



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #14, October 2015

Lunar Eclipse Report



We had a splendid night in Glentroll on September 18th with clear skies until around 4:00am. Brian and Robin Rice shot around 900 hi-res images of the eclipse. The five shots here (cropped and scaled, lower resolution) were taken at 00:50, 01:11, 02:57, 03:47 and 04:03am from left to right.

A striking feature of the total eclipse period was the reappearance of the stars – the Milky Way and the Andromeda Nebula were clearly seen around 3 am. In the large image at left you can make out one or two stars.

Not surprisingly for an all-nighter like this, we only had a few members turning out, but those that did had a great time. Two friends from Glentroll village showed up around 3 am and joined in the fun. Thanks are due to Glentroll Community Centre for letting us have the centre's facilities during the night.

A time-lapse video of the eclipse has been put together and will be on display at our next members meeting.

New Telescope

The society has been given a complete Meade 114mm reflecting telescope comprising: optical tube assembly with precision ground and polished primary mirror; counterweighted equatorial mount with control knobs on both axes; all aluminium adjustable field tripod; 5 x 24mm viewfinder; MA 9mm and MA 25mm eyepieces and two Barlow lenses. Here it is being checked over before being added to our stock of telescopes and astronomy equipment. The instrument is in excellent condition having been very carefully looked after and we are extremely grateful to Andy Little of Canonbie for this most generous donation.



AGM 10th October

The society's 2015 AGM was held on 10th October, 12 members attending. The Trustees were re-elected unchanged and the members approved the principles of the "funding roadmap" described in Newsletter 13.



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Planets in the Dawn

Look east before sunrise all this month for a spectacular planetary grouping of Venus, Jupiter and Mars. Venus in spectacularly bright and Jupiter, lower down, is also unmistakable. Mars is less prominent and lies between Venus and Jupiter. On 26th October the 3 planets will be at their closest so given a clear morning this will be a great observational opportunity.

The graphic on the right is from the Earthsky.org website, see the link underneath the image. Venus, Mars and Jupiter all meet up in the last week of October to present the closest grouping of three planets until January of 2021. And you can also see Mercury below this planetary trio.

Saturn is also visible this month but in the evening, at nightfall throughout October. Saturn will disappear from the evening sky in November 2015 and will reappear in the morning sky in December 2015.



<http://earthsky.org/astrometry-essentials/visible-planets-tonight-mars-jupiter-venus-saturn-mercury>



Image of the Year This is M31, the Andromeda Galaxy (with M32 and M110 for good measure), as imaged by Robin Rice recently. I know we've had good observing conditions lately, but this is brilliant! Well done Robin.