



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #20, December 2016: Compliments of the season to all our readers

AGM 2016: New Treasurer

Our AGM was held on 5th November as planned – a draft minute will be circulated to members soon. Our treasurer Alec Creel retired as planned and Gerry McCleary was elected in his place. Many thanks to Gerry for taking the task on.

Cloudy Galaxy Hunt

(Contributed by a member from Kirkcudbright)

26th November 2016 saw members of the GFAS meeting at Blairmount Park for an evening observing galaxies. Tripods, mounts and an assortment of telescopes, from Newtonian and Dobsonian to the latest Schmitt-Cassegrain were assembled, probing for galactic objects many light years away. Inside, accompanied by refreshments, a slide show of images, obtained from Society members and NASA, depicting galaxies near and far was presented by the GFAS secretary. Outside, in deteriorating visibility, the Andromeda galaxy could clearly be seen, providing a fitting end to an interesting and informative evening.

The picture shows the society's very powerful Meade LX200 telescope on a borrowed mount.



Newton Stewart Tennis Club

We have finally come to an agreement with Newton Stewart Tennis Club, who will give us leave to put a storage facility in place beside the tennis pavilion in York Road. The Tennis Club have applied for funding to refurbish the pavilion. In return for a modest annual contribution to maintenance costs, GFAS will have the use of the pavilion for meetings and events. We are currently looking at storage shed possibilities and will be making funding bids early next year. Meanwhile Forestry Commission Scotland have kindly said we can have a further six months' stay in the container out at Kirroughtree.

Next Members' Meeting: a different approach

The committee decided to try a rather different approach to our next observation meeting, in the hope of being able to choose a clear night. We are going to try to hold an event in January 2017, on an evening between Thursday 12th and Thursday 19th, depending on the weather forecast. During those seven nights, Mars and Venus are low in the south-western sky at 7:30 pm, Uranus (magnitude 6.15, very faint) is high in the SSW, while the moon rises after 9:30 pm. Given good conditions, we ought to be able to have another galaxy hunt – Bode's Nebula is high in the NNE and we don't have a picture of that yet. We will keep members informed by email of course, but please try to keep some or all of those nights free if you can.

2016-2017 Subs now overdue

Adult members who have not yet paid their subscription fee for 2016-2017 are respectfully asked to pay up as soon as possible. Although most of our event funding comes from grants, your subs are still needed to keep us ticking over!