

NEWCASTLE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY INC
MINUTES
26 October 2007

MEETING OPENED: 7.30 pm with 22 members and guests present.

CHAIRMAN: Mr Ghul Hussain.

MINUTES: The minutes for August 2007 were read and accepted (David Hough, Geoff Drewer, carried).
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APOLOGIES:

GENERAL:

- Patrick Barry is a candidate for the House of Representatives in the seat of Charlton for the upcoming federal elections. He delivered a campaign speech to the NAS members outlining his election platform and promising his prospective electorate generous tax cuts and free petrol for the term of his office.
- Colin Key brought in some more books to auction in aid of the NAS. Bidding started off slowly but soon gathered pace. Approximately half of the books were sold on the night with the remainder being held over to a future meeting. This was done not to flood the burgeoning market with astronomical reading material, thereby keeping prices at a premium.
- The members discussed the purchase of a twelve inch Lightbridge telescope. The issue was put to an informal vote and the majority of the members were in favour of the purchase. Eddie Roca will look into costing and report back to the Society.
- Scott Alder presented an overview of astronomical image processing using free software called IRIS. He walked through the process of combining several images and dark fields into a single low noise, high quality image.
- David Hough spoke of a rapidly brightening comet now visible low in the North that went from magnitude 16 to magnitude 2 over a six hour period. He then went through a similar process of image enhancement using proprietary software called Deep Sky Stacker, Images Plus and Photoshop. Both Scott and David achieved dramatic improvement in image quality in a relatively short time thanks to the expertise they have developed in adjusting the parameters of their chosen software.
- We then watched a BBC series DVD called The Sky at Night with Patrick Moore. The topic was methods for discovering extra-terrestrial planets. They included star wobble, transit dimming, anomalous lensing by planets orbiting stars, and shepherding of dust by planets.
- Next month we will have a guest speaker talking on browser astronomy.
- The next meeting will be on 30 November 2007 starting 7.30 pm.
- The meeting closed at 9.35 pm and a light supper was served.