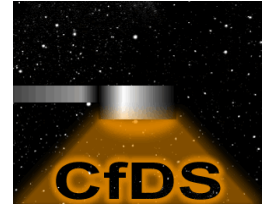




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COMMISSION for DARK SKIES



PROTECT THE NIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION'S COMMISSION FOR DARK SKIES

www.britastro.org/dark-skies

MAYO SYMPOSIUM POINTS THE WAY

At the 14th European Dark Skies Symposium on November 3-5 2019 at Mulranney in the Mayo Dark Sky Park, Ireland, over a hundred delegates from many countries as far afield as the USA, New Zealand and Japan gathered to discuss the latest developments in the worldwide battle against light pollution.



The Commission for Dark Skies was represented by Bob Mizon and Gerry Bond, accompanied by Amanda Scott, dark sky project leader of the Cranborne Chase AONB Dark Sky Reserve, the world's newest area where stars are protected within the International Dark-Sky Association's scheme.

The proceedings were skilfully organised and managed by Georgia Macmillan and her team from the Friends of Mayo Dark Skies, and the evening of November 4th was spent admiring the constellations from the Mayo Dark Sky Park Visitor Centre, where Bob achieved fame as the only delegate to fall from the winding walkway into the sodden bogland that characterises the area.

Veteran campaigner Dr Andreas Haenel (Dark Sky Germany) opens the proceedings.

Among the many talks and workshops: the necessity to insist on the precautionary principle with LED lights; the ever-growing impact of blue-rich lighting on wildlife and habitats; the new French lighting law (Dec 2018, see page 3)

and the need to urge governments to follow its precepts; and the increasing number of protected dark sky zones around the world, for example the Iriomote-Ishigaki International Dark Sky Park, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. Dr Nobuaki Ochi had travelled all the way from Tokyo to tell the story of its creation. Further details of this very successful event are at www.mayodarkskyfestival.ie/symposium

Encouraging Star-Quality Lighting

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

New friends in the Corridors of Power

An exciting new development in the UK dark skies debate is the formation of the new All-Party Group of MPs interested in pursuing the cause of dark skies in Parliament. It is co-chaired by Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs, and Lord Rees, the Astronomer Royal. See appgdarkskies.co.uk

The UK's newest Dark Sky Reserve

In October 2019 the superb landscape of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was formally designated the world's 14th International Dark-Sky Reserve (IDSR) by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA). AONB Director Linda Nunn said "From Cranborne Chase we see the Milky Way and the Andromeda Galaxy, if the clouds allow!" Adam Dalton, IDA Dark-Sky Places Program Manager, said: "Cranborne Chase has the largest central area of darkness of any International Dark-Sky Reserve in the UK. It's a huge area at almost 1000 sq km, less than 2 hours from London and Bristol. For those living and visiting this beautiful area, this is something to be celebrated and enjoyed." The Wessex Astronomical Society and the Commission for Dark Skies played a major role, supporting project leader Amanda Scott and taking meter readings of the darkness of the night sky over several years. Linda Nunn added: "Although huge amounts of work have already been done to achieve this status, we must continually improve our dark skies. Dark sky friendly schemes with schools, business, parishes and landowners are being developed and Wiltshire Council, which administers two-thirds of the area, has already agreed to upgrade its street lighting. This will make a significant contribution and will help us continually improve our dark sky quality". Other IDA International Dark-Sky Reserves are Aoraki Mackenzie (New Zealand), Brecon Beacons National Park (Wales), Central Idaho (U.S.), Cévennes National Park (France), Exmoor National Park (England), Kerry (Ireland), Mont-Mégantic (Québec), South Downs, (England), Namib Rand Nature Reserve (Namibia), Pic du Midi (France), Rhön (Germany), Snowdonia National Park (Wales) and Westhavelland (Germany). Cranborne Chase AONB organises a programme of dark sky events and communications throughout the year, including stargazing evenings, talks, school visits and workshops. More at www.chasingstars.org.uk

Excellence on Exmoor

The Exmoor Dark Skies Festival in October and November 2019 took place at various venues within the Exmoor National Park Dark Sky Reserve. Among numerous events were outdoor stargazing (partly curtailed by the weather), talks, planetarium shows, and displays by local groups. The CfDS played its part with outreach and a stall in Dunster, where Bob Mizon lectured and led stargazing at the Yarn Market Hotel. The dates for this year's Festival are October 16-31.

New CfDS Habitats video

The CfDS is pleased to announce that its new short video *DARKNESS: THE HALF-REMEMBERED HABITAT* is now available to watch at www.youtube.com/watch?v=TT8J8Q6a8PU&feature=youtu.be It features the work of our newest committee member, graphic artist Kerem Asfuroglu, and examines the moving habitat of night that covers half the planet.

Light control over the Lakes

The Lake District offers some of the UK's most spectacular skylscapes and is now in the queue to gain internationally recognised dark-sky status by 2022 with a project by Cumbria Dark Skies. CDS is a partnership of four local organisations: the Friends of the Lake District, Cumbria Tourism, Forestry England and the Lake District National Park. Download their Dark Sky Discovery Pack and access their Dark Skies Blog page, Stargazing guide and Outdoor Lighting Tips from

www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/dark-skies-cumbria-homepage

Restrictions during the current health emergency have hit numerous astronomical meetings and events. CfDS commitments currently on hold include meetings in London in the last week of March with the new All-Party Dark Skies Group of MPs, DEFRA and MHCLG, and reps of UK National Parks and AONBs to discuss a united approach to the Government on its failure to address light pollution properly. The official opening in early April of the new Davagh Observatory in the Sperrin Mountains, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, a project supported by the CfDS, has been postponed until further notice. www.midulstercouncil.org/davagh-dark-sky-observatory

DARK SKIES AROUND THE WORLD

Recent correspondence to the CfDS has come from Australia, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Italy, Ireland, South Korea, Malta, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Spain, the USA.

NIUE:

The Pacific island of Niue became the world's first International Dark Sky Nation on March 7. It received formal accreditation from the International Dark-Sky Association as an International Dark Sky Sanctuary and International Dark Sky Community, thus ensuring the whole country has dark sky protection. CEO of Niue Tourism Felicity Bollen said "The people of Niue are understandably proud and delighted to receive such an important acknowledgment. To be the first whole country to become a dark sky nation is a massive accomplishment for a small Pacific nation with a population of just over 1,600. The stars and night sky have a huge significance to the Niuean way of life, from a cultural, environmental and health perspective." Having already managed a successful bid for Great Barrier Island (New Zealand) to become an IDA Dark Sky Sanctuary, New Zealanders Richard and Gendie Somerville-Ryan were responsible for putting together Niue's IDA application. The IDA stated that "Niueans have a long history of star navigation and the Niuean elders now hope the passion to learn the cultural history of the stars is re-ignited in younger generations."

www.darksky.org/niue-is-worlds-first-country-to-become-a-dark-sky-place

FRANCE:

For the latest information on the important new light pollution legislation in France, which establishes national regulations "designed to prevent, limit and reduce light pollution which causes excessive disturbance to persons, fauna, flora or ecosystems, energy wastage and prevention of observation of the night sky", go to

www.darksky.org/france-light-pollution-law

The CfDS' main handbook, '**Blinded by the Light?**' has been completely re-edited and rewritten in a 40-page A4 edition with eye-catching artwork by new committee member Kerem Asfuroglu. It is styled "A handbook for friends of the natural environments of Earth and sky, installers of considerate lighting, campaigners against the misuse of artificial light, and those adversely affected by light pollution". Contents include: The Environment Problem, The Disappearing Universe, Environmental Aspects, Lighting and Crime, Light Pollution and Human Health, The Cold Light of Night: LED Lighting, Action that can be taken about Light Nuisance, Monitoring Light Pollution, Bad Lighting – the Problems; and as appendices, Lighting Assessment Principles and a sample letter for complainants about poor-quality lighting. Read it on the CfDS website at

www.britastro.org/dark-skies/pdfs/CfDS_booklet_Rev06.pdf or order copies at £2 each from CfDS coordinator Bob Mizon, 01202 887084.

Suggestions are invited for potential recipients of the CfDS' **Joy Griffiths Award 2020** for meritorious efforts towards preserving the night sky. The most recent CfDS Award of Appreciation for outstanding local efforts went to the **Bath Starlit Skies Alliance**, and the next CfDS **Good Lighting Award** will go jointly to **Dorset Properties** (Dorset Council) and **Wimborne First School** for good lighting which will not impinge on the starry skies of the neighbouring Cranborne Chase AONB Dark Sky Reserve (see page 2).

CfDS Fighting Fund

Fighting fund and Conference donations may be made via Bob Mizon (address below*), payable to 'BAA Commission for Dark Skies'.

Standing orders or transfer payments to the CfDS can be made via your bank to:

Sort code 40-46-37, a/c No. 71479393, a/c name "Commission for Dark Skies". Please notify us on 01202 887084 if you decide to support the CfDS in this way. We urgently need more donors.

CfDS thanks recent donors: Anon., Archant, Arthur Davis, Gerry Bond, Nigel Buchanan, Bill Cobb, Jeanette Dawson, Matt Dugas, Barry Fitzgerald, David Frydman, Richard Howson, Nigel Jacklin. Geoff Kirby, Hazel McGee, Rob Peeling, Marcus Price, Ian Smith, Alan Snook, Bob Stuckey, Dinah Thompson, Steve Tonkin, Ron Westmaas, SW Astronomy Fair, ukastroshow.com, BAA/SPA members at various venues, Cranborne Chase AONB, members of Crewkerne AS, Hampshire AG, and Wessex AS. Apologies to any donor inadvertently omitted.

Astronomical Societies - why not consider a regular monthly or annual donation to the Commission for Dark Skies?

Do you have a dedicated light pollution officer? Most societies don't. Please consider this, as it is important to have a current national picture of the extent of light pollution and trends in night sky visibility. Keep in touch! www.britastro.org/dark-skies/enquiries.php

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When your subscription expires, please renew promptly. BAA members can do so via their annual Association subscription form, or send your name and address with £4.00, payable to 'British Astronomical Association', for four issues, to BAA, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0DU. Encourage other concerned people in your area/group (including non-BAA members) to subscribe.

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The Editorial Team thanks Maddy, Bill and all at BAA headquarters for their hard work.

Queries and comments to the CfDS

can be made via the enquiry form on www.britastro.org/dark-skies/enquiries.php. You will be directed to an appropriate person to deal with your message.

To all astronomical societies

Do you have a dedicated light pollution officer? Most societies don't. Please consider this, as it is important to have a national picture of the extent of light pollution and local trends in night sky visibility. Keep in touch!

www.spacerocksuk.com supports the CfDS.

Meteorites, tektites and impactites: Sikhote-Alin, Canyon Diablo, Barwell, lunar meteorites, Martian meteorites...