



Newsletter #10, April 2015: The Solar Eclipse

Solar Eclipse 20th March 2015

Considering our rather disjointed organisation, we seem, looking back, to have got quite a lot done on this event. On the day itself we had a members' meeting in Newton Stewart, two members observing in the Faeroes, another member photographing it in Newcastle, a corresponding Australian guest filming in Svalbard (!) and 25 schools around Dumfries & Galloway observing with the help of solar safety specs provided free by us with the help of a grant from our friends the Holywood Trust. Most of it's on the website, of course, but here's a flavour of it:



Total eclipse from Svalbard

Grant Salmond, from Queensland, Australia, recorded a video of the total eclipse from Svalbard. This is a frame from his video, which you can see on Grant's blog at

<http://outbackrover.blogspot.com.au/2015/04/svalbard-total-solar-eclipse.html>

On his way home, Grant stayed over in Galloway at the Galloway Astronomy Centre near Whithorn from where he got a nice time-lapse shot of the night sky that he has also put on to his blog.

It was really good to be contacted by Grant ahead of his visit to the northern hemisphere and we wish him all the best for the future.

Total eclipse from the Faeroe Islands

Conditions were cloudy, so Brian and Robin Rice were not able to get the stunning images we'd hoped for.

Partial eclipse from Newton Stewart and Newcastle

Cloud cover was nearly 100% at the start of the eclipse, with a little light rain, but after 9:00 the clouds thinned a bit and we were able to see and photograph much of the eclipse. This super image, by Eric Sloan, is from just before maximum obscuration at around 9:25.

The varying cloud cover made photography especially difficult. Brian Leighton, in Newcastle, got some decent images, and we shot lots of pictures in Newton Stewart all of which we have joined up to give a rather jerky video, which we hope will go up on the website later on.

Society members and passers-by dropped into our observing site at the Belted Galloway Visitor centre in Newton Stewart during the eclipse and enjoyed our special "eclipse biscuits" baked for us by Creebridge House Hotel.



Solar specs for schools

With a grant from the Holywood Trust, we were able to buy a batch of solar safety specs to offer free to Dumfries and Galloway Schools to help pupils observing the eclipse. In all, were able to distribute nearly 190 sets of spectacles to 25 schools across Dumfries and Galloway. Many of the schools have since got back to us expressing their appreciation of the gift and describing how the specs were put to use by staff and pupils. We still have a few sets of the specs available if members would like to use them for simple observations of the sun – we have been experimenting with ways of using them as camera filters for sunspot observation, for example.