

East Riding Astronomers: Secretary's report up to end of April 2025

It's not being the worst year for cloud, just the usual frustrations. Periods of clear have needed selective getting up early etc, something I'm not always prepared to do. There haven't been many off-site observing sessions this year, maybe we need to react better to the odd clear forecast; and maybe it's a little because Mark T is diligently trying to gather time in his Newly finished observatory.

Woodmansey village Hall has continued to be a great base for us. They've asked for us to pay direct from the bank, which suits us. We used to pay cash per meeting, but have set up a regular standing order through-out the year (still for the same yearly amount though) – more on the bank later.

Woodmansey have installed a "beacon", for lighting on occasions. It's a slender thing & shouldn't get in our way, we'll always be able to move a scope a few feet to one side etc.

A scout group has started at Woodmansey, they meet on Mondays & will be in the hall with us. There has only been one meeting so far that we have been together and if there are any issues, I'm sure we will work them out. Obviously, they don't stay as late as we do.

We still have the ok to use the hall and grounds as we need, with the understanding that we'll work around who is paying to be on-site & with a few dates that a caravan club etc, want sole access.

We still have good links with the other local astro clubs, using each other for larger event planning, decent communication for all we're doing including meeting topics.

We held some extra sessions at Woodmansey, including:

Lunar session 14th June 2024 at Woodmansey. Poor forecast, but a decent clear spell made it worthwhile.

Lunar 17th Sept 2024, decently clear too.

Beverley Saturday market stall 24th Aug 2024

At a scheduled monthly meeting we hosted Steve Bowden to talk in September. A lovely set of photos to show and a decent bit of how, and what equipment he used.

We moved banks from HSBC to Lloyds, to take advantage of a "community account" which was free to run. They did change this after a while though & we ending up paying 5 to 6 pounds a month. So, we have recently moved over to Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union (thanks for the suggestion Dave Cross). We had a look for options and didn't find a better one. Stating the obvious, it isn't technically a bank. There are a few things less convenient, but the savings work out to ~£75 a year – or 3 of our current 28 members. My way of understanding our account, is that there is one overall account they operate & we have a carefully logged bit of that. Which means members must be careful with the reference number when paying by BACS! Payments in or out are not instant, but more likely to take a day or two.

Zoom meetings remain pretty much weekly, the same few having a general chat and working things out for the club. We still use Monday, but flick to Tuesday when HERAS or Brough are meeting at their camps.

We hosted Beverley Round table for a general chat about our astronomy and with some 'scopes. November 11th

We seem to keep pondering about pondering for having a proper observatory. The hall was contemplating some building work and wondered if things might fit in with a structure on the roof of an extension. I'll take that as a show of mutual goodwill between us! That particular venture wouldn't be practical for what we would want really. The Hall is hoping a bit of building work would mean being able to have two different bookings being fully separate and might enable other revenues to be looked at.

Donated 'scopes this year! Some were difficult to use & would frustrate most people, never mind beginners. But we did have some previously well-loved and fine ones too. We did some scope 'shuffling' and have had 2x 8" Meades and an 8" Celestron. These are a lovely standard optically, with one a free-standing optical tube, one on an equatorial drive that Lee has made a nice control box for and seems to track really nicely. The remaining Meade has started to malfunction, but if we can repair, will be an easy to use and set up bit of kit. There's always a background

story to donated items and these are no different. They came with the families willingness for us to use them well. There are some other, more portable items too. These can be used by us all, potentially utilised off-site. Some items have warranted us to donate a token gesture to charitable causes.

I'd hazard a guess that we have enough scopes for our use currently. We have to be realistic about the space we have and what we're likely to set up. The container has had a revamp to enlarge our 'safe' storage area, proving we have to keep evolving and adapting. Feel free to debate what we should be trying to utilise and help plan for the future.

ERA's Web-site got revamped by Lee, still on the back of a thoughtful provider. We got some malware though (a sort of hack?) & spent some time with a bare-bones info on display. Eventually we had to cut our losses with well intentioned promises and Lee has now got us a fine looking site, that can be edited easily by those wanting access rights. It can be added to, or structured differently, if we want. This is a real opportunity to make a place that could add value to what we get from the club. If you can think on how any features might be of benefit to you/us, now is a good time.

There have been a few talks with outside agencies regarding light pollution & trying for improving dark skies for various reasons. Lee has been communicating with Steve Tonkin who seems to be co-ordinating some things nationally. More directly we got involved with publicity for East Riding Council regarding turning off some bright street lighting for roads with no need to consider pedestrian visibility. They are carrying out a study on some local roads, and wonder if it would save money and 'de-carbonise' the roads a little. Lee's writings got published in Astronomy Magazine July '24!

National astronomy week. Was held Feb '25. From Sat 1st to Sun 9th. This fell within our scheduled monthly meeting, so we had an open night at Woodmansey. We helped HERAS on the Thursday for a public night in Cottingham, which was very well attended in the Civic Hall & nearby Grandad's Park. Some nice interviews broadcast on BBC Radio Humberside.

Yet again, no group venturing to the astro shows / vendor selling events. Two shows in Leicester, Coventry, that need a decent buying objective really...

Perseid watch night at Woodmansey.

Phill is still emailing a monthly compilation of astro events to keep an eye out for.

Some old copies of the magazine Sky and Telescope that were on DVDs have been transferred into PDF documents. So, if you come across a reference to an article you might want to read, let us know – we might have it. Or just for general reading!

We also held a 'Planetary Parade' viewing in Feb 25, held over two nights at Woodmansey to accommodate those that couldn't make the other night (me included). A task that was bit trickier than the general media led us to believe



We have an upcoming market stall, planned for Beverley again.

We renewed affiliation to Federation of Astronomical Societies, this gives us a great price for Public Liability Insurance.

Along the lines of keeping the club evolving; we have to push ideas or greatly risk becoming stale and fading away. I am thinking that I ought to seek out a different club secretary. I'm not rushing to leave, but realise I've been acting as the club Sec since 2018. A different person will be a fresh slant and help us stay active in what we want to achieve. I'm content to continue as Sec this year, with the intention of having someone to be lead in this role, presumably the following season: but willing to start earlier than that if that fits in.

Thanks for coming over the year, chatting and making the club a good thing for many people. It's not hard to realise we are here as an astronomy club, that comes with a great social side.