CADAS January 2018 meeting.

Our first meeting of 2018 and if all the others are as enjoyable as this one then we’re in for a good year!

Our main speaker was the inimitable Bob Mizon whose talk was on the pole stars of the planets starting with our own, for the time being at least, northern pole star Polaris. ‘For the time being’, because Earth’s precessional ‘wobble’ means that the poles slowly trace circles in the heavens. So Polaris was not always the northern pole star and will again stop being so in the far distant future.

Our pole star is not particularly bright, it is a close double star 130 light years away.

Bob then visited the other planets of the solar system and identified and described the pole stars of each. Not surprisingly, these varied in many respects although the Earth, Mercury, Venus Mars, Jupiter and the Dwarf planet Pluto all had poles pointing in the direction of the constellation Draconis. However Uranus’ north pole point to a star in Orion, Neptune’s points to one in Cygnus and Saturn doesn’t have a prominent pole star.

Bob ended by identifying the asterism of the ‘Polaris Engagement ring’ an attractive circle of stars including the pole star.

As entertaining and informative a talk as we’ve come to expect from Bob. Many thanks Mr M!!

After our refreshment break, Arthur Davis started with his reports of predicted ISS and Iridium flare sightings. These can be checked for on [www.heavens-above.com](http://www.heavens-above.com) An all-round useful website!

Arthur’s ‘Constellation of the Month’ was Auriga which is overhead at this time of year - it is one of our circumpolar constellations. Its brightest star is mag 0.6 Capella with a luminosity 160 times that of the sun. Notable deep sky objects in the constellation are M36,37 and 38 and it hosts 14 NGC objects. Thanks Arthur, for guidance on what to look for in this month’s constellation.

Bob’s ‘Object of the month’ was Canis Major. Bob highlighted M41 - a cluster of hot blue-white stars just 40 S of Sirius the ‘Dog star’. Also notable is the open cluster NGC 2362 which can be seen in binoculars. The ‘Thor’s Helmet’ nebula NGC 2359 is also in this constellation,

Despite the less than cooperative weather so far this winter, Bill Read was able to show some of his excellent work including a shot of the recent Mars/Jupiter conjunction (visible in the very early morning). Bill also had an image of Regulus with several faint galaxies visible and a nice image of the Double Cluster in Perseus. The star of this collection was a beautiful image Bill had captured of the comet PanSTARRS with its disrupted tail. A striking image. Great work Bill.

Ken Honour also shared over a dozen great images he’s taken over a period of time. These included a wide- field image of the Veil Nebula, and other nebulae such as the Skull, Pac Man, Helix, Flaming Star, Christmas tree and Crab and a number of galaxies. Let’s hope the weather improves for Bill, Ken and all other imagers!!!

We ended with Annabelle giving a brief talk on interesting rocks she had collected from various locations around and about.

What a full meeting, Thanks to Zena, Mike and Annabelle and all the volunteers who helped with clearing up. So good. ☺

Next month is our AGM. Our main talk is by Bill Read on ‘Misconceptions in Astronomy’. Now I wonder what those might be.

See you there on February 21st.