

Report on Abingdon Astronomical Society's Spring Moonwatch events on 4 April 2009

Abingdon AS had two events for Saturday 4 April: a daytime solar observing session in central Oxford, in association with the University's Museum of the History of Science, and a lunar observing session at Sunningwell village hall preceded by a talk about the Moon.

Early in the day, society members set up a stall in Abingdon Market Place to publicise the events. Posters and a telescope with solar filter caught the eyes of many passers-by. By 4 pm we knew that we would have an audience for the evening lunar session. Meanwhile, other society members had set up various specially prepared scopes for Oxford shoppers to have a look at the Sun. The hydrogen alpha scopes picked up a solar prominence which had graciously developed just in time for the first of the procession of what turned out to be a 100 or so new solar observers.

Fingers were crossed that the sunny weather would hold out for the evening event. With an attentive audience present, society chairman Ian Smith outlined some lunar highlights since the first observations of Galileo. Members had brought a range of scopes for the audience to have a look at the Moon as well as some other highlight objects. Many of the 30 or so visitors had their first look through a telescope. Given their excitement, there may soon be a few new telescopes around Oxfordshire. After the long day, which proved a great success, members moved on to the village pub.

Chris Holt, Paul McGale and Gwyneth Hueter

Pics:

The Abingdon AS stall in Abingdon's Market Place

A few of the telescopes at the Sunningwell evening event



The Abingdon AS stall in Abingdon's Market Place (photo J. Mole)



A few of the telescopes at the Sunningwell evening event (photo P. McGale)