

FOXTON BEACH ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY Inc



Colin Dunn, Headmaster of Foxtton Beach School, 1985

NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2009

**FOXTON BEACH ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
LIST OF OFFICERS 2009 – 2010**

President:	Ron Fisher	Ph 368-6251
Vice President:	Bren Chainey	Ph 368-4987
Secretary:	Richard Leach	Ph 368-4608
Treasurer:	Tina Hills	Ph 368-6926
Observatory:	Gordon Dustin	Ph 363-7707
Viewing hotline:		Ph 0211270604

We welcome contributions from any members - observing reports, photos, news, links to interesting websites, just about anything astronomical will be considered. Please have your contributions in by the 21st of the month. Address any newsletter contributions to Steve Chadwick at stevechads@hotmail.com or post to 628 Himatangi Beach Road, RD11 Foxton We cannot guarantee everything will be included, but we will do our best.

NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3RD 2009 at 7.30 pm

This month there will be a Special General Meeting, commencing at 7.30pm at which the proposal to change the name of the Society will be debated.

The regular monthly meeting will immediately follow. Visitors are most welcome with no obligation to join. If you would like to join then simply contact a member of the committee for more information. The society meets on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm at The Foxton Beach School staff rooms, Carthew Terrace, Foxton Beach.

Presidents Report September

Well i thoroughly enjoyed last months meeting (no not because i was the speaker!). It was a great turnout, in fact if we expand anymore we will need to consider a bigger meeting room. With a clear sky we were all keen to speed along the general business. A few announcements were made, a decision on having our "Near-Equinox dinner" was made but has since changed and will now be on the Sunday night of September 6th at The Avenue from 7pm. This is the day after the Spring fling which we will have our usual stall at, please advise if you wish to be a part of this. We are in the process of applying for funds to purchase our very own laptop and projector which will make it possible to give stimulating talks each month. We have lined up a few of those talks already so check the calendar to see whats coming up and get in early if you are interested to give a talk next year.

After general business was dealt with my talk was then given as a tour of observatories in NZ. This was the first time i had put together a talk like this and learnt many interesting things in the process. The history of astronomy in this country is fascinating. And thanks to Tina we were able to enjoy a hot drink and biscuits afterwards while some of us got behind the telescope eye piece for the first time in a long time. We observed Jupiter mostly as it became quite hazy and only the bright objects were visible. It got very dewey down there and there was talk of having a hair dryer on hand next time to clear the lens. Stephen has put his hand up to edit the newsletter from now and that was passed unanimously, thanks Stephen we know you'll do a fantastic job!

This months committee meeting was a good one. We discussed a variety of topics and some of the actions include investigating various schemes that could be applied to local secondary schools to support with their astronomy studies. Stephen and Allen will be reporting back to the committee next month. On a related note we are also in discussions with Manawatu College over holding a star party on the school grounds for Galilean Nights which is October 24th. A decision was made on fund seeking to increase our library with books and dvds, Tina has kindly offered to administer this. Space radio our musical astronomy evening at MAVtech has been postponed a month. A subcommittee has been established to organise this and they will report back on details next month.

And more good news – we now have 27 members! This is great to see this early in the financial year. Remember to tell your friends and family that they are always welcome too. Thats all for me, have a great month. See you at the dinner, the spring fling and look out for next month's Galilean nights. At our next meeting night, Doug Jackson will be leading the discussion on how to operate a goto telescope. We hope it will be a hands on session with clear skies.

Last month's members observing night was looking to be a cloudy one. A lonely president turned up to open the doors but found himself all by himself. So lonely was he and so cloudy were the skies that he proceeded to tidy and organise the cupboards! So no new discoveries were made apart from the dust nebula that came from the back of the cupboard. I must remember to take the vacuum next month in case of clouds.

A motion has been made that we "change our name to the Horowhenua Astronomical Society Inc and register the changes to our constitution and documentation." We will hold a Special General Meeting prior to our normal monthly meeting on September 3rd at 730pm. All paid members will have the right to vote for or against but you must be present at the meeting. We have asked Gordon Dustin to chair this meeting.

Cheers, Ron

In and around the society

A Missing Issue?

What has happened to the August edition of the newsletter you might ask? From now on the date on the front of the newsletter will reflect the month to which it is relevant. In this issue most of the information it contains relates to September so it makes sense that it is the September issue.

Observing nights at the Dome

Weather permitting, members' observing nights are held on the second Thursday of the month at the observatory from 7.30pm. Observatory key holders are Ron Fisher, Ian Cooper, Simon and Tina Hills and Gordon Dustin. On any given month one of these people will be in charge of opening and operating the scope so we can all enjoy the Southern Sky wonders. Some initial training is still to be done so these people are comfortable with the instruments.

Upcoming meetings

It would be great for members to contribute to the content of our general meetings. If you have something you would like to present then why not make a short talk out of it. We are looking for keen people to give presentations on anything astronomical and for anywhere from five minutes to an hour. You can also make suggestions of other people, outside of the society, you would like to hear. Please put your suggestions to Ian Cooper who organises meeting contents. We would like to plan visiting speakers well in advance so we can then promote these to the wider community.

**Information for members regarding proposed name change of Foxtan Beach Astronomical Society Inc.
by Gordon Dustin**

At the annual general meeting of the society a notice of motion was presented as follows – “I propose the annual general meeting change our name to the Horowhenua Astronomical Society Inc and register the changes to our constitution and documentation.” This notice of motion was moved by A. Little and seconded by S. Hills. A procedural motion was put forward by D. Jackson seconded by P. Fields “that the motion be laid on the table for a future special meeting. This motion was carried. That procedural motion was a directive to the committee to convene a special general meeting to debate the proposed name change.

The society has a constitution and by-laws, which are basic guidelines and rules which govern certain aspects of how the society operates. In consideration that the proposed name change is a major proposal I consider it in the best interest of the society that a full formal debate be taken on the proposal.

The constitution lists as number one in the document “The name of the society shall be _ _ _ _ _”. In order for any future debate to be taken on the matter full and formal notice must be given to members of date: venue: time and purpose of said Special General Meeting. Following a formal opening of the S.G.M a procedural motion is necessary “that the motion be uplifted from the table.” This motion requires only a simple majority. Voting on the name change can only be done by full financial members, but anyone can speak to the motion. Voting then should be taken by a show of hands. As a 75% or three fourths majority is required a show of hands is necessary as this is the only way to get an accurate three fourths count. Proxy votes are not allowed. If the proposal is carried by the required majority that decision must be notified to the companies office for their comment if any and registration.

Members, please put your thinking caps on, bring your thoughts either for or against the proposal to the meeting, and we will look forward to constructive debate.

The View from Himatangi Beach



M20
The Trifid Nebula

We Southern Hemisphere dwellers really are lucky when it comes to star gazing. The full wonder of the Milky Way stretches directly over our heads, and on dark winter nights the view of Sagittarius, which contains the centre of our galaxy, is breathtaking. Sagittarius contains more Messier objects than any other constellation – 15 in all. Two particularly well-known ones being M8, the ‘Lagoon Nebula’, and M20, the ‘Trifid Nebula’

The Trifid Nebula actually consists of two different sorts of nebulosity. The pink part is emission nebulae, and the blue part reflection nebulae. An emission nebula occurs when the dust and gas between stars is heated resulting in the emission of light. In a reflection nebula, the inter-stellar dust does not actually emit light itself. Rather, it scatters the starlight emitted from the stars it surrounds.

By the way, it is not called the Trifid nebula because it looks like a Triffid. It is because it is divided into three lobes.

(Image and text by Stephen Chadwick)

Short History of the Constellations – Part 2 of 2

It wasn't until **1930** that the International Astronomical Union (**IAU**) resolved all these different charts into one common, standard way of grouping the multitude of known stars and published what we now call the set of "modern constellations". In 1922 they had agreed on 88 different constellations and names, each very specifically defined as a region of the sky. Due to historical significance they could not just divide the sky up into equal regions and start anew - they had to include major asterisms in certain constellations and respect the heritage of most of the night sky's star patterns. (The boundaries themselves were drawn by Eugène Delporte, based on coordinates for the year **1875** (!), chosen because this system had already been used by Benjamin Gould in defining boundaries for the southern constellations.) The result is a hodge-podge of different sizes and shapes, some old constellations were dropped, some new ones formed, some stars that were in one "old" constellation suddenly found themselves in a "new" one. Thanks to other historical changes one constellation - Argo Navis - was "shipwrecked" because it was too big, and now all that remains are Carina (the Keel), Vela (the Sails), Puppis (the Stern), Pyxis (the Compass), Volans (the Flying Fish), and Columba (the Dove). One other constellation (Serpens) even consists of two completely separate pieces of the sky (Serpens Caput - the head of the serpent and Serpens Cauda - the tail of the serpent) separated by Ophiuchus - The Serpent Holder. Does this mean that instead of 88 constellations there are actually "87 and two halves"?

Nowadays, it can be difficult to make out some of the creatures the ancients saw in the patterns of the stars since many of the dimmer stars that form part of the outlines are nearly invisible from our light-polluted cities. Not only that, but a number of southern constellations were named "in honour" of something and bear no resemblance to the item it is named for at all.

It is important to note that you cannot go out and view all the constellations in one evening. For one thing, the night side of the Earth can see only about 1/2 the sky at any time. For another, for Northern hemisphere observers, the further south you look the more the planet Earth itself gets in the way preventing you from seeing the more southerly stars. Therefore in an evening's observing, you only get to see about 1/2 of 1/2 or 1/4 of the constellations in the sky. If you go out observing from month to month, the orbit of the Earth around the sun will make some constellations disappear in the West and others rise in the East over the course of weeks. Therefore, in a year's time, you can see all the constellations visible from your location. To see the other half of the constellations, you have to travel to the other (N or S) hemisphere and spend some more weeks or months viewing those that cannot be seen from home. People living at high altitudes near the equator have the best view of both the N and S hemispheres without traveling - this is why many of the world's largest telescopes are located in Hawaii, the Canary Islands, Chile etc.

from :Larry McNish <http://calgary.rasc.ca/constellation.htm#radec>

Gord's Corner

There has certainly been some calm weather lately and some clear night skies, which as astronomers know leads to lots of viewing and observing. Have not had my telescope out lately but I still do a naked eye take of the starry skies and still am in awe of what is out there. Until such time when I can allocate more effort and time to do some serious (sic) observing I will just have to turn my naked two eyes to the skies and say WOW.

It is good to see that a near Equinox dinner has been convened for Sunday 6th September at the Old Log Cabin north of Levin. I see the name of the restaurant is "The Avenue" as it is on avenue north on State Highway One. Time I see is 7.00pm. Have to check my diary and see if I can get to the dinner. Cost is \$22.00 per person, two course smorgasbord meal. Members have received notice.

Having a quick read about Galileo Galilei makes for eye opener readings. How his genius shone through in his learnings and teachings and yet he was virtually persecuted for his beliefs. We live in troubled times these days but centuries ago it appears a lot worse. My book of Galileo is available for members to read.

Read an article in the Manawatu Standard dated Saturday August 22nd 2009 about a Tokomaru teenager who recently attended space camp in Alabama. Rhiannon McNish spent a week at space Camp in July and is over the moon about her experiences at the camp. She has plans to start a degree in science and astronomy next year. This brings to mind Emma Dunning, a Raumatī teenager who spent a week at Space Camp and we made a contribution to her costs. That was July 2005.

Lots of people out there with an interest in astronomy, be it big or small.

Gords

Jupiter and the new impact scar

The image below was taken on 25 July, 2009 a few days after the discovery of a new impact scar on Jupiter. It shows the Galilean moon Io and its shadow in transit, the GRS approaching the eastern limb, and the new impact scar. Seeing was variable over the session, so the frame-rate was set at 10 fps, capturing approximately 1200 frames over a 2-minute period. About 400 of the best frames were stacked in Registax.



The new impact scar was discovered by Australian amateur astronomer, Anthony Wesley on 19 July, 2009 at 1330 UTC. It was affectionately (and unofficially) dubbed the "Bird Strike" by Ice In Space members - Anthony is a forum member, whose user name is "bird". Anthony almost missed the discovery, as the seeing was poor earlier in his imaging session and he almost packed up but decided to watch some of the PGA golf tour and come back and see if things had improved, which they had – along with the appearance of this new feature! You can follow Anthony's commentary of his discovery at <http://jupiter.samba.org/> and the excitement it generated on the Ice In Space forums at

<http://www.iceinspace.com.au/forum/showthread.php?t=47481>

The impact scar has subsequently started being torn apart by the strong winds in the South Polar Region (SPR). Currently it is in three pieces and being spread out along the SPR, making it more difficult for smaller aperture telescopes to see.

(Image and text by Michael White)

Calendar of events

The rest of this year is going to be busy for the society. Here is a provisional list of upcoming events:

September 3rd Monthly meeting:

Doug Jackson on 'Operating a goto scope'

September 5th Foxton Spring Fling

FBAS to host a stall

September 6th Near-Equinox dinner

7pm at The Avenue SH1 north of Levin

October 1st Monthly meeting

Mike White on 'Observing Jupiter'

October 24th or 25th (Labour Weekend) Galilean Nights

Star party at Manawatu College, Foxton, with a talk on Galileo and Jupiter (to be confirmed).

November 5th Monthly meeting

Stephen Chadwick on 'astrophotography'

December TBC

Frank Andrews on 'The Xmas Star'

January No monthly meeting

February Monthly meeting

Ian Cooper on 'Comets'

STOP PRESS

LAST MINUTE INFORMATION

Near-Equinox dinner

This is to be held on **Sunday 6th September, 7.30p.m.** at

The Avenue Licensed Restaurant & Cafe
33 The Avenue
Levin
(Previously known as The Log Cabin)

All members and partners welcome.

\$22.00 per head
for
Two course meal (Smorgasbord)

Please call Bren Chainey ASAP on either 368 4987 (home) or 368 6623 (work) so that he can advise them of numbers as they need to know by 1st September

Urgent note about name change proposal

The hugely important decision regarding a potential name change for the society will take place at a Special General Meeting to be held prior to the normal monthly meeting on SEPTEMBER 3rd 2009. The Special General Meeting will start at 7.30pm and the normal monthly meeting will immediately follow.

We want to be 100% sure that all past members have the chance to be paid up, as only current members can vote. IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION YET YOU CAN PAY BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING. PLEASE SPEAK TO TINA HILLS.

If undelivered return to:
Foxton Beach Astronomical Society
C/- 15 Manchester Street, Levin



Nelson Bartlett Observatory

(Photo by W Marshall)

**THE FOXTON BEACH ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY
NELSON BARTLETT OBSERVATORY
FOXTON BEACH SCHOOL STAFF ROOMS
CARTHEW TERRACE
FOXTON BEACH**