



Orpington Astronomical Society

Chair's Report for 2024

1. Opening Remarks

My first year as Chair has been a bit of a learning curve, but made easier by the wonderful help received from the Committee and others, all of whom have contributed to another great year for the Society.

It is also you as Members that make this such a vibrant Society and I appreciate your ongoing support. Our membership has consistently been over 100 during 2024 with many new members joining during the year. Our aim is as always to offer a wide range of talks and activities that are of interest to everyone.

2. Meetings

We held 12 meetings at Petts Wood where Tony Sizer our Programme Secretary arranged another appealing and thought provoking series of talks. We continue to offer Zoom links to members unable to attend the meetings. This has allowed up to 10 more members to participate each month, adding to the many members who regularly attend in person.

The Committee met 10 times during the year to discuss a variety of topics and look at how to further develop and enhance the way the Society operates. Our funds are healthy and have been carefully monitored by Andrew Ramsay who will provide more information on the Society's finances in his Treasurer's Report.

3. Observing Evenings

Observing Evenings were held at Otford every month with Raf Kaminski, Rose Hopkins, Roy and Sue Peters being the stalwarts of these evenings and welcoming new and existing members alike.

In addition Raf, as our Observing Officer continues to give comprehensive monthly reports at the Society meetings which include advice on objects to view at Otford and occasional insights on our weather. Raf and Chris Roberts also organised ad hoc observing evenings at different locations whenever the conditions were favourable.

4. Events

Our first visit of 2024 was to The Observatory Science Centre at Herstmonceux in March, followed by another great Starbeque in June. Dave Allen admirably took over Events from me and organised a visit to The King's Observatory in September, one to Bentley Priory Museum in October and the Mystery London Astronomical Tour (devised and led by Greg) in November. This coach tour of London was well attended and included members from other societies.

There was also a memorable trip to La Palma at the end of August which Carole Pope put a lot of effort into arranging. In addition, Carole organised Deep Sky Camps during the year and assisted Tom Meechan with his amusing play at last year's AGM. I expect this year's play will be equally fascinating and entertaining.

5. Imaging

Carole for the second time ran our Imaging Competition, with the winning images being included in the ever popular OAS Calendar that she publishes each year.

Members images were also presented informatively by Carole at our monthly meetings. As more Members started posting images, thanks in part to the use of smart telescopes or smartphones, Carole created a separate category for 'smart photos' in the Imaging Competition.

6. Outreach

Hugh Alford has been the driving force behind Outreach activities for the Society over many years. In 2024 he again organised several events and also gave various talks to local community groups. He has more than fulfilled our requirements to be an educational charity and has been well supported by Roy and Sue and other Outreach volunteers. Hugh will give details in his Report on Outreach.

7. Communications with Members

Our Membership Secretary Lizzie Goldsmith enthusiastically led the roll out of our new membership software MemberMojo which provides a more effective database than previously used. MemberMojo is now the basis for all email communications with Members and it was used for distributing the latest edition of our newsletter TOAST. Robert Finlay continues to produce illuminating editions of TOAST with a variety of interesting articles and meeting/visit reports written by Members.

Rick Hewett and Klitos Kyriacou remain key to sustaining and improving the OAS website. The website's Forum and Gallery have always been available for uploading and discussing Members' images and this has continued to be the case. However, the OAS Members' WhatsApp group has now become the more widely used means of communicating between Members with almost 60 percent signed up to the App.

8. Thanks to the Committee and Others

I would like to thank our Committee Members, and everyone else who has helped in the running of the Society, for all their hard work during 2024. I also thank our President Greg Smye-Rumsby for his much appreciated advice and support.

Thanks also go to: Raf, Hugh and Chris for providing the Zoom links at meetings; to everyone who has assisted with refreshments and setting out and stacking chairs each month; to Raf and Rose for managing our merchandise; to Roberto for his further tutorials on astrophotography; to Viki for her help with Committee Meeting minutes and helping out when necessary; and to anyone else I may have forgotten.

9. Looking Forward

Going forward we hope to develop further opportunities for collaboration with other astronomical societies on events and at meetings. We will also continue planning our proposed trip to southern Spain in 2027 to see a total solar eclipse.

Jim Worthington
Chair, Orpington Astronomical Society

20 February 2025