

2018/2019 was a great year for Newbury Astronomy Society with two programmes for the Main and the Beginners Meetings with a more active Out Reach programme.

Once again Ann has done us proud with a varied and interesting programme with some of the leading experts in astronomy. Grant Miller (University of Oxford) got us off to a good start talking about the Zooniverse and the Rise of the Machines. I know a few of our members are active supporters of citizen science and hopefully this talk may have enthused a few more to join in. This was followed by two more practical talks on Beyond the Moon and Mars and Great Comets and Great Disappointments from Roger Dymock and Nick James. This time with no weather interference. Our first session before Christmas had some stunning images of Jupiter from Juno. We went back to the Hilton Hotel for Christmas festivities and Dr Allan Chapman kept us enthralled with a talk about Hubble. The man behind the name attached to the space telescope. For our second session our members helped us celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> years in space. We then had three talks on Interplanetary Migration of Humans to Mars, Big Computers, Little Galaxies and Space Weather: Defending the Earth from the Ravages of the Sun. All of these talks were given by professional astronomers who listened to what Ann said and kept it entertaining without too many equations. And then Winchester. What a great weekend, expertly organised by Ann and Alan (as always). And for our final two meetings two talk on very different subjects, When Galaxies Collide! and The Colour of Science: Hyperspectral Imaging for Astronomy. The main meetings are well attended and now we can get access to additional car parking space we have few problems.

The Beginners Meeting continues with its more relaxed feel to the meetings with a stronger focus on practical astronomy and we take every opportunity to observe, weather permitting. The variety of themes addressed is wide and this year included The Planet Mars, 10 Easy Eyepieces (and telescopes), Science Fiction and Science Fact, the Speed of Light, Picture This and Daytime Astronomy. We have tried to always ensure that these meetings are aimed at new astronomers with a strong practical bias to encourage everyone (of all ages) to get out there and observe. And as a special treat this year we have agreed to add another Beginners meeting.

We attended the New Scientist event at the Excel centre on the BAA stand. And as for last year it was a great success with lots of positive feedback.

Our outreach programme has gone from strength to strength as we have gained a great reputation for entertaining and informing the public. Tony Hersh's records of the number of events we support has increased significantly with Steve Harris, Peter Bendall, Julie and Chris Hooker helping and Nicky and Richard Fleet organising and doing the James Webb telescopes presentations to the local schools. I have to admit I still enjoy these events even if I have to clean fingerprints off the optics after each of these events. I am keen for us to publicise these events more and maybe encourage our members to attend and come along and chat.

We had to replace a lot of our electronic equipment this year but as we knew it was coming, we had planned for it. With the good news that our subscriptions do NOT have to increase this year.

We decided not to organise another summer outing as there was little enthusiasm for them.

I am sure I have not covered everything but of course none of this would be possible without the help of ALL the committee (and a lot of helpers) but I must add personal thanks to Richard and Nicky, Ann, David and Kath for making the organisation of events so easy. With huge help from Steve Harris who always does this with a smile and a friendly word. Chris Hooker for organising the RAL events. I would also like to thank Steve K for twitter, Chris Douglas and Mark for the web page and Peter to ensure we kept to our budget. Also the key work of Monica and Phoebe who did a great job of

keeping us fed and watered. I also would like to thank Tony Hersh and Alan Wyles for providing a really positive contribution. And especially for Julie who contributes and helps without a fanfare.

#### Beginners report 2018-19

We've had the usual 10 meetings at St Mary's Church Hall, Greenham every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, Sept to May – plus an extra meeting to be held on 19 June 2019

Average attendance – around 40 per meeting?

Many thanks to all those who have provided talks throughout the year – and thanks to those who have brought along telescopes on the rare occasion it's clear.

Thanks also to everyone who has helped out at meetings – putting out and stacking away chairs, helping with the tea/coffees in the kitchen and clearing up afterwards. Much appreciated.

Most of all – thanks to Steve Knight for (almost) unfailingly catering to the Beginner's unhealthy obsession with raspberry, strawberry, apple, custard and salted caramel doughnuts!