



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #33, May 2019

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Busy, Busy!

The planetarium workload is picking up alarmingly. We have now done six dome shows, five within the Kilgallioch Community Fund area and one outside, to the Dumfries and Galloway Family Science Festival at the Crichton Campus in Dumfries. We've been north to Girvan, west to Portpatrick, south to Wigtown (twice!) and east to Dumfries clocking up nearly 570 car-miles. We've had 487 visitors so far, ages ranging from 80 years down to 3, although of course most have been primary school age. We've even coped with one youngster in a wheelchair.

It's not all been plain sailing. Sometimes the venue is a bit of a tight squeeze as this picture of the Duncan Hall in Dumfries shows – the top of the dome is touching the roof beam! The sound system is still temperamental and we haven't tested the new current-loop system yet.



We're still working on getting the dome blower noise down to comfortable levels without allowing the dome to deflate. Despite all these minor snags, though, our visitor feedback remains very reassuring with overall approval ratings between 92% and 75%. The secondary school feedback is the weakest so far and we'll need to think hard about that before our next secondary school visit in the autumn. We're also doing our best to integrate our offerings into the primary schools STEM programme.

Next gig - Port William Primary School, 11th June

Our last school visit for 2018/2019 will be to Port William on 11th June. Port William Primary is a small school, just over 60 pupils, on the east side of the South Machars of Wigtownshire so we can cover all the pupils with just three sessions in the morning.

The Veil Nebula, NGC 6960, imaged by Brian Leighton

The Veil Nebula is a cloud of hot ionized gas and dust in the constellation Cygnus. It is part of the Cygnus Loop, a supernova remnant. The source supernova was a star 20 times bigger than the Sun, which exploded around 8,000 years ago and the remnants have now expanded to cover an area roughly 3 degrees across (about 6 times wider than the full Moon). The distance to the nebula is estimated at 1,470 light-years. As before, email us any technical questions and we'll pass them on to Brian.



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