



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #25, November 2017

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Site clearance begun

We have started clearing the ground of our new site at Newton Stewart Tennis Club. The work all has to be done by hand and it has been hampered by rain and old age, but we hope that with some professional help two more sessions will do it. After that we just need to put down a hardcore base, order our flatpack log cabin, build it and move the gear in from the container out at Kirroughtree. Volunteers always welcome – just email for a date!



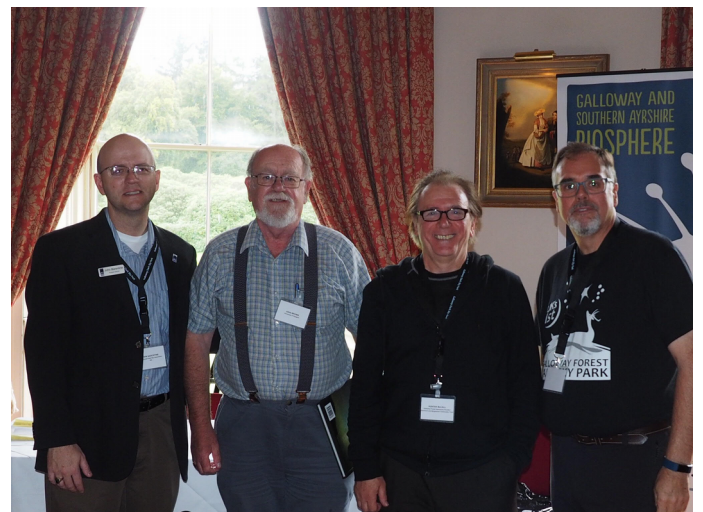
L to R: clearing brushwood in September, hired gardener at work, the ground-level space appearing.

GFAS AGM 2017

We held our fifth AGM since the society was re-formed in 2013, on 28th October in the Newton Stewart Centre opposite the library on Church Street. We had a good turnout of 12 full members and were able to report that the society is solvent and has survived four full years since the crisis. The management committee was re-elected unchanged and we were happy to welcome Elizabeth Tindall to the committee to be our press officer. Many thanks to all who attended and to those who sent apologies and good wishes.

European Dark Sky Places Conference

Hunter McCall attended the European Dark Sky Places conference in the Cally Palace Hotel in September. Here is his report on proceedings: "The conference proved to be a very enjoyable experience with speakers from very diverse backgrounds. There were some talks which were of a technical nature, relating to dark sky lighting, in terms of both design and spectral content and there were other talks which looked at the psychological and cultural aspects of darkness and light. One such talk, was given by a psychotherapist who conducted a study on the island of Stark (a "dark sky island" in the English Channel) where there are no cars and no street lighting - how good would that be if you're an observational astronomer! During the second night of the conference, which was beautifully clear, I went on a bat walk (for the first time), followed by a stargazing event organised by Elizabeth Tindall whom you all know. All in all, it was an enjoyable and informative event with a truly international flavour."



L to R: John Barentine (International Dark Skies Association); Prof. John Brown (Astronomer Royal for Scotland and GFAS Hon President); Hunter McCall; and Keith Brown of Galloway Forest Park.

The Crescent Nebula by Robin Rice

This image, in H-alpha emission, of NGC6888 or the crescent nebula in Cygnus was recorded by Robin Rice on Saturday 30th September using his Starwave 110, modded 600D. It is made up of a stack of 29 x 3 minute exposures! Robin himself said the image was “not in focus: OK but not great”.

The Crescent Nebula (also known as NGC 6888) is an emission nebula in the constellation Cygnus, about 5000 light-years away from Earth. It is formed by the fast stellar wind from the Wolf-Rayet star WR 136 (HD 192163) colliding with and energizing the slower moving wind ejected by the star when it became a red giant around 250,000 to 400,000 years ago.

It is a rather faint object located about 2 degrees SW of Sadr (Gamma Cygni).



The Pleiades by Robin & Brian Rice



This image of the Pleiades was taken on 16th September 2017. It is made up of a stack of 20 x 2 minute exposures on a Canon EOS 600D camera and an Equinox 80 telescope.

The Pleiades (the Seven Sisters or Messier 45), are an open star cluster containing hot stars in the constellation of Taurus. It is one of the nearest star clusters to Earth and is the one easiest to see with the naked eye. You can find it in the southern sky by following Orion's belt diagonally upwards through Taurus - it's very easy to see.

The cluster contains hot blue stars around 100 million years old. The faint nebulosities around the brightest stars are reflections from an interstellar dust cloud through which the stars are currently passing.

Members' and Friends' meeting 15th December

We have booked the Newton Stewart Centre, opposite the library, Church Street, Newton Stewart for our next meeting on Friday 15th December at 7:30pm. We will have a talk from Mike Alexander of the Galloway Astronomy Centre (<http://www.gallowayastro.com/>), Brian and Robin Rice's video of the total solar eclipse 2017 that they took in the USA, and we'll have some telescopes available if observing conditions are suitable after the meeting. There will be no moon that night.

GFAS Members free, visitors £5. If you're not a GFAS member yet, we'll happily sign you up at the meeting!



Galloway Astronomy Centre
<http://www.gallowayastro.com/>

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