



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #9, February 2015

Venus & Mars: Member's meeting 22nd February

Venus comes into conjunction with Mars shortly after sunset on Sunday 22nd February 2015. Members and friends are cordially invited to join us while we try to capture some digital images of the conjunction then do some image enhancement using the Registax software. This will be a very hands-on session, so bring a laptop if you can along with whatever observing gear you wish. We will have suitable telescopes, cameras and laptops with us as well, so we hope to be able to take you through the whole digital astrophotography process from the start, right up to putting the final result up on the GFAS website – quite a challenge!

Even if we can't observe because of the weather we will still be doing the image enhancement workshop - meet at **5:45 at Newton Stewart Golf Club, Kirroughtree Avenue, Minnigaff, Newton Stewart DG8 6PF**. We are grateful to the Golf Club for making the clubhouse facilities including WiFi available to us for this session.



Total Solar Eclipse 20th March

The picture is from the last total eclipse, in Australia in 2012. This year's is visible from the Faeroe Isles and also Svalbard, but not from Galloway. Our society astronomers, Brian and Robin Rice, are going to the Faeroes to observe and if the conditions are good we expect them to bring back some spectacular images of the event. See the Faero Islands travel bureau's website at: <http://www.visitfaeroeislands.com/en/be-inspired/total-solar-eclipse-2015/> if you would like to join them!

Subscriptions now overdue

All members who have not yet paid their 2015 subs are invited to do so as soon as they can. If you've decided not to renew your membership we'll be very sorry to lose you, but from the end of April you will be listed as "lapsed". You can pay your subs in cash at any meeting, by cheque payable to "GFAS" or on the website donations page using PayPal or a credit or debit card. We do try to make it as painless as we can, but we still need your cash!

New observatory and dark sky centre – funding bid made

We have made an initial bid for funding from the Royal Astronomical Society 200 fund for a grant to let us set up a new observatory and dark sky centre, probably on a site in the Galloway Forest Park overlooking Minigaff – within the Dark Sky Park, with a very good observing outlook, but still close to town and in easy reach for locals and visitors alike. Our rough estimate is for an overall cost of £150,000 and we now have to wait and see if the RAS 200 grant committee are interested in the project. Fingers crossed, and grateful thanks to Forestry Commission Scotland for their help.

