

For the July meeting we were delighted to have a talk from British Astronomical Association archivist John Chuter. He took on the position within the BAA when they were moving house out of their long standing office at Burlington House, off Piccadilly in London. John described the task of moving all of the archives to two different locations, one in South London and the other in Bedford.

Part of the move to Max Communication in South London is to digitise as much of the archive as possible and some of this has been done and a website produced. This is available to BAA members and has a number of documents for download.

The archives contain a number of interesting collections of handbooks and John showed some examples of the fine work that has been carried out by amateur astronomers since 1890 when the BAA was formed. One interesting set was of the total solar eclipse of 1898 seen in India. This is in the same sequence of eclipses (saros 139) as the recent eclipse over Mexico and the US in April 2024. Digitisation even showed up some background detail that was invisible to the naked eye.

He finished with some video of Patrick Moore at a Transit of Venus which is also in the archive collection. It was interesting to see so many Sky At Night faces along with many amateurs that had come to his house for the day.

All in all, a very interesting talk and we would love to welcome John back again in the near future.

After the break, we had short presentations from Bud, Ken and Terry. Bud gave us an update on his famed "ladder-scope" project which has (finally:-) got to the point where decent images are being produced. He showed us the latest (mark VII, or is it mark VIII) incarnation of the scope with electric focus and collimation. He also had some very impressive new images of his favourite object, the moon. Lots of detail in the images of some craters and that was on a night of only moderate seeing. We look forward to seeing how the scope performs on a good night.

Ken showed a number of colour images of objects that are visible in the northern sky at the moment while Terry had a few from the Australian sky along with simple tripod images of the recent conjunction of Jupiter and Mars.

Terry finished off the evening with some upcoming events (see below). Next month's meeting is on 18th September and will be the Observing Evening (weather permitting, of course) preceded by the "Gadgets and Gizmos" show and tell session. Please let Terry know of anything you would like to present at that session. A simple talk of around 10 minutes, please.

Upcoming Events

Planets

Venus continues to be very low at evening twilight but might be visible with a clear western horizon

Mercury visible in the morning at the start of September 05:30-06:00

Saturn will be at opposition on September 8th. Risen by the time it gets dark (22:00)

Jupiter and Mars still close together in Taurus. Mars will move into Gemini by early September.

Uranus near the Pleiades

Neptune west of Saturn in Pisces

Comets

Comet 2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) hiding near the sun and goes through perihelion late September after which it could be visible in the evening from mid October

Upcoming Meetings

Sep 18 Gadgets and Gizmos Evening followed by Observing Session

Oct 16 Adrian Dening Portable Astroimaging

Nov 20 Brian Fraser Unmanned Lunar Landings

Dec 18 Christmas Social and members' short talks