

The December meeting was our Solstice Social with no external speaker. However, we did have the 2nd annual Arthur Davis talk given by Terry and illustrated using slides digitised from Arthur's copious collection. This year's talk was on the Iceland annular eclipse which occurred on May 31st 2003. This eclipse was unusual in having a very short centre line which was entirely within Iceland. However, because of the very shallow angle of the Moon's shadow on the Earth, annularity still lasted over 3½ minutes. Arthur had some very pretty slides of the partial and annular phases, including one with a very fortuitous 2nd image of the sun probably caused by an internal reflection in the camera.

Terry then showed some images of Jupiter changing size over the current apparition, the recent occultation of Mars by the moon and some of comet 29P Schwassmann-Wachmann which had an outburst in late November.

He finished his stint with a look ahead at some upcoming events and these are attached at the end of this report.

New this year was a light hearted quiz ably put together by Bud and Viv. Some of the questions had only a very tenuous link to astronomy (eg John McEnroe's link to a bright star!) but no less entertaining (or easy) for that. Many thanks to both for putting that together.

Ken followed with some images of northern hemisphere winter objects including some fairly tricky subjects like the Wizard Nebula. He also showed some images which had Jupiter but also a fairly faint "ghost" which went away after a time. It was probably an internal reflection (of Jupiter) of some kind but it was odd that it went away. Not a new planet, though (probably:-).

Bud had some planetary images including a very nice sequence of the Great Red Spot moving slowly across the face of Jupiter and some of Mars which he noted were not as good as the previous apparition 2 years ago. Astronomy Now have accepted his Ladder Scope article which may be in the February edition.

Following this we fell hungrily onto the "bring and share" food and made a good impression on it all. Many thanks to everyone for their contributions. During all this, Winter Solstice passed at 21:48 so the nights are getting shorter already!

The next meeting will be on Jan 18 (2023!) where Claire Davies will talk on the subject "Flip it and reverse it: disruption in young planetary systems".

Upcoming Events

Venus and Mercury low in the evening sky

Mercury above and left of Venus at the moment

Moon nearby on 24th and 25th

Venus will climb and be very near Mercury 27th to 30th December

After this Mercury will be below and right of Venus

Probably too low after 4th January 2023.

All the planets visible in the evening sky

Venus meets Saturn 22nd January

Possible Naked-eye Comet

C/2022 E3 ZTF

Currently in Corona Borealis but will track north into Draco by late January

Perihelion January 12th

Closest approach 1st February

Currently morning object rising at 2am

Just visible but very low at around 18:00

Becomes circumpolar by mid January