



THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

KEEPING IN TOUCH– Please pass on to all your members Week Ending 18 June, 2010

1. National Radio Morning Report - Sunspot Activity – Wednesday, 9th June, 2010

A big thanks to Marilyn Head who sent this through - You can hear an interesting 8 minute segment about increased sunspot activity. National Radio Morning Report talks to astrophysicist Dean Pesnell from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory about the increase in solar activity.

http://static.radionz.net.nz/assets/audio_item/0007/2317309/mnr-20100609-0838-Sun_spot_activity_increases_dramatically-m048.asx

2. Tauranga Astronomical Society Monthly Meeting – Tuesday, 7.30pm 22 June, 2010



Stuart Murray, vice-president of the Tauranga Astronomical Society, and the telescope for the new observatory at Fergusson Park.

Tauranga Astronomical Society celebrate Tauranga's first city observatory and newly installed Meade LX200 14" ACF telescope with a public lecture by guest speaker and Patron, Dr Grant Christie.

Lecture Synopsis: For Love or Money: Astronomical research by amateurs
Motivated by the thrill of making new discoveries about the Universe, amateur astronomers today play an important role in a number of areas of astronomy. We will look at some of the international research projects that amateur astronomers are contributing to such as discovering supernovae in distant galaxies, planets orbiting other stars, measuring the size and shape of asteroids and tracking the motions of comets.

We welcome all those interested in attending the public lecture and learning more about the Tauranga Astronomical Society and the new observatory.

Contact: President George Stewart - geo_dorothy@vodafone.co.nz

3. Franklin Sidewalk Astronomers Monthly Meeting – Friday, 7.30pm 18 June, 2010



Everyone welcome - Matariki will be the theme of the Franklin Sidewalk Astronomers meeting this month. Matariki or the Maori New Year celebrations began on Monday 14 June with the arrival of the first moon after the rising of the star cluster Matariki or the Seven Sisters. The festival continues through to mid-July. The astronomers will discuss what the cluster actually is and show people where to look in the pre-dawn sky. After the meeting as usual the group will have a selection of their telescope for public viewing.

Where: Comrie Room at The Centre Franklin, Massey Ave, Pukekohe.

Contact: Chris Wilson, chriswilson@slingshot.co.nz

4. Winter Gissy Gathering – Friday 9th to 12th July, 2010 John Drummond Gisborne



The Gissy Gathering will be held at a dark sky site about 11 kms from Gisborne (people are welcome to stay Fri, Sat, Sun nights). This is an impromptu socialising and observing four night event - however, if you have an astronomical-type presentation then please bring it along... It will be held on a small farm near the little township of Patutahi. The site offers a dark sky. The weather in Gisborne is often fine and so we're hoping for a clear weekend. The weekend costs \$5 per person, per night to cover power and water. Accommodation is either tents, caravans (bring your own), or sleeping communally in various rooms in John's house.

If you want a fun, social and observing weekend please come along! BYO weekend.....

Contact: John Drummond, Home: (06) 8627 557 - Mobile: 0275 609 287 - Email: john_drummond@xtra.co.nz

5. Freeware - New Stellarium Planetarium Programme

Stellarium is a free open source planetarium for your computer. It shows a realistic sky in 3D, just like what you see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope. Just set your coordinates and go. New Stellarium version released - this release brings some exciting new features. Stellarium now ships with plug-ins for predicting the positions of artificial satellites in Earth orbit, improved telescope control features, telescope eyepiece simulation (ocular) and more. Plug-ins can be enabled using the new plug-ins tab in the configuration dialogue.

More information and programme download: <http://www.stellarium.org>

