

Aylesbury Astronomical Society

Chairman's Summary of the Year 2008 to 2009 (Peter Gillespy)

I will run through a brief list of the activities of the society and of members of the society for the previous year.

Monthly Talks

As ever we have had a mixture through the year, some talks being presented by external speakers and some by society member.

- June A talk on the mythology behind some of the better know constellations presented by myself followed by Thomas on the History of the rocket
- July BBQ – wash out bar a few hardy members turned up
- August Thomas started the evening with a short talk on how GPS works followed by Dr Alan Chapman on Thomas Harriot
- September A member from SW Herts came and gave a talk on short notice.
- October The Terry and Ralph show. An intro to their equipment and observing including a brief look at the software they use to navigate around the heavens.
- November Dr Katherine Gunn on New Perspectives on the Early Universe using Supercomputers and cutting-edge Technology
- December Annual quiz held here with our normal visitors from the South West Herts. Society based in Rickmansworth
- January 2 talks, a shorter one by myself on Extra Solar Planets discovered to date followed by Ian MacDonald on the IBEX missions
- February Cancelled due to snow
- March Stephen Wollers from the OU on Near Earth Asteroids
- April Discussion session on observing equipment

As you can see from the above, we had a varied set of talks. I would like to thank Thomas in particular as he has prepared and presented more talks than anyone else. Thomas is in the lower sixth and will be heading to university in just over a year's time so will need people to come forwards to fill the gap when he leaves.

Open day

We held an open day here in the Scout hut last summer which was a bit of a disappointment as very few members of the public came. If the mountain will not come to Mohammed then Mohammed will go to the mountain so we will be holding a society open day in Friar's square this Saturday coming Saturday (the 16th) in the area outside where Woolworths used to be.

Bulletin

Peter Biswell has been producing the monthly newsletter or bulletin for many years; I believe about 14 to 15. He has indicated his desire to stand down and we need someone to take this on.

Annual Trip

A group of members visited the Royal Observatory at Greenwich on a very hot day. I believe we all enjoyed the experience and I would a visit if you have not been. If you do beware of the prices for food and drink, they are a bit steep.

Visits and External Talks

We have had 5 or 6 groups of people visit our observatory site for a tour, talk and look through the telescopes. These include cubs, Scouts, and the pony club amongst others. The weather was not kind last year and I do not think any of the groups actually got to see much.

If anyone knows of any group who would be interested in visit let them know so they can contact us to arrange a suitable date. We do not charge for the evening, but a donation to society funds is always welcome.

Ian gave a talk to the National Woman's Register on the solar system which was well received.

More recently Thomas and I visited the SW Herts society and presented on Pluto and the Space Shuttle in reciprocation for the talk they gave in September. We hope to maintain this contact in this and coming years.

Upper Winchendon Site

We now have a good lawnmower and 2 decent petrol strimmers / brush cutters up at the site to help us keep it in order.

We have started a process of renovating the inside of the dome building bit by bit. The small front room has been cleared and is in the process of being painted with the intention of making it a bit more pleasant for the toilet we now have on site.

More on this later.