

sharing the same sky

SAGAS

Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies

SAGAS OFFLINE

The Quarterly Newsletter for SAGAS Societies

Issue 4 January ~ April 2010

Happy New Year to all our readers and many thanks to all who have submitted a copy of a society magazine, it has been good to read what everyone is doing.

ASTROBASH 2009 ASHFORD AS Saturday 24th October 2009

Approximately 200 visitors of all ages attended the Astrobash held by Ashford AS in Canterbury. They sent a message out into space and tracked it across the solar system, made planets, flew rockets, landed on the moon, learnt about Mars and how to take pictures of the night sky.



Picture by Ashford AS

Weather forecasts were downloaded using a homemade aerial and receiving station.



Picture by Ashford AS

The University of Canterbury's Planetarium was also available as was Modern Astronomy and F1 Telescopes to give advice on equipment on view and our resident Dalek kept the children (and adults) in line!



Picture by Ashford AS

Despite rain during the day, the cloud eventually parted and the Moon, Jupiter and some of the stars and clusters in the sky were able to be seen through a variety of telescopes.

The event was covered by KMFM, the Ashford Extra (front cover) and The Kent Messenger (double page spread).



Picture by Ashford AS

.....and here in the newsletter of SAGAS! Congratulations on a very successful day ED.

CHRISTMAS DINNER BRIGHTON & HOVE AS + December 2009

Like most other SAGAS societies during December, Brighton & Hove AS held their Christmas dinner, their choice being a local Malaysian restaurant, but with the addition of members from Foredown Tower Astronomers and Worthing Astronomers, making it a truly SAGAS societies event!

Rather appropriately, quite a large number of crackers had the gift of small plastic stars inside them! A great evening, enjoyed by all and one that certainly added a few inches to the waistline!

WINTER DEEP SKY CAMP ORPINGTON AS 15th~18th January 2010

Orpington AS must be a hardy bunch as they organised a weekend camping event in November and are doing it *again* in January!!

This time they are camping close to Henfield in West Sussex, like everywhere in the UK at the time of writing, is covered with deep snow and suffering sub-zero temperatures.

Let us all hope that the conditions improve beforehand. However, a reminder for Orpington members attending, that the monthly SAGAS meeting will be taking place on 17th January at the nearby Southdowns Planetarium where they will at least be able to warm themselves up by coming along!!!!

Please Orpington campers, send in a report about the January camp for the next issue...ED.

SPRING WATCH WEEKEND HAMPSHIRE AG 19th~ 21st March 2010

Most, if not all, SAGAS societies did some form of out-reach to the public events during 2009 as part of the IYA celebrations. Hampshire AG has decided to follow up on these and hold another event in the spring for the public at the Clanfield Observatory. We all hope the weather will be kind to them and their efforts prove a success and look forward to receiving a report for the next edition of the SAGAS Offline Newsletter.

IYA ROUND-UP VECTIS AS

Vectis estimated over 1,000 members of the public looked through telescopes at IYA outreach events organised by the society throughout 2009.

Member Richard Flux suffered the calamity of damage to his observatory dome during the autumn storms, but was very stoic in his response, stating it was nothing more than "*Such Is Life*".

Hopefully when the weather improves Richard will be able to carry out repairs and be back in action again.

FEEDBACK REQUEST WADHURST AS

At their October 2009 meeting, Wadhurst AS provided their membership with a short questionnaire to fill in for feedback from members.

This may be an idea that other societies may wish to use, especially if the committee are short of ideas of what to provide for their members.

IYA FINAL UPDATE WORTHING ASTRONOMERS



WA Exhibition in Worthing Library J Youna

For the finale to IYA, Worthing Astronomers chose to hold a two-week exhibition in the local library (pictured above). This created a great deal of interest from the local public, including the library staff, and an increase in membership.

Just prior to this, WA had held their final public observing week on the seafront to coincide with Moonwatch week. Weather at the start of the week was in favour of looking at the night sky, but mid-week it deteriorated and brought about an early end to the proceedings.

The night-club at the end of Worthing Pier had produced some rather bright laser beams, which reached a considerable distance inland; however, some complaints to the local council brought attention that the night-club owner had not obtained planning permission and the problem was sorted.

The last event of 2009 was a meeting to celebrate the return of

the Sun to the northern hemisphere (solstice, but on the 23rd) and like almost everyone else in the SAGAS group, the January informal meeting was cancelled due to heavy snow and icy conditions.

ASTROFEST ASTRONOMY NOW 5th & 6th February 2010

While not exactly SAGAS related, many SAGAS members are readers (hopefully) of the Astronomy Now magazine who are holding their annual meeting at Kensington Town Hall, London on the 5th and 6th February 2010.

As is usual with this two day event, there are plenty of trade stands available full of those must-have goodies and telescopes, lectures that cover all kinds of topics and delegates can meet and speak with the Astronomy Now editorial team in person.

For more details and how to obtain tickets see the website below:

www.astronomynow.com/astrofest/index.html

ISLE OF WIGHT STAR PARTY 2010 EVENT 11th-15th March 2010

Once again, the Isle of Wight Star Party is taking place at the usual venue of the Brighstone Holiday Centre, Isle of Wight.

Last year's event was a complete success; even the weather was excellent enabling members attending to enjoy the dark skies the site offers and an account of the 2009 event can be found in the April 2009 issue of SAGAS Offline.

For bookings and further details, please look at the website below:

www.iowstarparty.org/IOWSP/Home.html

**SAGAS
ORDINARY MEETING
16th January 2009**

All being well with weather and transport, the first SAGAS meeting of 2010 will take place at the normal venue, South Downs Planetarium, Chichester, at 2.15pm.

The meeting will be chaired by Farnham AS and the second half, as is usual, will include a speaker.

**SAGAS
AGM
10th April 2010**

The April SAGAS meeting will be the AGM, held as usual at the South Downs Planetarium, 2.15pm.

<http://www.southdowns.org.uk/sdpt/>

The present committee, with one exception, are standing for re-election, but if there are any other people who would like to put forward their names, please do not hesitate to do so. The exception will be our present secretary John Axtell, who will be standing down because of other commitments.

There must be someone, somewhere in a SAGAS society who would like to volunteer for a role on the SAGAS committee, so please do not hesitate to contact anyone on the current committee with your name.

**SAGAS SUMMER MEETING
GUILDFORD AS
Date To Be Advised**

The summer meeting of 2010 will be, as has been usual in past years, a special day hosted by a member society, this year being the turn of Guildford AS.

At the present time it is in the early planning stages, but further details will be announced at forthcoming SAGAS meetings, the next edition of the newsletter and of course on the SAGAS website.

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And Last Of All

Please keep those newsletters and any other snippets of news about what YOUR society is doing coming in for inclusion in the next edition of SAGAS Offline.

Deadline for submissions to be included for the next issue is 31st March 2009.

Apologies for this month's rather thin issue, but the recent weather of rain (autumn) and snowfalls (winter), plus **that** annual event in December causes everyone's usual activities and news to come to a short stop!

***Clear Skies to all for 2010
Jan***

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