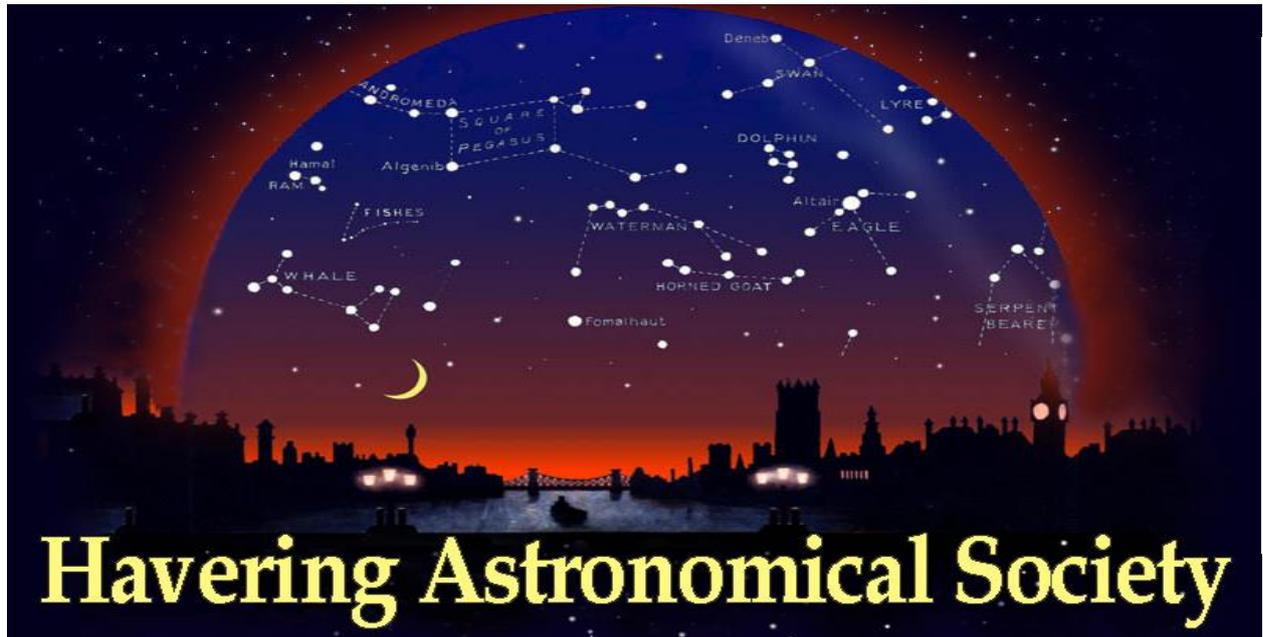


**WELCOME TO OUR MEMBERS AND GUESTS.
PLEASE SIGN IN AND WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE EVENING**

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This Month

John Purvis will give a statement on the Society's accounts, **Les Brand** will give a talk on the *Drake Equation* and **Chris Smart** will show some of his images (possibly **Martin Gill** as well).

Last Month

A most enjoyable evening with nibbles, a raffle and another great quiz from **John Sweeney** and we thank him for his hard work. He will now be handing over the task to **Peter Morris** who has volunteered to run the quiz in December

Member's News

Members are kindly reminded that the Annual Membership fee is now due. It is **£13.00** for Ordinary Membership and **£10.50** for Seniors. Please pay at the Registration Desk. Members are also asked to check at the Desk that their contact details are up to date.

European Astrofest 2018: A Reminder

The European AstroFest will return to London on 9th and 10th February 2018 at the Kensington Conference and Events Centre. During the course of the two-day event conferences will cover a large range of space topics which could include 'Gravity Waves' to the 'Dwarf Planets'. If you are looking for a new telescope, a better eyepiece, a state-of-the-art CCD camera, a good astronomy book, or are thinking of taking up an astronomy course, European AstroFest 2018 is the place to be. Conference tickets will go on sale very soon. See www.europeanastrofest.com for further details.

Jerry Stone, FBIS

We are pleased to announce that for our March 21st meeting we will be joined by **Jerry Stone** who is one of the country's leading speakers on space exploration. As well as speaking at all kinds of venues across the UK and abroad, he has appeared on many TV and Radio shows. He will talk on "The Way to the Stars". Not to be missed.

Next Meeting ~ February 21st

Our next meeting will be a **Member's Meeting** where members can bring along their equipment if they require advice, have any items for sale or exchange or if they just want to demonstrate them. **Magda Wheatley** will give a presentation on her astronomical holiday experiences

NIGHT SKY

Jupiter: can best be seen on January 31st at 06:00 in *Libra* in the South-southeast. It will be positioned centrally in *Libra* shining at mag. -1.8. Viewed through a 3" or larger telescope its disc will appear 35 arcseconds across. The North and South Equatorial Belts will be apparent and, with concentration, the planet's famous *Great Red Spot* may be seen.

The January "Blue Moon". Can be seen also on January 31st. The second full Moon for the month of January rises at 16:35 and sets at 07:45. Second full Moons are sometimes referred to as '*Blue Moons*', a term that has no scientific meaning but derives from early American farming almanacs. This full Moon will undergo a lunar eclipse and, because the Sun's reddish light is bent round into the Earth's shadow, it will actually appear red.

Mars: can best be seen on February 9th at 05:00 in *Ophiuchus* in the Southeast. If the skies are clear Mars will present a 5 arcsecond disc shining at mag. +1.1. It will appear 5.4° above mag. +1.0 *Antares* (Alpha (α) Scorpii). This is a great time to compare the red supergiant star with the Red planet.

Ganymede Transit of Jupiter: This can be seen on February 10th between 02:36 and 04:20 in *Libra* low in the Southeast. Ganymede will be on Jupiter's central meridian at 03:29 and as it approaches the northeast limb hopefully you will be able to detect its 1.4 arcsecond disc during the transit.



*Thank you to
everyone who
helps with
refreshments.*

Observing at South Weald

The next favourable dates for observing are this coming 19th, 20th and 21st January. Details will be discussed at this evenings meeting.

Young Astronomers

We will next be meeting on Thursday February 1st at Frances's home.

Spaceflight News

2018 could see return of US human spaceflight

The year 2018 could provide for some exciting, history making moments on Florida's Space Coast. The highlight of the year, and perhaps the decade will be the return of human spaceflight, launching from U.S. soil. NASA is expected to send astronauts on American spacecraft from the Space Coast in 2018. *"All launches are awesome, but when there are humans on board, it's a much more personal and visceral engagement by everybody,"* said Space Florida Vice President **Dale Ketcham**. *"So that will be a huge, momentous event for the nation and certainly those of us here on the Space Coast."* NASA hired both SpaceX and Boeing to develop spacecraft that can send astronauts to the International Space Station. Both companies continue testing. NASA's website says the first crewed flight on Boeing's CST-100 Starliner is scheduled for Nov. 2018. SpaceX's first manned launch on Crew Dragon is set for Dec. 2018. The return of human spaceflight would be welcomed news for local businesses after the retirement of the Space Shuttle in 2011. Things haven't been the same, according to **Brenda Mulberry**, the president of Space Shirts on Merritt Island. *"Slow, steady, but not overwhelming like the space shuttle,"* said Mulberry. The year 2018 will also see the inaugural launch of the Falcon Heavy. SpaceX says it's the world's most powerful rocket, capable of sending humans to the moon or Mars one day. For the test launch, SpaceX plans to send a red Tesla roadster to Mars' orbit. Blue Origin will start manufacturing rockets in the new year, and OneWeb is expected to begin building satellites. *"It will be the first time we're launching satellites and rockets from the cape that have been built here at the cape, so that's very exciting to all of us,"* said Ketcham, who believes diversifying the Space Coast's economy is a key to the area's success. As for other launches, this summer United Launch Alliance will use a Delta IV rocket to send a probe on a first of its kind mission to the sun. That's a record 32 launches from the Space Coast.

