

CADAS Chairman's Report 2019

Firstly, I want to thank the committee and, especially, the “backroom staff” of kitchen helpers and those that set up and tear down before and after each meeting. The meetings are always great but none of it would happen without all of those unsung helpers.

The meeting talks were hugely varied and interesting as ever. Thanks to Bob for setting up such an interesting set of speakers for. As a reminder, we had talks on Lunar Geology, Saturn and the Herschels. We also had a really professional talk on Dynamic Skies (with those GAIA animations) from Will Gater (who was a late stand-in for Prof Chris Lintott who should be with us in April). Also thanks for those that contributed to the Panel and Gismos evenings.

We've carried out a number of “outreach” events over the past year (or at least tried to!). The session at Manor Court in early December was during the only 2 hour break in the clouds for weeks and the children managed views of the moon and some clusters as well as images of a number of deep-sky objects in Pete's camera. Not so lucky for Ham Hill on 31st January which was completely clouded out. We still had about 30 people come to the Ranger Station though and I'm in contact with a number of people about having a session on setting up a simple equatorial telescope. Ash school in early February was a hide-and-seek event where we did manage to see the moon and Venus, albeit briefly. At least everyone managed to see something. Not so for Redstart School on the 13th though. A clear afternoon turned into 10/10 cloud as soon as we started to set up. The organisation at the school was very good though and there were plenty of other activities for parents and children including Pete's slide show of interesting objects. Thanks to Peter, Paul, Martyn and Ken for supporting these sessions. It's not particularly onerous and if anyone would be able to help in the coming winter, then please let me know.

We're already starting to organise for the autumn and we're already looking to have a session on Ham Hill on November 20th which will feature Saturn, Jupiter and Mars just after opposition

Sadly, 2019 also saw what is probably the last appearance at our meetings of Arthur Davies, who has been a huge support and contributor to the club over its entire lifetime. Arthur has unfortunately not been well and has had to go into a nursing home, first in Chard and now in Berkhamstead. I have his new address and phone number. His house in Middle Chinnock has been sold and he has gifted all his astronomy gear and his Observatory to the club. A lot of his gear has already been distributed and I've taken on his slide collection and scanned in about 1300 of his slides which he used for his monthly talks. We weren't able to make use of his observatory in the time that fitted with the sale of the house and have sold this on to an astronomer in the South East Kent Astronomical Society. I'd like to try to express our thanks to Arthur for all his work over the years and his very kind support for the club which should see it on a very firm footing for the future.

Looking forward to the coming year, Bob has arranged another varied programme which should have something for everyone astronomy inclined. We're looking to have a few more outreach sessions in the coming autumn and winter and would welcome any suggestions of how we could engage with the general public.

The financial position – especially after Arthur's gifts – is reasonably solid and the committee will be looking into how we can improve the meetings (though, to be honest, they already run pretty well). One thing I'd like to do is to improve the website and have a proper way of communicating with members regarding any news and changes, etc.

Finally, I started taking on Ron's job with a fair bit of trepidation. It has, however, been a really enjoyable experience. I'd like to thank Ron again for all his support - both initially and ongoing – which had helped me an incredible amount.