WEYMOUTH ASTRONOMY

Sky Watcher

Volume 13, Issue 9
8 February 2019

Trips / Events

Ideas for trips and events always welcome!

events@weymouthastronomy.co.uk

Feb 20 CADAS—Astrobiology by Steve Hill

Mar 5 WAS—The evolution of star clusters by Guy Hurst

Mar 20 CADAS—— Cassini at Saturn by Professor Carl Murray

Apr 2 WAS—Meteors - how to observe them and why you should bother by Steve Bosley

Apr 17 CADAS—Solar System Alphabet by Bob Mizon

May 7 WAS—Stellar Evolution by Dr Robin Catchpole

Programmes for many other UK Astronomical Societies will be available in the near future. Check their websites for more details.

The events for the British Astronomical Society (BAA) can be found at https://britastro.org/meetings/2019

Of particular interest to WAC members may be the BAA Winchester Weekend on Friday, 2019, April 5 - 19:00 The 2019 Winchester weekend is at Sparsholt College

If you are interested in giving a talk or workshop, let the organisers know. They like to offer new titles in their programme line-up.

WAC Upcoming Events:

March 8 Sandsfoot Castle Viewing Evening

April 12 Paul Spurr - Radio Astronomy

May 10 AGM + Bob Mizon - Craters of Europe

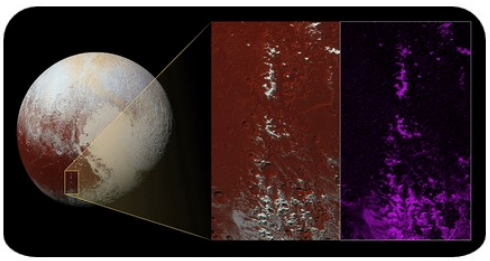
June 14 Ennio Tabone - Introduction to Telescopes and Observing

Why don't you volunteer to give a short talk? What part of astronomy inspires you?

WAC News—

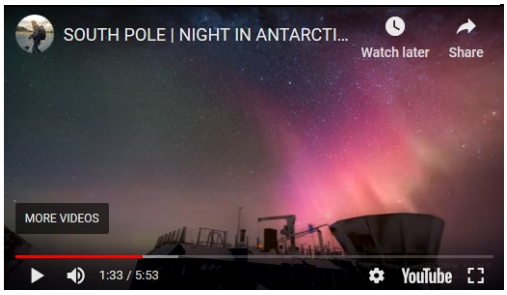
This month NASA has sent out an interesting primer on the topic 'Is there ice on other planets'. https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/ice-on-other-planets/en/

A great topic for a talk if someone is interested in giving one to the club!



Pluto and an up-close image of its icy Cthulhu (pronounced kuh-THU-lu) mountain range.
Credit: NASA/JHUAPL/SwRI

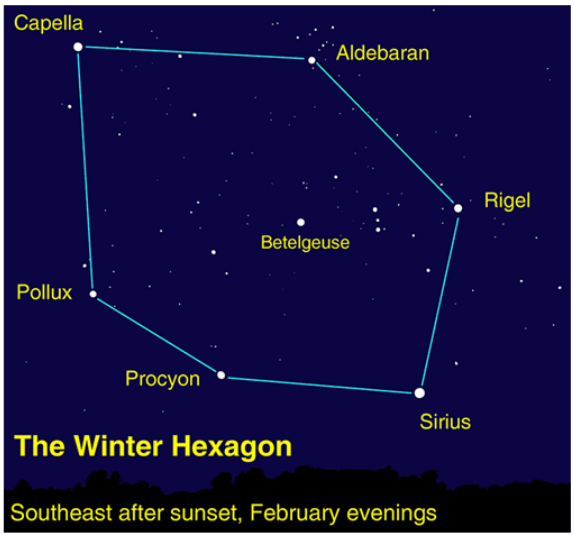
Another fascinating link is a video created by Robert Schwarz. He's a professional telescope operator for the Keck Telescope Array at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. And his hobby is astrophotography. For the past 14 winters, he has been taking pictures of the south polar night, witnessing scenes unlike anyplace else on Earth. His work is highlighted in a newly-released video entitled "South Pole | Night In Antarctica." https://youtu.be/t57DPnH06V0 More of his story is on spaceweather.com dated 6 Feb.



Until next month ~SK

Hexagon at Night, Quartet in the Morning by David Prosper

The stars that make up the **Winter Hexagon** asterism are some of the brightest in the night sky and February evenings are a great time to enjoy their sparkly splendor. The Winter Hexagon is so large in size that the six stars that make up its points are also the brightest members of six different constellations, making the Hexagon a great starting point for learning the winter sky. Find the Hexagon by looking southeast after sunset and finding the bright red star that forms the "left shoulder" of the constellation Orion: **Betelgeuse**. You can think of Betelgeuse as the center of a large irregular clock, with the Winter Hexagon stars as the clock's hour numbers. Move diagonally across Orion to spot its "right foot," the bright star **Rigel.** Now move clockwise from Rigel to the brightest star in the night sky: **Sirius** in Canis Major. Continue ticking along clockwise to **Procyon** in Canis Minor and then towards **Pollux,** the brighter of the Gemini twins. Keep moving around the circuit to find **Capella** in Auriga, and finish at orange **Aldebaran**, the "eye" of the V-shaped face of Taurus the Bull. Two naked-eye planets are visible in the evening sky this month. As red **Mars** moves across Pisces, NASA's InSight Mission is readying its suite of geological instruments designed to study the Martian interior. InSight and the rest of humanity's robotic Martian emissaries will soon be joined by the Mars 2020 rover. The SUV-sized robot is slated to launch next year on a mission to study the possibility of past life on the red planet. A conjunction between Mars and **Uranus** on February 13 will be a treat for telescopic

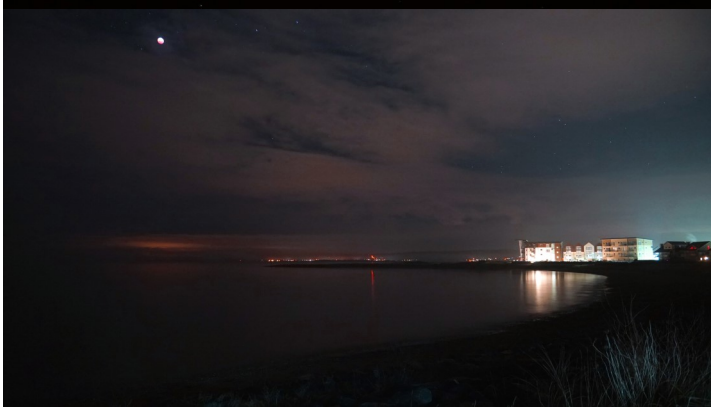


Caption: The stars of the Winter Hexagon
Image created with help from Stellarium

Night Sky (more!)

observers. Mars will pass a little over a degree away from Uranus and larger magnifications will allow comparisons between the small red disc of dusty Mars with the smaller and much more distant blue-green disc of ice giant Uranus. Speedy **Mercury** has a good showing this month and makes its highest appearance in the evening on February 27; spot it above the western horizon at sunset. An unobstructed western view and binoculars will greatly help in catching Mercury against the glow of evening twilight. The morning planets put on quite a show in February. Look for the bright planets **Venus**, **Jupiter**, and **Saturn** above the eastern horizon all month, at times forming a neat lineup. A crescent **Moon** makes a stunning addition on the mornings of February 1-2, and again on the 28th. Watch over the course of the month as Venus travels from its position above Jupiter to below dimmer Saturn. Venus and Saturn will be in close conjunction on the 18th; see if you can fit both planets into the same telescopic field of view. A telescope reveals the brilliant thin crescent phase of Venus waxing into a wide gibbous phase as the planet passes around the other side of our Sun. The Night Sky Network has a simple activity that helps explain the nature of both Venus and Mercury's phases at bit.ly/venusphases

21 January Total Lunar Eclipse



Weymouth Astronomy Club

January 2019

Members 10 minute Talks

A really big Thank You to everyone who contributed to the evening