

Meeting report 21st June 2023

Since our last meeting, the funeral of founder member Bob Mizon has taken place. Bud and Viv gave a report of the celebration of his life and some of the (hitherto unknown to us:-) early life in his long hair days! Bob's leaving us has left holes in many astronomical societies and it will be a real struggle for us all to try to fill his shoes.

It was a return welcome to Jo Richardson, our main speaker for this meeting (who worked closely with Bob over the years). The title of the talk was "Night of a Thousand Stars" which covered the opportunities given by the Exmoor Dark Sky Reserve. In her usual entertaining style, honed on hundreds of children over the last decade, she ran through the history of the Exmoor Reserve and the proliferation of other Dark Sky areas throughout the British Isles. The Dark Sky reserve has, at worst, Bortle 3 skies with a Bortle 1 central Core. These are some of the darkest skies in the world.

She concentrated on and described some of the best dark sky sites in the National Park, though only some of are in the Core. Many of these are easily accessible (some even with toilets!) though some *are* at the end of muddy tracks! She also showed a film of the relatively new Dark Sky Discovery Trail which looks like worth a visit. The Park also runs a Dark Sky Festival each year at the end of October which now has over 100 events of all kinds to attract new visitors to the area. Jo also described her work in training up businesses to be able to support visitors looking for dark skies and what they should be able to see. All in all an excellent description of the truly dark skies available on our doorstep.

Further details are on the National Park website at:

<https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing>

<https://exmoorwalks.org/darksky>

<https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing/astronomy-advice>

The last of these has a downloadable guide (written by Jo) aimed at astronomers.

After the break, Stuart Davis noted that we **do** have a Facebook presence at, Not unsurprisingly, "Crewkerne and District Astronomical Society". At present, this appears as a "one person" page, rather than a group so look for it through the main search bar rather than the Groups search bar. Stuart has been putting some content on but more would be welcome. Please contact him at Stuart stuartmdavis at aol dot com . [Usual decoding – change "dot" to "." and "at" to "@" to give his e-mail address].

Stuart then showed some of his lunar images taken with a phone camera through his telescope eyepiece. Considering the equipment, these showed some quite high resolution on the moon.

Ken had some images with the highlight being one of M101 showing the recent supernova SN 2023ixf in one of the spiral arms.

Terry showed a composite image of the passage of Mars past M44 earlier in the month and some planetary images from Australia. There was also a sequence of NGC6729 which has just gone through a very unusual secondary outburst overlapping with a new (ongoing) primary outburst.

Coincidentally, there's a very nice image of the NGC6729 area in Thursday's APOD at <https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap230622.html> . NGC6729 itself is the small fan shaped white area top right of centre.

We agreed that we would do an outreach session on Thursday 24th November at St Margaret's School in Tintinhull. Terry will get back to the school to confirm.

The speaker for July's meeting is currently unconfirmed but details will go up on the website (cadas.net) when things are confirmed.