CADAS April 2018 meeting.

Even a rare sunny evening in April couldn’t dent our numbers at this meeting. Once again it was a full and varied programme kicked off by Bud Budzynski’s talk on rockets and rocketry. And what a presentation it was. With some great images, Bud took us thorough the history of ideas about travel in ‘space’ and the development and principles of rocket propulsion. I can’t honestly say we can now call ourselves ‘rocket scientists’, but we are certainly clearer about how difficult and complex rocketry can be. It was also interesting to hear about the contributions of some of the key individuals in the development of rockets. What a great talk. Many thanks Bud.

We then broke for tea and cakes, provided as usual by the wonderful Zena Morgan and her team and as usual it was our much valued time for chat.

After our refreshment break, Bob Mizon presented his ‘Object of the month’ which, this time, was the second largest of the constellations, Virgo - known to the Babylonnians as a goddess- and which is associated with fertility and plenty. Bob discussed a number of key stars like Spica, and the nice double star Porrima. Bob also described the huge Virgo cluster of galaxies which included well known M 87. Also picked out were magnitude 12.5 quasar 3C273 (Virgo) and pulsar PSR B1257 +12 around which the first extra-solar planet was discovered. Nice choice for the month Bob. Many thanks.

Arthur Davis’ constellation of the month was Ursa Major –the third largest of the constellations- with its well known asterism ‘The Plough’ whose alpha and beta stars form a guide to Polaris. Arthur identified the many Messier objects in this constellation like M40, 81, 82, 97,101,102, 109. In 1650 Mizar was found to be a double star and a nice double it is. Many thanks Arthur for this monthly treat.

Jan Wrightson treated us to her fine images of M16, the Eagle Nebula, as well as M26 and NGC 7000 the North American nebula in Cygnus which she had taken with a 300mm camera lens! She had also captured a great image of NGC7331 in Pegasus. It is always a treat to see Jan’s images and given our rubbish skies recently we were lucky that she was able to capture these outside the UK’s dismal skies. Thanks again Jan.

Our final treat was from Terry Evans who’s southern hemisphere images were captured remotely from his base in the UK. We seldom see images from ‘down under’ so this was a rare treat indeed.

And what excellent images they were. There was IC 4662 a blue complex galaxy, the beautiful ‘Jewel Box’ cluster in Crux. and the second largest and second brightest globular cluster in the skies, the amazing NGC 104 in Tucanae in H alpha and the Eta Carinae Homunculus Nebula. As if this wasn’t enough, we also saw great images taken from Australia of Jupiter, Saturn, the moon and Mars (complete with south Polar Cap). What an unexpected treat to see these great images. Our thanks to Terry for this feast. What a way to end the evening.

So, all in all a full and varied meeting much enjoyed by us all.

Next month we have the welcome return of David Strange whose talk is ‘Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven…the oldest story ever told’. Hope you can make it!!