

The meeting of 18th August was attended by 21 people which is fairly typical of August meetings in the past. Perhaps we are seeing some signs of normality!

Further normality is promised by the return to Ordinary meetings starting in October when we expect the Kitchen will be back open for teas and Zena's famed carrot cake!

The schedule for the rest of 2021 is :

September 15th - (last) Informal meeting

October 20th – Mark Radice, Observing and Imaging the Planets

November 17th - Steve Tonkin, How Old is the Universe?.

December 15th – Members' short talks and Social

The meeting started with another set of Lockdown images:

Jan showed some images of some sunspots (which have been rare in this solar minimum) and some very nice ones of Comet Neowise including a really nice one of the comet and come NLCs.

Ken had deep sky images of a number of galaxies and nebulae including the Spider Nebula (IC417 – I had to look it up!) which was a new one for me at least.

Gordon gave us more narrowband and RGB colour images including planetaries NGC40 and NGC2359 – Thor's helmet.

Bud regaled us with his very sharp images of the lunar surface showing the difference between the rough highlands and the smooth lava plains.

Terry showed some images taken from his remote telescope in Australia including Comet Swan (much fainter than Neowise) and some animations of Jupiter, Saturn & the Seeliger effect and Neptune.

The main talk of the evening was given by Terry and entitled Recent Variations of NGC6729. HGC6729 is a variable nebula in the southern sky and the talk covered where it is, how it was observed and how the variations occur. The 66 day odd cycle was described with images of the nebula in its outburst, recession and quiescent phases. An animation of the 3 cycles of variation during 2021 (this far) was shown and a paper should be coming out (lead authored by Grant Privett) in the BAA Journal at the end of the year.

In the interval a few tests were made of the 4G speed at the hall. Disappointingly, these only produced speeds of about 1.5 Mbps which will not be fast enough for a Zoom (or similar) video connection. It is a great pity that the hall does not have wi-fi like many similar village halls these days.

We discussed the possibility of running an open observing session (or maybe sessions) during the Autumn. These would (obviously) be outside and would involve very little Covid risk. Locations were discussed and Bud will have a word with the hall committee to see if it would be possible to set

up telescopes either on the veranda or in the field. Terry will also send e-mails to the schools we have been assisting over the years just to say "we're still here!"

A short discussion followed on commemorating Arthur Davies. Terry undertook to do a short talk in December based on Arthur's slide collection (which has largely been scanned to jpg files).

The meeting's attention was drawn to the Levels Stargazers' virtual meeting on Wednesday 25th - when Bob Mizon will be talking on Comets in History – and to the current outburst of recurrent nova RS Ophiuchi. This only happens every 15 years and it is fading but should still be visible in binoculars.

The September meeting will be another informal meeting and if you have any contributions you would like to make or any agenda points then please e-mail either Terry or Bud (addresses are on the Home page).