, how much help and support we get from members as it always seems to be the same few.

If you would like to come along and help at any or all of these events, please let Graham, Alex or John know as soon as possible. No special experience or knowledge is necessary but you need to be ok with children.

### **Events list 2017 so far:**

<b>Friday the 31<sup>st</sup> of January</b>	<b>Netherthird School</b>
<b>Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Willowbank special needs School</b>
<b>Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Netherthird School</b>
<b>Friday the 24<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Kingcase Church Scouts</b>

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**Presidents' Word**



It is great to see that the Star Camp has returned (especially since the above article gives me the opportunity to sue for libel - well not quite! I suppose there might be some truth loitering on the edges of the assertions – maybe!) However, all things being equal, the Presidential caravan will be there, and yes ! certain riff raff may be stood outside in the cold while others bask in the luxury of comfortable seats and heating, popping out for the occasional astronomical observation but that's life!

Every one of these events has been a great week end with or without clear skies, so they are well worth attending even if just for the one evening. Last time we actually got clear skies and managed some great observing, not to mention plenty of banter and antics. Don't worry if you don't have a scope or cannot bring it, there will be plenty of opportunity to use the scopes that are there and be shown around the sky. You don't need to be an expert to attend (perhaps as well!!) Just let Allan know and turn up—you will enjoy it.

The other news is that the new magazine Space and Scotland that we had a presentation about from its Editor Duncan Lunan, is now in print and will soon be available for distribution free of charge to members. I have asked for some forty copies so there should be plenty to go around and hopefully a few spare.



Oh yes! The other thing is that the big bright object in the sky after sunset in SSW is Venus

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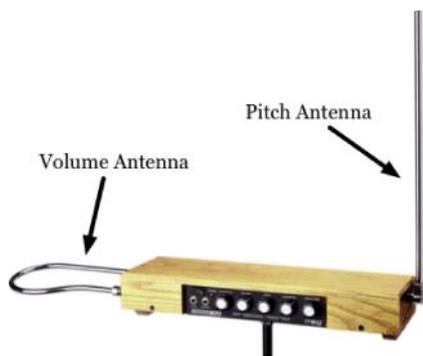
## Alex's Space

### Heavenly Harmonys

Music and Space was the theme of a recent radio programme which I caught by chance the other day. A random selection of topics based on the theme began with the gold discs carried by the VOYAGER spacecraft ---- a modern "message in a bottle". While these spacecraft themselves might tell their finders about our scientific knowledge, the music carried on the discs was intended to convey something about our human character, but, while we might regard some of the music as beautiful, we don't even know whether it would be understandable to an alien civilisation, let alone have an aesthetic or emotional significance!

The traditional notion of the motion of the spheres was another aspect of the programme. Apparently the Greeks had first made the link between music and the motion of the planets, however, the heavens above are more likely to be filled with musical dissonances than harmonies! Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony ---- it was his final one ---- represents the twinkling of the stars and also gives the "spooky" music which accompanies many science fiction films.

A literal connection between music and space is provided by the THEREMIN --- named after its inventor Russian inventor Leon Theremin who patented the device in 1920. Never heard of it ? well, neither had I, and , until I had undertaken some investigation, I had no idea what it was! It is in fact an early electronic musical instrument



controlled without physical contact by the player (the thereminist), who controls the sound by moving their hands in an electromagnetic field. The THEREMIN was used to provide music for early science fiction films such as the original version of "The day the Earth stood still" (1951).

The final section of this really interesting programme focussed on the electronic music of some bands and groups who used spaceflight actuality, such as real mission control audio. Also included were short spoken excerpts based on the story of astronaut Major Tom from David Bowies "Space Oddity" --- that's correct Oddity NOT Odyssey!!

If I had know this programme would be so fascinating, I would have attempted to record it ---- but I managed to scribble down the main points ---- although it did take me a L...O...N...G time to decipher my scribbles.

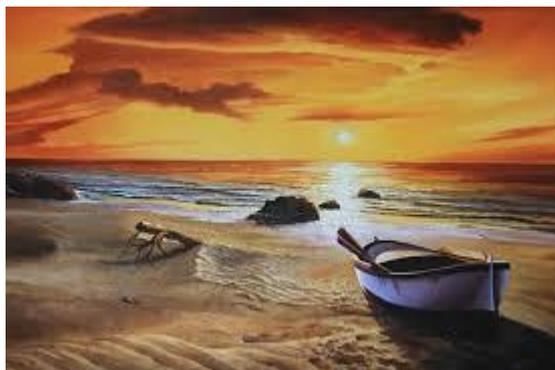


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## Isabelles' Solar Corner



Rumoured to be doing some first hand solar research at an undisclosed exotic location!



Back soon – we hope!

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### **Open for business!**

**THE LIBRARY IS A RESOURCE FOR MEMBERS -PLEASE SUPPORT IT AND MAKE USE OF IT**

The Library list is also available on the website under “links” and can be downloaded



What does the AAS library has to offer? We have a good selection of books and some DVD so just ask; a complete updated list can be obtained from the librarian. Please remember, it is your library and to quote popular adage ‘Use it or lose it’.

Alex Baillie - Librarian

**If you would like to obtain a list or borrow an item – contact Alex at the next meeting or give him a call on 01563 520887.** Unfortunately Alex does not have email but if you email your good (not so) old President, requests will be passed on.

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