

The May meeting was rather overshadowed by the recent sudden death of Bob Mizon who has been a stalwart of the society since its earliest days. He was a passionate advocate for dark skies and supported astronomical Societies all over the country. He was a fixture of all of our meetings for many years with talks on some obscure corners of astronomy as well as his monthly objects to see. His last talk had been in February on Wasat (Delta Geminorum) which was the background to the discovery of Pluto.

A number of members passed on their recollections of Bob and it was noted that his funeral will be on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May 11am at Poole Crematorium. There is an obituary at <https://www.darksky.org/remembering-robert-edward-bob-mizon-mbe-fras-1946-2023/>.

We welcomed Nick O'Donnell to the meeting as the chair of the South Somerset Astronomical Society. Coincidentally, Nick has just been elected as Mayor of Taunton so congratulations to him (though his chain of office was noticeably missing :-). Nick joined Bud, Ken and Gordon at the front for our Ask the Panel session. A number of questions had been sent in from Jim and John (thanks for the notice which allowed the panel to be set the appropriate homework!) but – as ever – there were a number of questions from the floor.

The questions were wide ranging and included:

- The effect of celestial bodies on our weather,
- Rotation of the Galilean moons of Jupiter,
- Where accurate information on JWST discoveries can be found (ie not YouTube),
- The Milankovitch Cycles (top marks for Ken's homework here!),
- Coronal Mass Ejections,
- And what are our favourite references and websites.

Thanks to the panel for their quick and thorough responses to such a wide range of topics.

After the break, Nick went through the plan to add Halley's comet to the Solar System model currently on the Taunton to Bridgwater canal. The current model gives a good impression of the relative distances between the planets (especially the outer ones) but adding Haley's comet would give an impression of the relative time scales involved in astronomy. We all wish Nick the best of success with getting funding for the model and seeing Halley do its very slow progress in from the County Ground to Maunder's Lock!

Terry had some images including the "world preview" of the latest NGC6729 movie showing a full outburst over the past month and the recent passage of Pluto through its stationary point & the start of its westward movement to opposition. Gordon has been doing some re-processing of some old data and has managed to extract a wealth of detail from these images.

Terry concluded with what to expect over the next month (see below) including details of June's meeting talk which will be done by Jo Richardson on the Dark Skies of Exmoor.

# Upcoming Events

## Next Meeting

Jun 21 Jo Richardson Dark skies of Exmoor

## Planets

Venus at its best in the evening sky and sets after midnight BST  
Twilight will start catching up over the month and it will be low by our next meeting

Moon near on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> May

Mars moving past Pollux and Castor

Already in Cancer. Goes through M44 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Venus near M44 on 13<sup>th</sup> June but will be low and probably need binoculars

Venus will chase Mars but not quite catch up

Saturn still low in the morning sky but will get better as the month progresses

Jupiter just up by mid June

## Other phenomena

No full darkness from 24<sup>th</sup> May until 29<sup>th</sup> July ☹️

Noctilucent cloud season will start soon 😊

Passes of ISS visible all night