

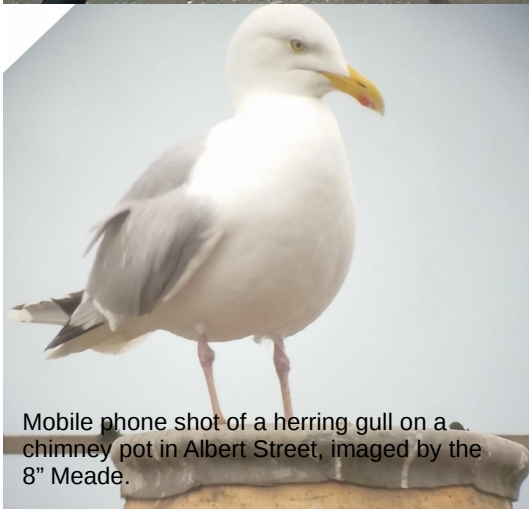
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Astrojam1, Friday 26th May

This could have gone better, I think it's fair to say. A mix-up over the reservation meant that there was a wedding party where we thought we ought to be meeting, so five of us ended up in the pub instead and had a drink, but things were extremely noisy and the astronomic content was minimal, neither was there any jam! Better luck next time.



Brian and Robin's 8" Meade reflector.



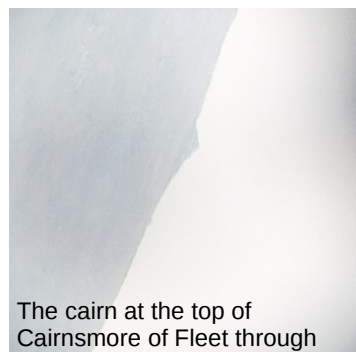
Mobile phone shot of a herring gull on a chimney pot in Albert Street, imaged by the 8" Meade.

May Fayre 27th May

We had a gazebo and a couple of telescopes at the McMillan Hall in Newton Stewart at the May Fayre. The gazebo was provided, erected and dismantled at the end of the event, free of charge, by volunteer staff from Newton Stewart Initiative. Many thanks to them for their help and hospitality.

It was a cloudy day but it stayed dry and our visitors had fun focussing on upside-down chimneys and seagulls and so forth. We also tried some handheld mobile phone "chimno-photography" with rather shaky results as you can see – but it gets easier with a cheap-and-cheerful mobile phone holder, see page 2.

We had a fairly quiet day but there a few visitors to the stand and for many of them this newsletter will be first they get from us, so a hearty welcome to them.



The cairn at the top of Cairnsmore of Fleet through the smaller telescope.



Bank of Scotland chimney pots by handheld mobile phone



A quiet moment on the stand.

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Mobile Phone Telescope adapter

I got quite interested in the idea of using a mobile phone camera with a telescope so I went on eBay and bought the adapter shown in the image for £7.50. It is very easy to use and it holds the phone in the right place over the telescope eyepiece so that you can shoot still shots or videos. I haven't had the chance to use it with any heavenly bodies yet, but it works. The pictures are, from left to right - the adapter itself; the adapter mounted on the eyepiece of the small Meade telescope; a neighbour's chimneypot and the communications array on the top of Cambret Hill about 15 km away.

You can use the digital zoom on the phone camera to expand the telescope image and then try to get the focus right. The phone camera auto-focuses on the image as well, so getting it really sharp takes patience. Another possibility is that you can shoot a video of the object from which you could extract stills for stacking with Registax. I'm looking forward to trying that, maybe with Saturn if we get a clear night soon.



Space: Fact and Fiction - Stranraer Museum exhibit

Stranraer Museum (55 George Street, Stranraer, DG9 7JP) have a free exhibit running all summer until September to let us "explore the vast expanse of space from Galloway Dark Sky Park to planets far far away". There are moonbase modules for kids to crawl through and even a tiny one-person planetarium! The pictures below are to whet your appetite. Worth a visit, especially on a wet day in Stranraer!



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