



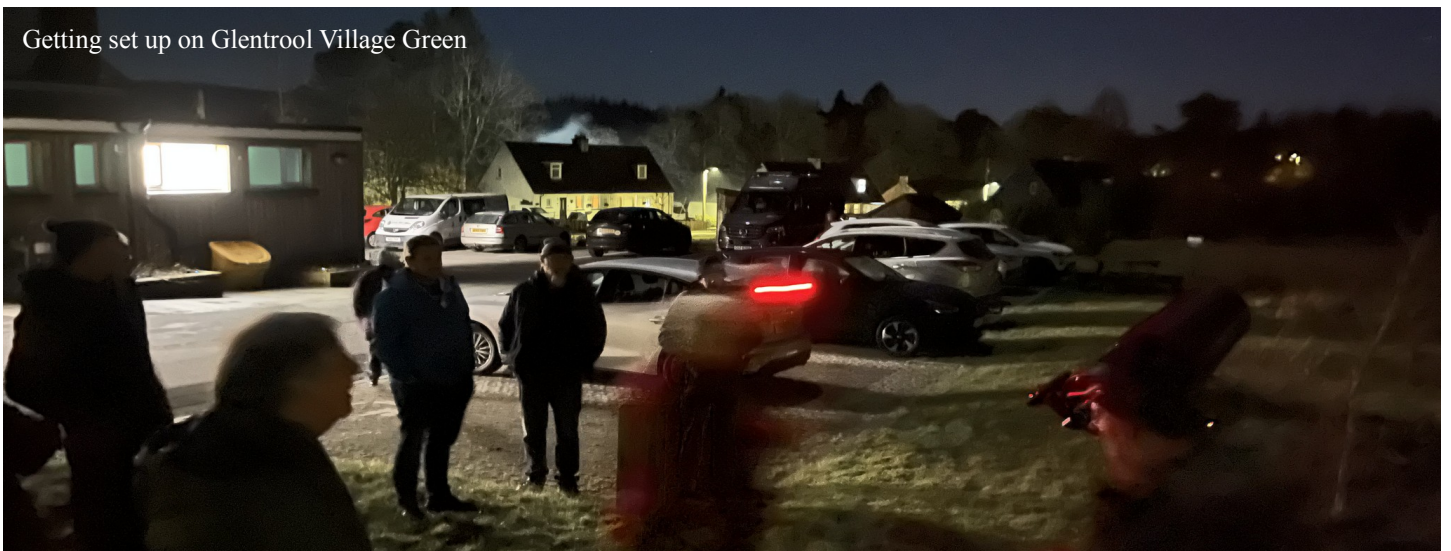
### **A clear night for National Astronomy Week**

We went to the Glentool Hive on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> for an observation evening during National Astronomy Week, offering members an indoor presentation as usual in case of cloudy conditions, and for once we got a clear sky with good visibility! We only had two telescopes available but one of those was a Celestron 9.25 inch Schmidt-Cassegrain reflector, brought along by a new member, and it performed very well indeed, even being able to produce the images on **page 2**.

Those who attended were able to view Saturn (briefly, before it set in the west), Venus (showing a fat crescent), the Moon at just over half-phase, Jupiter with the Galilean moons nicely lined up, and Mars in the east. We couldn't see Neptune or Uranus so we used Stellarium indoors later on to show visitors what they were like on the night, and the difficulties in observing Mercury were described during the presentation, just to complete the planetary set. The sky was too bright to see the Milky Way, and later on a veil of light cloud crept up from the horizon all around, but observing carried on well into the night after the end of the meeting.

Thanks again to Glentool Hive for a safe, comfortable, warm space to retreat to out of a really cold but bright night.

Getting set up on Glentool Village Green



### **Upcoming events this Spring**

**Thursday February 27<sup>th</sup>: 5:30pm** Guided tour of Kirkcudbright Dark Space Planetarium; **6:30pm Prof. Martin Hendry** talk - "Why are we here? An astronomer's guide to the Universe". **Booking required** at <https://www.darkspaceplanetarium.org/>

**Tuesday March 11<sup>th</sup> 8:30am** Girvan Academy Science Fair - Planetarium Dome Show - volunteers needed, mileage payable for car use from home to Girvan and return. Please email if you'd like to join in.

**Saturday March 29<sup>th</sup> 10:00am** Belted Galloway Visitor Centre, Newton Stewart - Partial Solar Eclipse

**Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm** Newton Stewart Golf Club (TBC) Astronomer Brendan Owens on "Our Fascination with Mars". Also, observing - note sunset about 8:40pm

**Saturday May 24<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am** Belted Galloway Visitor Centre, Newton Stewart - Solar Observing Session weather permitting

**Saturday Jun 21<sup>st</sup> 3:30 pm** MacMillan Hall, Newton Stewart (TBC) - Dome display for Solstice

**Note:** We are also working on a talk from a guest astronomer in May, details to be advised as soon as we can.

**GFAS Membership:** We always welcome new and returning members, especially juniors who join for free. Subs remain at £15.00 Adult, £25.00 Family, £0.00 Juniors or Students in full-time education. Just email [members@gf-astro.org](mailto:members@gf-astro.org) for a form or download a form from the website.



## **Galloway Forest Astronomical Society**

Registered Scottish Charity SC035033.

Chairman: Antony Berretti;

Acting Secretary: Doug Snell, 5 Elm Grove, Newton Stewart, DG8 6JT

W: [www.gf-astro.org](http://www.gf-astro.org) E: [members@gf-astro.org](mailto:members@gf-astro.org)

Fb page: [@GallowayForestAstronomicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/GallowayForestAstronomicalSociety/) / Fb Group: [@gfas](https://www.facebook.com/gfas) chat

**Supported by Kilgallioch Community Fund**

**with funding from ScottishPower Renewables' Kilgallioch Wind Farm**





### **Instant Astrophotography (well, nearly)**

Trying to take good pictures of objects in the night sky is a frustrating business, even on a good night. We were lucky to have Marc Charron with us last Thursday with his C9.25 reflector with its camera and connection to a laptop. He got images of Mars, Jupiter and the Moon during the evening and had them processed and ready for this newsletter by Friday morning, so here's a selection.

Mars and Jupiter taken with the Celestron 9.25 with a 2.5x PowerMate for a focal length of about 5800mm



Imaged by Marc Charron, 06/02/2025, from Glentrool Village

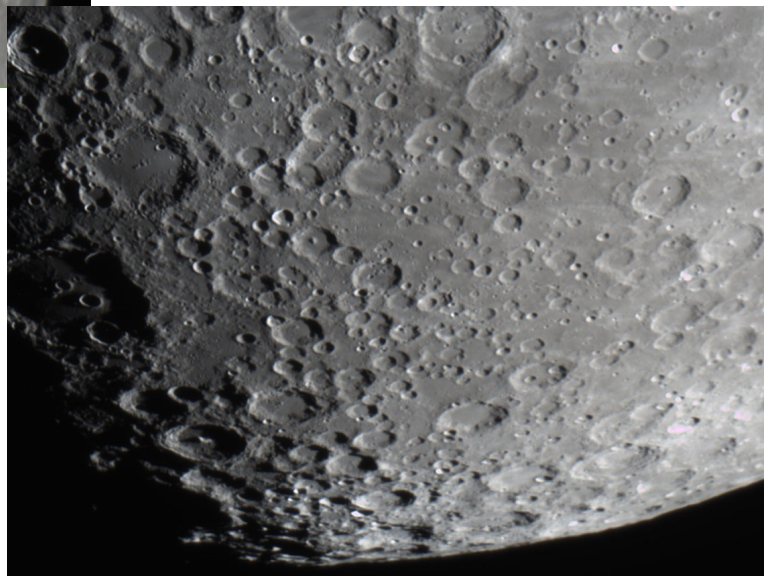
The images are at the at the same scale on the camera showing the difference in angular size on the sky, Mars, being quite a bit closer is still smaller, though with a brighter surface area. Mars is about 106.5 million km away, whereas Jupiter was 692.6 million km distant, or about six and a half times as far away, yet still quite a bit larger in the sky. The great red spot is visible (just) and took a bit of processing to make it more prominent. The northern polar cap on Mars is very clear.



Here are two of Marc's high-resolution images of the Moon, both cropped and reduced in size to fit into the newsletter. The originals are, as you would expect, breathtakingly spectacular.

The image above has been cropped and resized to highlight two features of interest, the craters "Messier" (arrowed) and "Messier A". Messier is a relatively young lunar impact crater located on the Mare Fecunditatis. The crater has a distinct oblong shape that is not caused by foreshortening. Messier A is to the west, a similar-sized crater with an oblong, doublet form, oriented more nearly north-south.

The image on the right, also cropped and resized, shows the Moon's southern highlands. The Moon's surface is made up of light-coloured, heavily-cratered highlands and smooth dark lowland "maria" which are most prominent on the near side. The highlands are plastered with large craters owing to their greater age (about 4.5 billion years) compared with the maria and dominate the far side and most of the near side.



### **Newsletter Articles**

Please send us your astro news! We are happy to consider all contributions to our newsletters and we will always acknowledge the source of anything we use. Just email us any original astronomy-related items for consideration.

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