



Galloway Forest Astronomical Society

Newsletter #21, February 2017

Cloudy members' meet at the tennis club

Observing conditions so far this winter have been really poor – it seems we only have to organise a meet for the low pressure areas to start queuing up on us. We didn't get a single clear evening in the week 12th-17th January so, although a few members went along to the tennis club on the 17th, we'll have to try that one again later on this month, see below!

Members' meet at the tennis club, 2nd edition

We have organised another bite at the tennis club cherry for the weekend of Friday 24th-Sunday 26th February, date and time to be advised depending on the weather. Our targets are multiple stars such as the Mizar/Alcor double in Ursa Major (which, amazingly, actually comprises six stars), galaxies again, and, with any luck, some shooting stars from the delta-Leonid meteor shower.

See <http://earthsky.org/brightest-stars/mizar-and-alcor-the-horse-and-rider>

This meet will also give us a better idea of the observing potential of the tennis club site. It's not perfect but it may be quite usable, very easily accessed by young members and will in time have decent meeting facilities once the clubhouse refurbishment is carried out.



Visit to the SDSO, Wednesday 15th March

We hope to have a guided group visit to the Scottish Dark Skies Observatory on the evening of Wednesday 15th March. Small groups pay the individual visitors' fees: £15.00 adult and £10.00 concession, but there is a reduction for larger groups. We'd like to share transport to keep the travel costs down and to minimise the risk of cars getting lost in the dark in the Craigmillar wilderness (NB – avoid SatNav at all costs). If you would like to join in, email us soon and we'll organise the visit to suit the number of participants.

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere is to be the setting for the first-ever International Dark Sky Park conference to be held in Europe. The event, from 20-22 September 2017, will bring together some of the world's top dark-sky experts with the aim of promoting rural development, tourism and tackling light pollution issues. The conference is being organized by Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, the International Dark Sky Association and Forest Enterprise Scotland, which manages the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park.

We are working on what presence GFAS might have at this high-level event.

See <http://darksky.org/ida-co-sponsors-major-international-dark-skies-conference/>



Committee change

Neil Park has stepped down from the management committee but is keeping on his voluntary work with the society's website. The committee extends its thanks for all his work for us since 2011 and for his continuing support.

2016-2017 Subs now *seriously* overdue

Adult and/or family members who have not yet paid their subscription fee for 2016-2017 are asked to pay up now!