

Saturday 17th February 2018 – Seven Valley Country Park



Over 40 stargazers congregated in the tea room to devour the soup and roll provided. The dull skies did not seem to dampen any enthusiasm as Pete Williamson started the night with his well illustrated presentation on the joys of astronomy and what we might be able to see in the night sky. He outlined his work with education through the Faulkes telescope group. During the break we all shuffled outside to be greeted with dull low lying cloud, not sure what we were expecting to see but never mind. We returned inside, filled our cups with tea and coffee and settled down to listen to Steve Szwajkun discuss the progress from just being a stargazer to being an accomplished astronomer. We were treated to one of those lucky occasions when the clouds cleared and we could venture outside to put our new knowledge into practise. With the assistance of fellow SAS members Kev and Roger, die hard stargazers were treated to a number

of excellent views and sights found in the constellations of Orion and Taurus. As numbers dwindled we packed away vowing to return in the not so distant future.

Friday 27th October 2017 - Petton (transparency: 3)

The SAS continues its theme of 'pop-up' astronomy observing events by spending an evening at the request of residents of Petton in north Shropshire. The site was the elevated field next to St Raphael and St Isidor church. With clear views to the horizons the clear sky offered the opportunity for some good observing, for a change. The moon, 48% illuminated, provided the main target for the local stargazers, many who had not peered through a telescope. Although the damp sky hampered crystal clear views we spent time identifying the constellations and discussing their associated myths. The local congregation provided tea and cakes from the sanctuary of the church hall. I fear we will be back for more observing soon.



Saturday 23rd September 2017 - Rodington Village Hall



Why is it that cloudy skies tend to coincide with our monthly meetings? However, prepared as ever to entertain the 40 odd stargazers present, member Pete Williamson shared his work with I-telescope and the Faulkes robotic telescopes. He demonstrated what was possible with very little experience and input. Coupled with tea and biscuits and lots of chatter about astronomy and a telescope clinic members drifted away contented as ever. With a return to proper time (GMT) next month we might, just might, get the opportunity for some early evening observing. Here's hopping!

Saturday 19th August 2017 - Rodington Village Hall



Cloud cover greeted stargazers, new and hardened, to the August monthly meeting. However, as always we are prepared, member Kev Wildgoose treated the assembled group to his expertise and experience in observing and capturing solar system objects. It is always a difficult task as to which level to pitch such presentations. Kev must have got it right as he was occupied all night with questions and queries. Following a break for tea and biscuits small groups gathered for self-help chats with things like setting up scopes and the old chestnut about which one should I buy. With the tea bags running low the group drifted home to the usually clearing skies.

Saturday 17th June 2017 - Rodington Village Hall



Even as the summer solstice approaches, over 40 stargazers/astronomers turned up at Rodington. Many old faces mingled with *first timers* looking for the 'awe' and 'wonder' that the heavens have to offer. Local radio does reach out to people of Shropshire for which we are always thankful. Appropriate telescopes were set up to treat arriving guests the opportunity to count the sun spots. Armed with tea and coffee the assembled group were treated to an informative and entertaining presentation by member Michael Bourke entitled 'The 4th Dimension' where he explored and discussed the various calendars and their origins. More tea and coffee followed, this time with chocolate hobnobs, as we waited for the sky to darken. Excellent views of Jupiter and Saturn were on offer as we discussed the difference between constellations and asterisms - what with the summer triangle starting to show its self.

As it was getting late, this stargazer headed for home to leave the young ones to explore more. Next month is the summer social so get baking!

Saturday 20th May 2017 - Rodington Village Hall

As many as 50 members and interested stargazers turned out to a cloudy Rodington village hall to join our president, Megan Argo, award prizes to the winners in our annual photographic competition. The best in show was awarded to Kev Wildgoose for his image of Uranus. Megan followed this with an outline of her current research including analysing data from recent supernova data. This was followed by a presentation by vice chairman Steve Szwajkun on the importance of a stable mount for new telescope observers, including a review of what is available, depending on the depth of your pockets. After the mandatory tea and chocolate biscuits the



assembled stargazers split into various groups. Some seeking help setting up their telescopes while some seeking help fixing theirs. A number of members continued drinking, catching up on the latest images they had captured. A number set up their instruments outside to view Jupiter and the Galilean moons

Saturday 25th March 2017 - Rodington Village Hall

Marches monthly meeting was put back to the fourth Saturday to the benefit of the 40+ members and guests who turned out. Using SPA data, the scale of transparency was estimated to be 4! With clear skies from horizon to horizon, experienced members brought a number of large aperture instruments to view a range of deep sky objects. The remainder of the group made excellent use of binoculars that they brought with them, or used ones provided by the society, to seek out a range of open star clusters. First time stargazers were guided round the sky identifying the constellations with their key stars and learning the benefits of star hopping. Of particular interest was M45 (the Pleiades) and M42 (Orion Nebula) with Jupiter, although low in the sky, drawing some attention.

Saturday 21st January 2017 - Rodington Village Hall

Over 40 members and guest, some for the first time, turned out for the societies first meeting of the new year. However even with the new year, things still remain the same, with this part of Shropshire still shrouded in cloud. We are becoming experts at providing what we call 'cloudy night talks' where members share their expertise and interests. Member **Trevor Clifton**, entertained and informed the group with his venture into the dark art of radio astronomy. Coming from an electronics environment he showed us how he constructed the necessary equipment to collect, record and display radio signals from identifiable objects. Following a short refreshment break members broke up into small discussion groups mainly helping guests with their new, or possible dusty equipment

Saturday 5th November 2016 - Tern Hill Observatory

14 interested hardy individuals turned out to what was the first opportunity to seriously use, the newly installed telescope at the community centre at Turn Hill Army Camp. Previous attempts had been thwarted by the weather, which was kind on this occasion.

Using maps and guides Uranus was identified and the telescope quickly trained on the blue green blur in the southern skies. Tracking locked on the group took turns to view the ice giant some for the first time. The double star Beta Cigni also known as Albireo in the constellation of Cygnus, was the next target in the poor seeing. With a pair of binoculars, images of Andromeda (M31) and the Pleiades (M45) were compared with those seen through the scope. Lots of discussion followed, regarding which is better and what instrument should one purchase. With the cloud closing in the group dispersed contented that we had been able to view through the telescope at last.

