

Federation of Astronomical Societies



fedastro.org.uk

Editor: Michael Bryce

Newsletter

No 141: December 2024

Note: The FAS Council Reserves the Right to publish articles, events and reports submitted to the FAS Newsletter

SH2-155 Diffuse Nebula: Cepheus

Image Credit: Roland Goody

SH2-155 as imaged on 27th September from Wantage, Oxfordshire. The image is made up of 75 x 6 minute exposures through ~5" refractor (Skywatcher Esprit 120 triplet) taken using an Altair 26C astro camera on an iOptron CEM70 mount. The image data was processed in PixInsight. Roland Goody is a Member of Abingdon Astronomical Society

FAS Council

President

Clare Lauwers

president@fedastro.org.uk

Treasurer

Pat McEvoy
77 Binsteed Road
Portsmouth
PO2 7PJ

treasurer@fedastro.org.uk

07729 696832

Secretary

John Stapleton

secretary@fedastro.org.uk

Editor

Michael Bryce
Carolian AS & Bromsgrove AS
49 Cortland Way
Stourport-on-Severn
Worcestershire
DY13 8NZ

newsletter@fedastro.org.uk

07821 896304



President's Spot: Clare Lauwerys

Hello!

I suppose I should formally introduce myself as the new FAS President, although many of you hopefully know me a little already from the various emails I've sent you.

But before it's all about me, I must say thank you to Paul for everything he did for the FAS. And an extra thanks for staying on a year longer than he really wanted to. His sense of service and duty meant he didn't want to leave the FAS in the lurch and I was particularly grateful that he was still in place as we dealt with the insurance issue at the start of the year. I'm also pleased that he has said he's always at the end of the phone should I need him. I hope that now the FAS has "set him free" he will have the time to pursue the many projects he had put on hold.

And now to me

It is a huge honour to write this first President's spot. My interest in astronomy began, as it does with many people, with my Dad pointing out some of the constellations. I recall an old telescope living in the corner of a room but I don't remember it being used. My Dad was definitely a naked eye observer, perhaps because when he was a young boy light pollution wasn't the scourge that it is today. I clearly take after my Dad (which is by no means a bad thing) and have a strong preference for naked eye observing, although I do have a soft spot for the images the likes of the SeeStar can produce. And the other end of the spectrum where the "hard science" lives is my other happy place.



Image Above: Clare Lauwerys enjoying a well deserved holiday.

Now as I have an unusual surname, I'm quite easy to find online. To save you the Google, you'll find out that I've done a wide range of voluntary work and that I've had a lung transplant. If your sleuthing is really good, you may also find this:



Image Above: Clare Lauwerys Carrying the Olympic Torch: promoting the importance of organ donation.

or even a photo of me on Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square as part of Antony Gormley's (the Angel of the North creator) One & Other project. I used both these as opportunities to promote the importance of organ donation as I am incredibly grateful for the gift I have received. These days, I'm using my lived experience to help design webinars for transplant patients.

I've been the Secretary for North Essex Astronomical Society for over 6 years and in that time the society has really grown. I don't

take all the credit for that; we are a great team and all bring something to the table. But I mention this as I'm keen to help any society that is struggling to get and keep members.

Now at this point, it's probably the traditional time to set out what I want to achieve as President. My first goal is to fill the gaps on the FAS Council. You will have read in previous editions of the newsletter and in emails that we have been operating with fewer members than is ideal. This has made everything harder than it should be, so I am delighted that we have a new Vice President and Secretary. There are still some vacancies so if you think you have some useful skills, please get in touch.

My second goal is to get know the societies better and find out what you want from the FAS. I can't guarantee to deliver everything, and a cloud dispersal machine is off the cards, but the FAS is here to support the members. What I'd like to see is members supporting members, so if your society is has achieved something which you are proud of, or if you know you are particularly good at something, let me know. Email and Zoom means its very easy to connect and share knowledge. And of course Michael is keen to receive reports from you to include in the newsletter.

My third goal is to stop writing now and let you read the rest of the newsletter. This is by far the easiest of my goals and it's always nice something on a list you can tick off quickly!

**Clear skies,
Clare**

***Text and Images: Clare Lauwerys
president@fedastro.org.uk***

Editors Welcome

On behalf of the FAS Council I'd like to formally welcome our new President Clare Lauwerys to the Helm. Dr Paul Daniels has done a fantastic job over the last five plus years but it is good to have someone new. Clare hales from Essex. She is Secretary of North Essex Astronomical Society and a prominent figure in the local astronomical community.

Clare is only the second female President of the FAS (some of you may remember Pam Spence in the '90's). Just as the BAA elected its third ever female president Janice McClean and Kemi Badenock becomes the fourth female Conservative leader, it's about time more women were accepted into high power roles both in industry and local community.

Clare brings new ideas, experience and skills to the FAS Council. Clare is also currently FAS website manager until a replacement is found. I'm sure Clare will steer the FAS Council in the right direction for the foreseeable future.

I wish Paul all the best for a great, but no doubt busy future.

**Michael Bryce
Editor**

In Memoriam: Dr. Michael Martin-Smith

From the Hull and East Riding Astronomical Society (HERAS)

It is with great sadness that we say farewell to our former president and very long-standing member Michael Martin-Smith, who passed away in October 2024.

Michael was the president of our society from 2010 until 2019.

Michael was a Doctor of Medicine and Physiology and had a special interest in space medicine. He was for 30 years a General Medical Practitioner and a lifelong amateur astronomer and promoter of space development. He was a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society, a member of the National Space Society, the Mars Society, and of the Planetary Society - as well as HERAS!

Michael was the author of 'Salto nello Spazio' and 'Man, Medicine and Space', plus several papers on astronautics given at International Astronautical Federation congresses, and over 60 articles translated into several languages, on space, astronomy, philosophy, and ancient Egypt. He had lectured on each subject for 25 years. He was a director of the Space Renaissance Initiative from 2008-2009.

Rest in peace, Michael. Your support for - and many contributions to - HERAS will be long remembered.

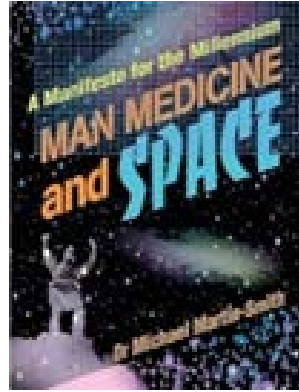


Image Above: Here is Michael meeting Dame Jocelyn Bell-Burnell in 2015.



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Our passion is to tell **everybody** about their Universe and its wonders! Come and explore the Universe with us!

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Welcome to our New FAS Council Members

John Stapleton: FAS Secretary

I transferred to Secondary School in September 1969, just two months after Apollo XI landed on the moon. Here I met another interested student who introduced me to the Torbay Astronomical Society of which I have been a member for over 50 years. During my time at school I achieved a self-taught extra-curricular O Level in Astronomy and co-founded the school Society which was run by pupils without Staff assistance.



I consider myself a protégé of J Hedley Robinson FRAS who founded the Torbay Society in 1956. At Torbay AS I held the post of Secretary on two occasions totalling 11 years service and was Chairman for 4 years. Whilst holding these offices, I arranged programmes of internal and external speakers, BAA out-of-London Section meetings hosted by the Society, exhibitions, public observing events and lectures as well as events for National Astronomy Weeks. I was also President of the Devon Association of Astronomical Societies for 2 years. On moving from the area I was made an Honorary Life Member of the TAS.

It was at Torbay that I first met and encouraged and mentored a young Grammar School student named Chris Lintott, who has taken over presenting the BBC Sky at Night programme following the death of Sir Patrick Moore and also directed the Galaxy Zoo website and is the current Gresham Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. I became a Primary School teacher and Adult Education lecturer in Astronomy.

Work brought me to Hampshire where I continued my teaching career and AE course, which is where I first met Guy Hurst. My first course in Basingstoke resulted in the founding of the Basingstoke Astronomical Society which now has over 60 members and is in its 21st year. I have been Chairman of that Society for 2 years and Secretary for 10 years. I am now Honorary Vice-President and a Life Member. Whilst at Basingstoke I also became a committee member of SAGAS and supported public observing events run by Jenny Shipway at the Winchester Science Centre.

I have delivered talks to other societies around the country as well as to the British Astronomical Association, University groups, schools, scout, and guide groups as well as the general public. I have written articles for local newspapers and Astronomy Now magazine and given radio and TV interviews. I have addressed audiences from 4-400 and shared the stage with my good friend Sir Patrick Moore.

I have recently returned to Devon and quickly took a committee post with the Torbay Society once again, this being my 54th year as an amateur astronomer. I am now serving my second term as Chairman of the Torbay Society and write a monthly night-sky article for the local community newspaper.

John Stapleton
Torbay Astronomical Society
<https://www.torbayastronomicalsociety.co.uk>

Dr Ray Palmer: FAS Vice President

Bachelor of Science degree with honours in Biological Sciences from Edinburgh Napier University postgraduate Masters degree in Forensic Science at the University of Strathclyde. PhD from The University of Lausanne, Switzerland.



Over 30 years as a Home Office Forensic Scientist, latterly specialising in the identification, analysis and comparison of questioned materials using advanced optical systems combined with UV, Visible and Infra-Red Spectroscopy. Prior to retiring in 2018, employed as assistant professor and programme leader in Forensic Science at Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK.

Ray has been interested in Astronomy since the late sixties and is an avid Astrophotographer.

Lives near Elgin, Morayshire, where he is a member of SIGMA – Moray's astronomy club, serving on its organising committee.

Dr Ray Palmer
SIGMA - Moray's Astronomy Club
<https://sigma-astro.co.uk>

FAS Council Members:

President:	Clare Lauwerys
Vice President:	Dr Ray Palmer
Secretary:	John Stapleton
Treasurer:	Pat McEvoy
Editor:	Michael Bryce
Website:	Shaun O'Dell
Diversity and Inclusion:	Vacant
Dark Skies Advisor:	Steve Tonkin
Meetings and Publicity:	Jerry Stone
Membership Secretary:	Vacant
International Liason:	Dr Jenny Shipway

What can National Astronomy Week do for you?

Clare Lawereys

Now, I know what you're thinking. Surely that title should be title should be "What are you doing for National Astronomy Week?"!

But it's still a far time away (**NAW is 1 – 9 February 2025**) and you may only just be thinking about it. Or you may only just be thinking about thinking about it.

You don't need me droning on about running star gazing events or holding talks during NAW. But if you've not run a public star gazing session for a while, this is a perfect opportunity.

NAW is producing resources you can use in your social media and there will also be a press release template you can adapt to let the local press know about both the week and what you're doing. All resources can be accessed via a shared drive at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pkY0NL7a3yYOfMqFgzc3Gb6NZLGWmPZ->

There may not be much there when you look, but it is being added to regularly so check back later. NAW is mostly being coordinated by volunteers (so you know what that means when it comes to time) and the funding that was secured to finance the coordinator role wasn't what we had initially hoped, so Jenny Shipway's time is limited. If you have a talent for creating graphics, we'd love to hear from you.

The website - <https://astronomyweek.org.uk/> already has an outline of what's going on and again this is something that is be added to. As well as the obvious stargazing, there is a new planetarium show called "Chasing the Moon". As NAW coincides with National Storytelling Week it will be presenting a new telling of the traditional story "The Sages of Chelm", by the fantastic professional storyteller Alastair Daniel of the Society for Storytelling.

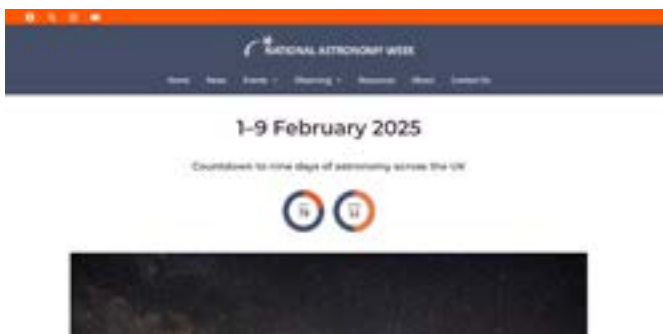


Image Above: NAW Home Page. If you do the maths, you can work out when Clare wrote this

There's a map - <https://astronomyweek.org.uk/event-map/> which will let people find activities.

It's drawing data from Go Stargazing, <https://gostargazing.co.uk/> so if you already have events there that are happening during the week, you don't need to do anything. If you don't have events there, it definitely helps people find you.



Image Above: Events map for National Astronomy Week.

If you don't normally run public events but have decided to just for NAW, you can send the bare details through the form on the NAW website and the Go Stargazing team will do the rest. You can find the form at <https://astronomyweek.org.uk/submit-your-event-for-national-astronomy-week/>

I know that many societies found Covid difficult, and some have struggled to bounce back, finding it hard to attract new members. Sadly, a couple of societies have closed this year due to a lack of interest and I'd hate that to happen to any more groups.

National Astronomy Week is a fabulous opportunity to let people in your area know you exist and find out more about what you do. My society does a lot of public events but this summer we met someone who didn't know astronomy clubs were a thing. It wasn't that he didn't know about us, the very concept of astronomy societies was a complete revelation to him.

I completely understand the growing challenges of organizing public observing events—finding a suitable location with the right amenities can be tough, and it often falls on the same few members to bring their telescopes, which can get exhausting over time. However, a successful event can be incredibly rewarding. If you've ever heard the "wows" from someone seeing a planet through a telescope for the very first time, you know what a buzz that is. You never know, you might just inspire tomorrow's scientists.



Image Left: Flying the flag for astronomy

Image credit: created with Image Creator on Microsoft Bing using Text to Image



Stratford-Upon-Avon Astronomical Society

The Stratford upon Avon Astronomical Society meets every first and third Tuesday at 8pm (doors open at 7.30pm) at Alderminster Village Hall. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners and those wanting to learn more. The first Tuesday is usually a club night, however in December it will be on the third Tuesday which is 17 December and the speaker will be with us on the first Tuesday - 3 December 2024. That will be Adam McMaster from the Open University with a talk called "Weird stars – a roundup of some of the more unusual type of stars". Please note that the speakers usually start quite promptly at 8pm.

Winter solstice, Sunsets and Sunrises

As you may be aware, the shortest day with the least number of hours of daylight in a day, is known as the winter solstice, and this year it will be on 21 December. Specifically it will be at 9.20 am, when the sun appears to reach its most southerly point, before starting its annual journey back north. We have a solstice due to the Earth's tilt of 23.5° compared to its orbit.

My father and grandfather used to say that the mornings kept getting darker until the New Year and the evenings were getting lighter well before Christmas, even though the solstice is always between the 20th and 23rd December. And they were right! The earliest sunset is 12 December at 15.53 GMT and the latest sunrise is 2 January at 08.16 GMT.

You may ask how can that be correct?

This is all to do with earth's elliptical orbit, meaning the planets 'positioning' is slightly out of line, compared to the sun. The elliptical

orbit also, just very slightly, alters earth's speed of rotation, again slightly changing the timings of sunrises and sunsets. By June, and the summer solstice, the sunrises and sunsets are aligned with the solstice.

Another effect of this is the Sun is only due south at 12.00 noon GMT ON 4 days in the whole year.

And not many people know that!

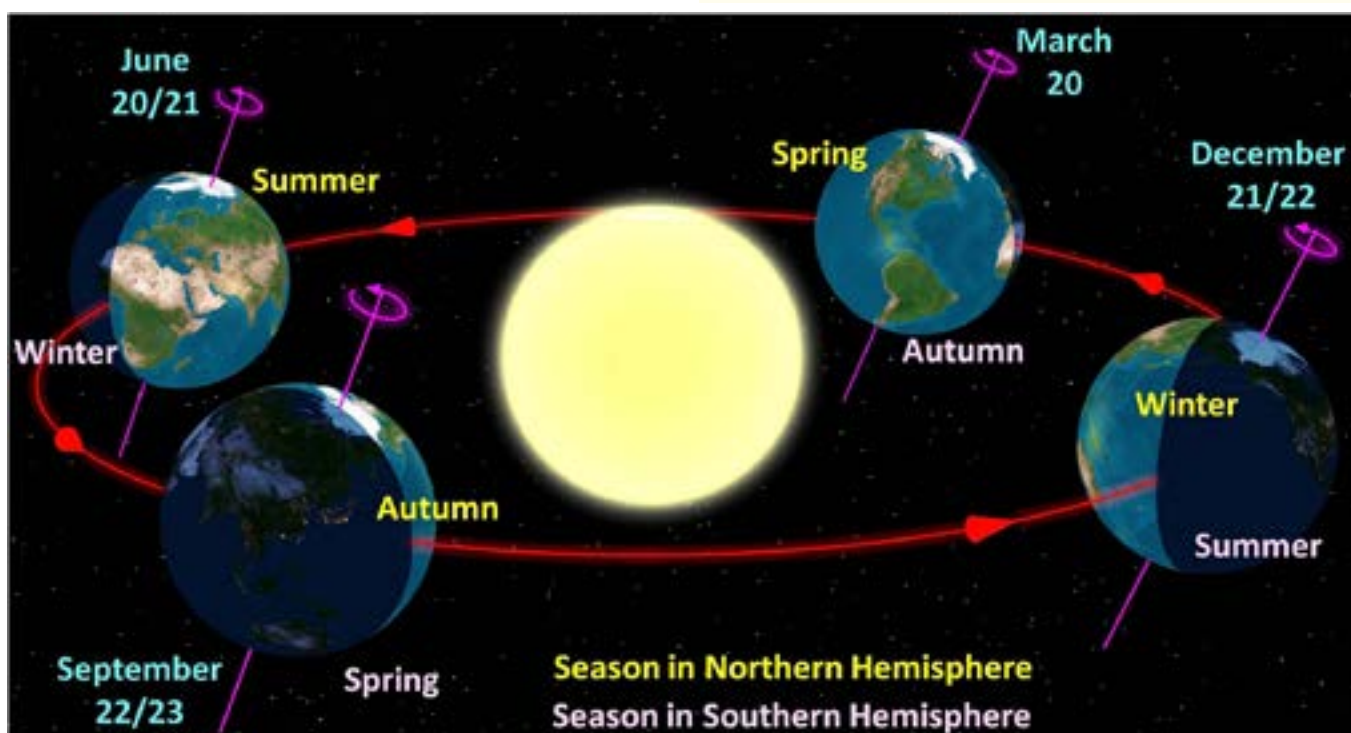
Club nights offer more information on what to look out for each month if it is clear we do some observing just outside the Village Hall, so please join us. There is no charge initially to come along and find out more, but if you do want to become a member then the fee is just £15 a year and it's free if you are in full time education. For more details go to the website <http://www.astro.org.uk> or contact the Chair John Waller john.waller@astro.org.uk or on 07703 192188.

Happy Observing!

Adrian Wakeham

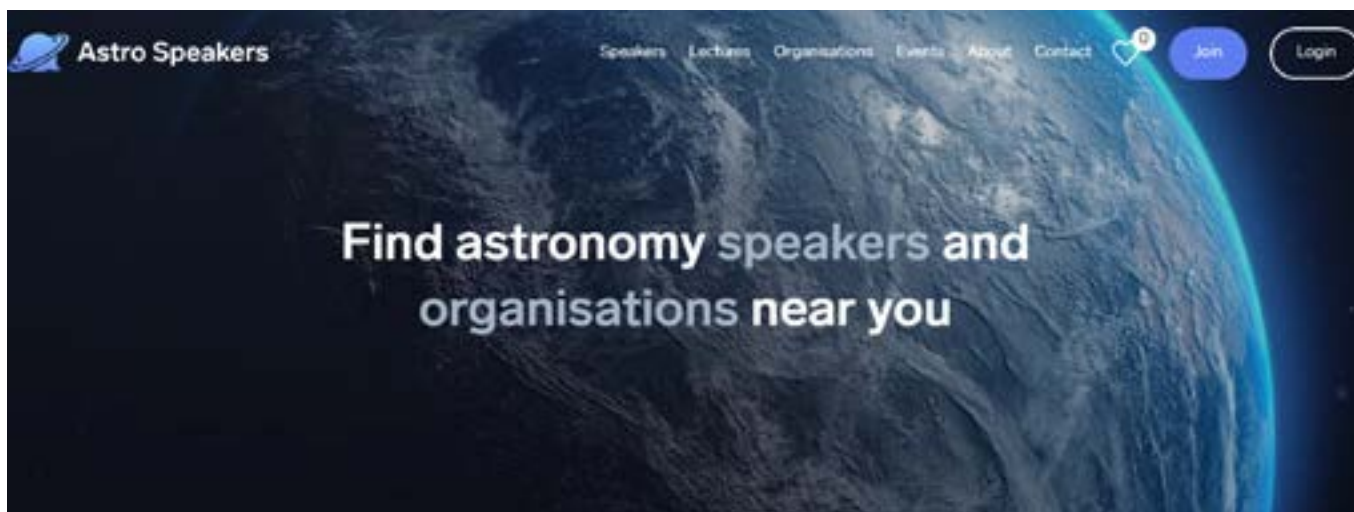
Image Below: The seasons with the transition points of the June solstice, September equinox, December solstice, and March equinox.

*Image Credit: Public Domain via Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_solstice*



Astro Speakers have a new website – new opportunities

Graham Winstanley



The new website has been made possible by partnering with Go Stargazing. The Go Stargazing website is already a well-established source of information on astronomy events and lectures around the UK that is regularly used by astronomers and those with a general interest in the subject. Neill Sanders, the owner of gostargazing.co.uk, has generously funded the design of the new website and personally completed the development work to get it working. Astro Speakers and Go Stargazing are two not-for-profit ventures run solely for the benefit of the UK Astronomy community.

Astro Speakers was launched by Graham Winstanley and Glyn de Lacy in 2015, initially with the support of about a dozen speakers. Glyn prepared an attractive and functional site and it has proved popular for societies to fill their lecture programmes and with speakers seeking engagements. Glyn acknowledges that his web skills are outdated, and we have been seeking volunteers to help for some time. Thanks are due to Glyn for the huge number of hours spent on building and maintaining the old website.

Go Stargazing have been active in promoting opportunities for anyone to attend stargazing experiences around the country at dark sky sites or local society observatories. Through this activity they have been approached by organisations such as hotels, camping sites, etc to supply contacts able to deliver a stargazing experience. Around the country there are many amateur astronomers already doing this through local societies. Astro Speakers would like them to join on our website as it is an opportunity for you or your club to be paid for your outreach.

Astro Speakers is here to help anyone engaged in astronomy outreach to contact their target audience. Also let Go

Stargazing know when you are speaking or running an event.

Many well-known amateur and professional astronomers are already members of Astro Speakers and just a few of the positive comments received are:

“I am happy to make a donation. You do a terrific job and I have had some great opportunities (including national TV) on the back of your site.”

“This is an excellent idea, long overdue and just what is needed for astronomy outreach. There has been a real gap in trying to connect those interested in giving talks/presentations etc with those who are looking for volunteers. I would encourage all those who regularly give talks to the public, societies and schools to sign-up to this excellent website.” By a past President of the RAS.

Graham Winstanley is Secretary of Lincoln Astronomical Society and the current Treasurer of the British Astronomical Association.

Graham Winstanley
Secretary, Astro Speakers
astrospeakers.org

Light Pollution: one amateur astronomer's approach

Lee Cooper

Light pollution is an issue on many levels. The impact on the environment, on plants and insects in particular, the impact on people, and the wastefulness of too much light in the wrong places are all reasons to do something about it. This article looks at one person's individual campaign to address the blight of night light on their cherished hobby of stargazing.

This amateur astronomer lives in Beverley, an East Yorkshire town, and observes the night sky from their mid-terrace back garden, and also from the grounds of Woodmansey Village Hall, the monthly meeting location for their club: East Riding Astronomers.

At home, the back gardens lead onto a busy road with high level (shaded) streetlamps. Beyond that is a light industrial estate with an array of floodlit buildings and storage areas. Between the lights and the gardens is a dense thicket of trees which, when in full leaf, provide a very effective barrier to light and sound. After the leaves fall, however, the lights are able to stream through so strongly that they cast sharp shadows on the backs of the houses.

There are four businesses in clear line of site from the rear garden, with several larger businesses in the distance. The nearer businesses all contribute to direct light trespass, while the further businesses add significantly to sky glow. It was these nearer local business that were tackled first.

At around the same time, the garden centre to the south of Woodmansey Village Hall started leaving their car park lights on all night.

With five businesses to convince, the initial approach was one of persuasion and information. Each of the businesses was contacted by email and provided with basic information on light pollution culled from Steve Tonkin's excellent talks on the topic. The opening statement was along the lines of "I'm sure that you are aware of Section 102 of the 2006 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005) which makes it a statutory offence to cause a light pollution nuisance? As a local resident I feel that your floodlights may be causing such a nuisance. Would you like to discuss this?"

The response in each case was yes. In several instances the discussions led to face to face meetings, but often it was a mix of phone calls and emails. Patience and politeness was required, as discussions dragged out over weeks and, in one case, months.

Three of the five "polluters" agreed to suitable mitigations through discussion with the local manager. They quickly realised that this was a real issue that could be solved easily to everyone's satisfaction. Where possible offending floodlights were pointed to the ground and when not needed they were turned off. In one instance a shield had to be fitted to restrict the light trespass from a powerful spotlight.

There was always the hint that escalation might be required, and it was necessary in the other two cases. The 'relatively' easier of the two cases was against the local garden centre in Woodmansey, affecting the Village Hall site used by East Riding Astronomers club. The issue here was that the car park was due south of the Club's observing site, and had 45 poorly designed lampposts, each with three daylight bulbs.

The problem started in October 2021, when the car parking lights were left on all night. Discussions and meetings with the site managers lasted several months. An appeal to the council was blocked as the Club is in the words of the local Environmental Health Officer team leader "not a local resident". We did not realise at the time that as a local amenity user we have a right to make a complaint. Eventually the local manager agreed to switch the lights off at 10pm, 4½hrs after the garden centre closes. This wasn't acceptable to us so we went to step 4 on our escalation list.

Steps 1 to 3 are speak to the local site manager, the most senior on-site manager/director, speak formally to the Local Authority. Step 4 is approach the owner of the business, or chairman of the board which is exactly what we did.

Our email to the chairman of the group that owned the business outlined our concerns, the possible reasonable concerns of other locals, our probable next step of contacting local media,

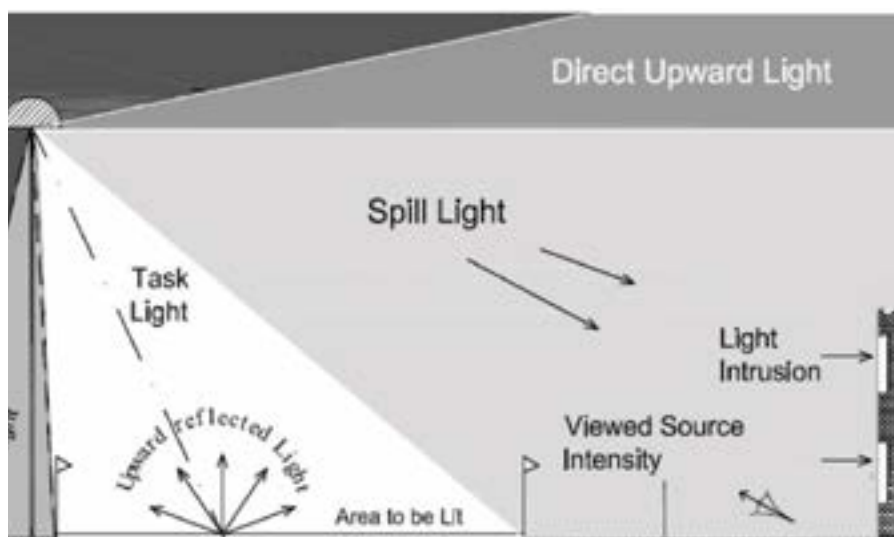


Figure 1: Most people think a floodlight is like a garden hose – it only waters what you point it at.

Source: Institution of Lighting Professionals (2011)

and cast doubts on the financial sense of paying for 135 bulbs to be lit all night, every night. Within a week the lights went off shortly after staff had left the site and this arrangement has been in place since early 2022.

Meanwhile, back in Beverley, the last case involved all of steps 1-4. The business was the local tyre fitters and the problem was the overnight illumination of the side of their 70m wide building following the repainting of the facade.

An appeal to the site manager was ignored. An appeal to the area general manager resulted in a visit and an apology that they wanted to show off the newly refurbished depot so couldn't help. A complaint to the council resulted in a visit by environmental health officers who were extremely reluctant to do anything other than suggest heavy duty blackout curtains as the light was reflected from the building and not direct.

The solution was to write to the owner directly on behalf of local residents, represented by an informal local resident group. The owner proved to be sympathetic to our cause and agreed that, providing it did not result in lost business, the illumination of the building would be switched off 30 mins after the staff left for the day.

Almost three years after these interventions the immediate locality is as dark as practicable. There remains the challenge of the local sky glow.

To address the issue of skyglow caused by other businesses that are out of sight requires a different approach.

Each business is being sent a general information pack on light pollution that focuses on the

proper use of floodlights. Businesses are asked to do what they can to reduce night light blight by adopting as many of the following steps as possible:

- a) Switch off lights when not needed;
- b) Point floodlights directly at the ground to reduce glare and light spill;
- c) Use warmer colour temperature lights when possible;

There will be some pushback on this. Managers will not want the expense of making adjustments. Staff may well feel uncomfortable as the site at night will appear dimmer even though visibility will be improved. The status quo will be hard to move away from.

To help each business individually a short note detailing particular issues or suggestions is added to the generic information. In one case pointing out that their low level floodlight probably interferes with drivers passing by their site.

More detailed information is available on our Club website, and a follow-up in a few months' time for some businesses may be necessary to improve the success rate of this approach.

It will be interesting to see if this information only approach has an impact on these businesses. If it does then it is readily scalable and cost effective, only requiring a few printed pages and a hand-delivered envelope to get the process started.

Conclusions

If light pollution is a problem for you then you can do something about it. You can approach the light polluter directly, personally, politely and persuasively to inform and convince.

A more stand-off approach is to send them an information pack to see if they get and understand the message.

A complaint to the council is unlikely to work, but should always be hinted at as a possible next step.

A reasoned argument to the head of the company has proven very effective, particularly if you use the phrases "compliant with corporate social responsibility" and "an opportunity to reduce costs".

Be prepared to compromise as others may have a reasonable need for light at night, but stand firm when it comes to light trespass.

For more information try our help with light pollution page on our society website.

Lee Cooper is a Member of East Riding Astronomers

eastridingastronomers.org.uk

Image Right: Badly positioned floodlights resulting in glare, skyglow, and light trespass. For drivers using this site at night glare represents a real safety hazard.

Image Credit: Curtesy Lee Cooper



Readers' Images

Bill McSorley

Latest images taken from my back garden mini-observatory

Image Right: Sharpless 101 - The Tulip Nebula in Cygnus. This image comprises data I collected in October last year, with additional data from October 2024 (a total of just over 18 hours total integration).

Sharpless 101 (Sh2-101) is a glowing cloud of interstellar gas and dust in the constellation of Cygnus. The Tulip Nebula itself is about 8,000 light years from Earth, and 70 light-years across in size.

Imaged with my ZWO ASI1600mm Pro cooled astro camera through a SharpStar 94EDPH Triplet refractor.

Image Below: NGC7380 - The Wizard Nebula in Cepheus. NGC7380 is actually the open cluster of young stars. It is the surrounding emission nebulosity that is known as the Wizard Nebula, and it is located at a distance of approximately 8500 light years away, in the Perseus Arm of our Milky Way.

Imaged using my SharpStar 94EDPH triplet with a ZWO ASI1600mm Pro cooled astro camera. This image is made from some data collected in October 2022 (approximately 6 hours of exposure), with an additional 12 hours captured over a couple of nights in September 2024 (18 hours total integration), processed in the SHO Hubble Palette.

Bill McSorley
West Yorkshire Astronomical Society





This Image: Barnard 343 - Dark Nebula within the Gamma Cygnus Complex.

Imaged over three nights in September 2024, using my SharpStar 61EDPH Triplet and ZWO ASI1600mm Pro camera. Around 15 hours total integration.



This Image: IC5068 - The Forsaken Nebula.

The neglected cousin of the nearby, more photogenic North America and Pelican nebulae. The nebula is a low emission nebula (composed of clouds of hydrogen gas) and is best known for the streaks of dark clouds that separate the hydrogen-colored regions, which also separate the nebula from its better-known neighbours. All are located around 1,600 light-years away in the constellation of Cygnus.

Imaged over 5 nights, end of September to the beginning of October 2024 (just over 16hrs of total integration).



Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society

Forthcoming Meetings

Our meetings are every Thursday at Mexborough Church Hall, S64 0ER. All of our weekly meetings are broadcast via Zoom as well as “live” in the meeting hall.

Tickets available at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/manage/collections/814679/events>

Meeting Programme December 2024 - January 2025

5 December

Maire Gorman: “Pretty aurora and dangerous flares”

12 December

Martin Braddock: “Astronaut Health in Space”

9 January

**Martin Hendry: Listening to Einstein’s Universe
The Dawn, and Exciting Future, of Gravitational-Wave Astronomy**

16 January

**Dr Susan Cartwright: Neutrinos and the mystery of the missing
antimatter**

23 January

Alex Hall: Exploring the Dark Universe with the Euclid Space Telescope

**Meetings held at St John’s Church Hall, 58A Church St,
Mexborough S64 0ER**

Web site: www.msas.org.uk



Forthcoming Meetings

10 January 2025

Dr. Julian Onions: Galaxies – One Gigayear at a time

What are galaxies, how are they classified, how are they formed,
What do we understand about their lives - and how many pretty pictures can I fit into one talk!

31 January

Peter Goodhew: Revealing the unseen Cosmos

In recent years there have been significant improvements in affordable amateur astrophotography technologies. This, combined with the advent of remote robotic telescope hosting at dark sites, has resulted in a step increase in the capabilities of amateurs to conduct scientific exploration of the cosmos. Amateur astronomers have been discovering literally hundreds of previously unknown cosmic objects. The majority of these are planetary nebulae, but supernova remnants, and other more mysterious objects are also being found. Peter will explain how such discoveries are made and illustrate the discovery process by way of a real-life case study. Deep amateur imaging is also revealing previously unknown features of well-known objects - and some examples of these will also be featured.

14 February

Family Space Night

If you want some fun for yourself or your children or grandchildren at the start of Half Term, then look no further than our Family Space Night! We are offering a brilliant evening which will include a beginner's guide to the night sky and displays about astronomy and space, We will have some hands on activities for the younger children from age 7 upwards. There will be plenty to occupy adults too!

28 February

Greg Smye-Rumsby: If Venus Had a Moon

The planet Venus is a fascinating world, a world that should by all accounts be a near twin of the Earth with continents and oceans undergoing seasonal changes and possessing a moon. However, the reality is very different. Its surface is completely blanketed by dense opaque cloud making observation of surface features impossible. Venus is not one of the planets favoured by most amateurs BUT what if it had a moon?

Meetings are held at Bredhurst Village Hall from 8:00 pm
Bredhurst Village Hall, Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, Gillingham, Kent ME7 3JZ

Dave Merrall
Press Secretary
Mid-Kent Astronomical Society

Please visit our website: www.midkentastro.org.uk/events



Hertford Astronomy Group

2024-25 Programme

(subject to change)

11 December

Jill Stuart: The governance of the "Final Frontier"

8 January

Martin Lewis: Planetary Imaging at the Edge

12 February

Quentin Stanley: The Art of (Computer) Modelling

12 March

Mike Foulkes: Eclipses

9 April

David Southwood: A Decade as an ESA Director

14 May

Jerry Stone: AGM followed by Is Pluto a Planet? - 15 years since New Horizons flyby.

11 June

Kevin Fong: Living on the Moon

Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held at:

University of Hertfordshire, Lindop Building
College Lane, AL10 9AB

Second Wednesday of the Month

More details at: hertsastro.org.uk

Loughton Astronomical Society

The Loughton Astronomical Society is the home of all things astronomical in West Essex. Guests are always welcome; just drop in to one of our Thursday meetings.

12 December

Malcolm Zack and Jonathan Daniels:

Winter Skies - A view of what can be seen in the night sky with binoculars and telescopes.

13 December

AstroKyds Junior Section

AstroKyds is the Junior section of the LAS - a gentle Christmas Quiz. 6:30pm at St Mary's Church Hall

Astrokyds is a group for young astronomers (6 - 14 years) run by some of the LAS members. Activities include simple experiments, audience participation, demonstrations, show and tell, quizzes, mythology of the constellations and, if clear, some real observing. We ask that a parent or carer stays with the child.

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Please visit: las-astro.org.uk

Baker Street Irregular Astronomers: Society Outreach Activities



Image Left: Solar Spectroscopy observing at the August meeting of the Baker Street Irregular Astronomers. Regent's Park hub London.

*Image Credit: Jack Martin
Huggins Spectroscopic Observatory
Baker Street Irregular Astronomers
member*

<https://www.bakerstreetastro.org>

Readers Images - Ray Palmer

Image Right: Joker Face Nebula (NGC6992)

Image Below: Iris Nebula

Images taken in the week up to 10 November. ESprit 120 APO refractor, with ASI 2600MC pro camera (Combined with Optolong L-Extreme Dual Narrowband filter for the Veil nebula) both Images approx 4hrs total integration, captured using SGPro and processed in Pixinsight.

Image Credit: Dr Ray Palmer FAS Vice President

Dr Ray Palmer
SIGMA - Moray's Astronomy Club
<https://sigma-astro.co.uk>

