

'Twas a Dark and Stormy Night... but that didn't deter a good hardy brood of CADAS members from coming to the annual pre-Christmas social! Before the main event though, we had a small number of reports.

Peter, Paul and Terry had been to Manor Court Primary on Wednesday 4th December when the sky had (miraculously) been as clear as a bell. The children had enjoyed views of the Moon, Albireo and the Pleiades through the visual telescopes and images of the Ring, Dumbell and Andromeda nebulae with Peter's camera rig. We received lots of thank you notes from the class which showed we'd at least managed to enthuse some of them!

There will be further outreach events on the 31st of January at Ham Hill and 4th February at Ash Primary school. We're also looking to do another at Redstart school in Chard in early February as well. Volunteers will be required but it's really easy and the kids are very well behaved and very grateful.

At a slightly different level of outreach, Bud reported on a visit to HM Prison Ashfield. This talk was on rockets and rocketry, so we hope that it won't be used as inspiration for practical experimentation!

Terry reported on progress digitising Arthur Davies's collection of slides. About 1200 slides have been scanned and include images of a large number of astronomical objects along with those of a variety of observatories and telescopes. We also have Arthur's old Tektronix oscilloscope which is available for any member who needs it for a project. It will be especially useful for anyone setting up the little encoders that the like of Meade use.

We followed this with a number of short talks. Bob looked forward to some of the winter constellations. Ron highlighted the dangers of increasing space junk to existing spacecraft, manned missions and (not least) to the future of land based astro-imaging. Terry had a short talk on some of the (less contentious, perhaps) Celtic constellations.

The main event this month was the half time food. Thanks to all those that contributed and, especially, to those that prepared and cleared up afterwards. It gets done quietly and diligently every month and we all appreciate the hard work done. The meetings would not be the same without their efforts.

After the repast, we had images from new (old) member Matthew Bayliss. Matthew was a member before university some 10 years ago and showed us some pictures of his astro-photography setup. I hope that we'll have some of Matthew's astro images in months to come. Gordon had a couple of images from both the UK and via the net from New Mexico. Finally Terry did a quick review of the astronomical highlights of 2019 including the NLC's and lunar eclipse of high summer (where did that go!), the hide-and-seek transit of Mercury in November and the current passage of interstellar comet Borisov around the sun.

Next month's meeting will be on Developments in Radio Astronomy given by Paul Spurr from Weymouth AS on Wednesday January 15th (2020!),